

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 20 MARCH 1980

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

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Reports—

Rural Reconstruction Board 1978-1979.
Brisbane Market Trust 1978-1979.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Regulations under—

Industry and Commerce Training Act 1979.
Workers' Compensation Act 1916-1979.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

From Mr. Prest (12 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will ensure that the Select Committee on Education recommendations with regard to sex education be rejected.

[Similar petitions were received from Mr. Scassola (306 signatories) and Mr. Booth (36 and 14 signatories).]

**PROTECTION OF UNBORN QUEENSLANDERS
KILLED BY ABORTION**

From Mr. Booth (31 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take action to protect the lives of unborn Queensland children being killed by abortion.

[A similar petition was received from Mr. Jones (28 signatories).]

Petitions read and received.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. DETECTION OF CHOLERA ORGANISMS

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

With reference to the latest detection of cholera organisms in the North Pine

Dam and, in view of the growing public concern in this matter—

(1) How many cholera samples have been detected in Queensland in the past five years, what was their location and on what date was each reported?

(2) What plans are under way involving his department and possibly local authorities for a Statewide survey of all major river systems to determine the extent of the cholera problem in Queensland?

Answers:—

(1) In the past five years, *Vibrio Cholerae* has been detected in 107 samples of water taken at the following locations by my officers—

McLeans Bridge, Logan River—4-4-77;
12-4-77; 27-4-77; 1-6-77.

Evergreen, Logan River—17-1-77;
12-4-77.

Logan Village, Logan River—12-4-77;
22-8-77; 13-3-78; 10-4-78.

Paynes Bridge, Logan River—12-4-77;
27-4-77; 5-5-77.

Cedar Grove Road, Logan River—
20-4-77; 17-1-78.

Il-Bogan Bridge, Logan River—
28-2-78; 20-3-78.

Josephville Road Bridge, Logan River
—10-4-78.

Neville Road, Logan River—12-4-77.

Williams Bridge, Logan River—8-5-78.

Boylard, Canungra Creek—20-3-78;
28-3-78.

Mundoolan Bridge, Albert River—
21-2-78; 28-2-78; 20-3-78; 28-3-78.

Plunkett Bridge, Albert River—
23-2-77; 27-2-77; 1-3-77; 2-3-77; 4-3-77;
23-3-77; 23-3-77; 13-4-77; 26-4-77; 7-2-78.

Chardon's Bridge, Albert River—
23-2-77; 2-3-77; 3-3-77; 4-3-77; 28-3-77;
26-4-77; 20-3-78.

Luscombe Weir, Albert River—
22-2-77; 22-2-77; 27-2-77; 28-2-77; 28-2-77;
1-3-77; 2-3-77; 3-3-77; 4-3-77; 5-3-77;
6-3-77; 7-3-77; 8-3-77; 9-3-77; 10-3-77;
14-3-77; 16-3-77; 16-3-77; 16-3-77; 17-3-77;
17-3-77; 17-3-77; 17-3-77; 28-3-77; 28-3-77;
28-3-77; 28-3-77; 28-3-77; 28-3-77; 4-4-77;
18-4-77; 4-5-77.

Stanmore Road crossing, Albert River
—22-3-77; 23-3-77; 21-11-77; 19-12-77;
4-1-78; 4-1-78; 4-1-78; 7-2-78.

Yatala, Albert River—20-3-78.

Chiltern Springs, Albert River—
23-3-77; 23-3-77.

Karen Court swimming hole, Albert
River—23-2-77.

Gully outlet into Albert River, King-
horn property—28-2-77.

Mundoolan property, Albert River—26-2-77.

South edge of Mundoolan property, Albert River—26-2-77.

Old Mundoolan Weir, north of Mundoolan property—1-3-77.

200 m north of old Mundoolan Weir, Albert River—1-3-77.

100 m north of old Mundoolan Weir, Albert River—1-3-77.

Spiddal property, Albert River—28-2-77.

Stanmore crossing, Albert River—4-2-80.

Below Luscombe Weir, Albert River—4-2-80; 3-3-80.

Intake Point, Luscombe Weir, Albert River—4-2-80.

Above Luscombe Weir, Albert River—3-3-80.

Mundoolan Bridge, Albert River—4-2-80.

1st Crossing, Linville, Brisbane River—18-2-80.

Kholo crossing centre, Brisbane River—19-2-80.

Kholo crossing, North Bank, Brisbane River—19-2-80.

Kholo crossing, South Bank, Brisbane River—25-2-80; 27-2-80.

50 metres upstream, Cooyar Creek, Brisbane River—25-2-80.

Il Bogan, Albert River—3-3-80.

In the past five years *Vibrio Cholerae* has been detected in 40 samples of water taken at the following locations by officers of the Brisbane City Council:—

Bulimba Creek, downstream Mt. Gravatt sewage treatment plant—29-3-78.

Bulimba Creek, upstream Mt. Gravatt sewage treatment plant—3-5-78; 8-5-78.

Mt. Gravatt sewage treatment plant before chlorination—18-4-78; 19-4-78.

Mt. Ommaney sewage treatment plant effluent—8-5-78.

Brisbane River, Kholo—18-4-78; 12-12-78; 14-2-80.

Brisbane River, Wivenhoe—21-11-78.

Brisbane River, Murrumba—18-4-78; 15-1-80.

Mt. Crosby raw water—26-11-78; 27-11-78; 28-11-78; 3-12-78; 4-12-78; 12-12-78; 3-1-79; 9-1-79; 10-1-79; 20-2-80; 29-2-80; 2-3-80; 3-3-80; 9-3-80; 13-3-80; 14-3-80.

Mt. Crosby combined filter effluent—25-2-80; 2-3-80; 13-3-80.

Hoits Hill effluent—29-2-80; 2-3-80.

Mt. Crosby filter effluents—No. 12 Filter, 10-3-80; No. 14 Filter, 10-3-80; No. 20 Filter, 12-3-80; No. 1 Filter, 13-3-80.

Brisbane River, Mt. Beppo—15-1-80.

Brisbane River, Linville—31-1-80.

North Pine Dam—raw water—13-3-80.

(2) Since 5 February 1980, State health inspectors have taken 322 samples from major river intake points of reticulated water supplies and from popular aquatic recreation areas throughout the State. State health inspectors are to inspect and report on every public domestic water supply and treatment plant throughout the State. Local authorities are being requested to forward samples from water supply intakes at three-monthly intervals for cholera examination. Health officers and State health inspectors will continue to survey and sample the Albert, Logan and Brisbane River systems at two-weekly intervals and are presently surveying and sampling the Pine River system.

2. BEEF CATTLE INDUSTRY

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

(1) How many export meatworks are there in Queensland that (a) have commenced the killing season but have subsequently stopped operating, (b) are operating on a reduced kill quota, and (c) have not commenced the season at all?

(2) Has the current cut-back in the beef killing season been caused by (a) a shortage of cattle or (b) lack of buyer support because meat export companies have not been able to secure sufficient export orders?

(3) In view of the fact that the beef industry in Queensland is again facing a crisis situation, what action is the State Government now prepared to take to properly implement its own legislation to provide for a proper beef stabilisation scheme in Queensland?

Answers:—

(1) My inquiries reveal that of the 30 export registered abattoirs in Queensland, six have not commenced operations this season, one commenced but subsequently ceased operations and all other abattoirs, with the exception of one, are operating at reduced capacity.

(2) It is my understanding that the United States market in particular is rather hesitant at the present time and beef imports from Australia are moving very slowly into that market. The importers are showing some reluctance to rebuild their beef stocks and no doubt this reflects the economic climate in the United States.

Additionally, I believe there is a shortage of marketable cattle in Queensland at the present time, not only as a result of the

drought conditions prevailing in many parts of the State, but also because of the reduced numbers of cattle following heavy slaughtering in recent years.

(3) The question of the provision of a beef stabilisation scheme in Queensland has been, and still is, under investigation. Numerous proposals have been examined with a view to evolving a workable scheme which would then be referred to the beef industry in general for consideration.

3. ROAD PRIORITIES, CABOOLTURE SHIRE

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

Has the Caboolture Shire Council submitted an up-to-date list of priorities for secondary roads in the Caboolture Shire and, if so, what is that list?

Answer:—

The priorities for permanent works on secondary roads in Caboolture Shire requested by that council are based on a list submitted in 1976, which has been amended on several occasions since then. I will supply details to the honourable member in writing.

4. TENDERS FOR PUBLIC WORKS; APPOINTMENT OF SELECT COMMITTEES

Mr. Ahern for **Mr. T. A. White**, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

With reference to the Government's strong confirmation of the free-enterprise system and his own personal reputation as a supporter of private enterprise—

(1) Is he aware that (a) most road-works in this State are carried out by Government construction without tenders being called, (b) the Queensland Water Resources Commission carries out extensive works without calling for public tenders, and (c) Queensland Railways carries out track upgrading and maintenance without calling tenders?

(2) If so, will he support the appointment of a parliamentary select committee to inquire into the above matters and report to Parliament on (a) the efficiency of the present system and (b) what public accountability should be required in respect to the expenditure of public funds by Government instrumentalities?

Answers:—

(1) It is, of course, my Government's policy to assist the private sector in these matters where it is satisfied that the end result produces a more efficient and more economical service for the State and its people. On the other hand, regard must be

had from time to time to the employment and other aspects of day-labour construction, and a judicious balance must be maintained between both systems for the maximum benefit of all concerned.

(2) The appointment of a parliamentary select committee to inquire into these matters is not necessary.

5. RESTORATION OF HORNIBROOK HIGHWAY

Mr. Ahern for **Mr. T. A. White**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

With reference to the restoration of the old Hornibrook Highway—

(1) What are the relevant details and progress of the current investigation of the bridge?

(2) When is it likely that the bridge will be open again to traffic?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) As the honourable member will be aware, the new Houghton Highway has adequate capacity to cope with present traffic volumes and is providing a good level of service. Work is proceeding on investigation and repairs to 12 spans of the 294 spans in the old Hornibrook Highway. Until this investigation is complete, estimates made and availability of funding considered, it is not possible to indicate a likely date of reopening.

6. QUEENSLAND TOURIST AND TRAVEL CORPORATION

Mr. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism—

Since the inauguration of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation on 1 August 1979—

(1) How many employees of that organisation have (a) left the corporation, (b) resigned, (c) been deployed to other sections of the public service, and (d) indicated a desire or opted to return to the Public Service ranks?

(2) How many of those positions so vacated have been filled?

(3) Has there been a predominance of public servants selected to fill the vacancies and, if so, what are the criteria for appointments?

(4) Have appointees to the key management positions vacated been filled by other than public servants and, if so, has this action been contrary to stipulated policy that preference for promotion would be given to personnel within the organisation?

Answers:—

(1) (a) 42 have left, comprising resignations and redeployment as follows; (b) 11 have resigned from the Public Service but 2 of these have remained as employees of the corporation; (c) 31 redeployed; (d) in addition to the above, a further 21 are awaiting redeployment—a total of 52.

(2) 26.

(3) Yes. Fourteen of the 26 positions vacated were filled by promoting existing members of staff and of the remaining 12, 10 were base-grade positions filled by outside recruitment. Five of these were school-leavers employed in the cadet training scheme which was introduced.

The criteria for appointment were experience, educational qualifications, special training where relevant, general ability and potential, specific skills, personality factors, motivation, length of tourist bureau service, and knowledge of Queensland where relevant.

(4) Some positions—for example, general manager, marketing manager, and sales promotions officer, which position has been restructured—have been filled by other than public servants, but this is because the particular skills required were not available amongst existing staff.

Other key positions have been filled by public servants—(a) Operations and Deputy General Manager; (b) Marketing Development Manager; (c) Secretary to the board; (d) Manager, Adelaide; (e) Manager, Brisbane; (f) Manager, Melbourne.

It is the corporation's policy to promote from within where possible. All job vacancies are advertised initially within the organisation.

7. HOUSING COMMISSION ACCOMMODATION, CAIRNS

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

(1) How many applications for housing accommodation in their respective categories of priority are at present registered as outstanding with the Queensland Housing Commission through the Clerk of the Court, Cairns?

(2) How many rental houses have been allocated for the year to 30 June 1979 and to date this financial year?

(3) During the same period how many (a) new houses, (b) pensioner units, (c) houses through co-operative societies, and (d) houses through other funding were erected?

(4) How many building sites are presently held at Cairns for commission requirements?

(5) How many applications for units under the Dwellings for Aged Persons Scheme are at present registered as outstanding and how many have been allocated over the same periods?

Answers:—

(1)—

Families—100 points, 1; 80 points, 1; 40 points, 85; Nil points, 103.

(2)—

Pensioners—Couple, 17; Single, 33.

	1978-79	1979-80 (to date)
Families	54	56
Pensioners	3	17

(3)—

	1978-79	1979-80 (to date)
(a) Rental houses	13	29
(b) Pensioner units	Nil	14
(c) Co-operative societies	Nil	4 completed 8 more approved
(d) Other	3	20

In addition 19 houses are under construction, 1 approved but not started and 3 at tender stage.

(4) 1 pensioner site to accommodate 20–25 units; 8 house sites; 70 house sites being developed; 230 (approximately) house sites for future development.

(5) Figures on Housing Commission schemes are contained in (1), (2), (3) and (4) above. I have no information on the Commonwealth Scheme under the Aged and Disabled Homes Act or the Aged Persons Hostels Act.

8. QUEENSLAND OPERA COMPANY

Mr. Innes, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation—

Will he reassure concerned Queenslanders that the Queensland Opera Company will continue and that its recently demonstrated world-class standards are likely to be available to grace the new cultural centre and delight Queenslanders and other Australians throughout the '80s?

Answer:—

The Government recently demonstrated its faith in the Queensland Opera Company's future and in its capabilities by providing a special developmental grant of \$150,000 to enable it to further improve the quality of its productions and to expand its activities throughout the State. This special assistance was in addition to the 1979-80 annual grant of \$234,000 and the free annual orchestral services provided by the Queensland Theatre Orchestra.

We believe that the Queensland Opera Company will continue its contribution to the State's cultural life. We expect

that it, and other major performing arts companies, will now be considering in their forward-planning programmes presentations at the Performing Arts Complex in the Queensland Cultural Centre and, indeed, in other major cultural complexes in the State.

9. LAD PORTERS, RAILWAY DEPARTMENT

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

(1) Is there a by-law, regulation or policy in the Railways Department that excludes a young person who wears spectacles which correct his vision to normal from meeting the requirements needed of an applicant to become a lad porter?

(2) If so, in a day and age when Queensland's Sheffield Shield wicket-keeper and the West Indian's cricket captain wear spectacles, can this by-law, regulation or policy be justified, assuming that an applicant passes the necessary entrance examinations and is physically strong enough for the work?

Answers:—

(1) The long-standing policy of the department is that lad porters, as well as certain other junior employees, must meet a standard of unaided vision of 6/6 in one eye, 6/9 in the other and 6/6 with both eyes open.

(2) This policy is justified by reason of the fact that a lad porter is employed in an operational area which would bring him into contact with the movement of trains. I have asked for this policy to be reviewed.

10. ROAD SIGNS INDICATING SPEED LIMITS

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

(1) Is he familiar with the speed limits applying along Ipswich Road between Brisbane and Ipswich where speed limits vary backwards and forwards between 60 km/h, 70 km/h, 80 km/h and 100 km/h without apparent differences in the condition of the divided highway and without significant change in the adjacent built-up area?

(2) Is he aware of the ease with which a basically law-abiding person who is concentrating on overtaking, or is being overtaken or sees some other problem on the road ahead, can miss a sign indicating a change of speed and break the law?

(3) Will he have his officers, in liaison with officers of the Main Roads Department, if appropriate, investigate the problem on this and other divided highways and consider a basic speed limit, a reduction in the number of alternative speed limits and the erection of regularly spaced reminder signs on stretches of road where a different speed limit applies?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) Yes, I travel this road frequently and am familiar with the varying speed limits. I will arrange for the Commissioner for Transport to take this matter up with the Commissioner of Main Roads, as suggested by the honourable member. In due course I shall advise the honourable member.

11. PRE-EMPLOYMENT COURSES, GOLD COAST SCHOOLS

Mr. Gygar for **Mr. P. N. D. White**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

With reference to his press statement released on 3 March relating to pre-employment courses to be introduced in certain secondary schools, are there any Gold Coast schools nominated to conduct these courses?

Answer:—

Schools are now being asked to submit applications for approval to conduct courses. Such approvals in the first half of this year will be limited. Additional approvals will be given in the second half of the year.

Until those applications have been received and the school submissions examined, it is not possible to state which schools will receive approvals to conduct courses. It is anticipated that the first approvals will be given in April.

12. GOLD COAST TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Mr. Ahern for **Mr. P. N. D. White**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

(1) What is the estimated date for the completion of the Gold Coast Transportation Study?

(2) Is it proposed to table this study in this House?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) It is anticipated that the Gold Coast Transportation Study will be completed in June of this year. It is expected that a public presentation of the report will be made to the local authorities involved and subsequently a copy will be made available to the Parliamentary Library and other technical libraries.

13. STUDENT ALLOWANCE

Mr. Warburton, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) What is the present yearly normal student allowance for students aged eight to twelve years, and what was the yearly allowance for each of the years 1970 to 1979 inclusive?

(2) In the case of an applicant with two dependent children, what is the present family income limit and what was the family income limit for the Eastern District in the Southern Division for each of the years 1970 to 1979 inclusive?

(3) Is it correct that parents in receipt of a total income of only \$90 per week and who have two dependent children are not eligible for normal student allowance?

(4) Will he advise of any action being taken to lift the amount of the normal student allowance and to set the family income limits at more appropriate levels?

Answers:—

(1) Student allowance is based on the level of education of a child and is available under certain conditions for students undertaking Years 8 to 12. The age of a student is not taken into consideration when ascertaining eligibility for the allowance. To be eligible, a student must be undertaking Years 8 to 12 or equivalent thereof. The student allowance from 1970 to the beginning of the 1972 school year was awarded as follows:—

Grade	Living at home per annum	Living away from home per annum
8, 9, 10	\$32	\$130
11	\$40	\$164
12	\$40	\$208

The student allowance was increased at the beginning of the 1972 school year to \$54 per annum for all students living at home and \$222 per annum for students living away from home. These amounts stand at present.

(2) The means test applicable for an applicant with two dependent children in the Eastern District in the Southern Division from 1972 until the present time is tabulated hereunder:—

1972, \$2,350 per annum; 1973, \$2,462 per annum; 1974, \$2,628 per annum; 1975, \$2,898 per annum; 1976, \$3,158 per annum; 1977, \$3,538 per annum; 1978, \$4,110 per annum; 1979, \$4,354 per annum; 1980, \$4,650 per annum.

The figures for the years 1970 and 1971 are not readily available.

(3) Assistance provided by the student allowance scheme is for parents who, by Queensland standards are financially disadvantaged. The Queensland standard is defined as the State basic wage as determined from time to time by the State Industrial Commission.

It is possible for parents who receive a total income of \$90 per week to receive student allowance for their children. The allowance would be granted in these circumstances after deductions for various types of expenditure were taken from the \$90 per week to give the adjusted family

income which is the determinant for eligibility for the student allowance from my department.

(4) I am aware that the matter has been considered in the past and it is my intention to seek a further review.

14. RAILWAY CARRIAGES, BRISBANE-SHORNCLIFFE LINE

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

(1) Is he aware of the passenger ill-feeling about the condition of railway carriages used on the City-Shorncliffe line?

(2) Why are the thousands of train travellers commuting weekly on the busy Shorncliffe-City rail service now forced to travel in old, dirty wooden suburban and long distance carriages instead of suburban stainless steel carriages previously used on that service?

(3) If he cannot see his way clear to give workers and shoppers from the Sandgate and Redcliffe districts decent carriages in which to travel, will he at least take action to ensure that the carriages used are clean and well maintained?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) Since September 1979, only two complaints have been registered regarding dirty suburban railway carriages. Approximately 200 railway cleaners are employed throughout the metropolitan area to attend to carriages.

The introduction of the cross-river connection in 1978 affected the working of the stainless-steel carriages, which previously were captive on certain lines in the northern suburbs. They now continue on "through" rail services from the northern to the southern suburbs and the older-type wooden coaches, which were previously captive on the southside lines, now correspondingly continue through to the northern suburbs.

Whilst planning provides for the progressive withdrawal of wooden coaches as electric trains are introduced into service, increased passenger patronage on suburban trains in peak hours throughout the metropolitan area has prevented this being done to date. In actual fact, additional trains have been scheduled to cope with this increased patronage.

Also, at this interim stage of the electrification construction programme, there is a loss of some flexibility in the use of stainless-steel coaches on certain lines, including the Shorncliffe line.

The work in connection with electrification of the Shorncliffe line is now in progress and every endeavour is being made to maintain the cleanliness and appearance of the wooden coaches until they can be progressively replaced by new electric trains coming on stream.

15. TRUST ACCOUNT IRREGULARITIES

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

(1) When defalcations or shortfalls are discovered in solicitors' trust accounts, are the principals of firms involved obliged to report these matters to the Justice Department, Law Society, or any other body?

(2) Can the individuals or firms involved in trust account irregularities avoid publicity, prosecution or other Government action by attempting to repay trust account shortfalls once they are discovered and, if so, will he extend this privilege to bankers, real estate agents, company secretaries and others involved in financial dealings in the community?

(3) How common are trust account deficiencies in the legal profession, how many incidents have been discovered in the last six months and what are the names of the firms or individuals involved?

Answers:—

(1) There is no requirement under the provisions of the Trust Accounts Act 1973-1978 for the principal of a firm of solicitors to report to the Justice Department or the Queensland Law Society Incorporated when a defalcation or shortfall is discovered in the solicitor's trust account.

The trust accounts of solicitors are subject to audit by qualified independent accountants twice in each financial period of six months.

At the end of each financial period when the trust accounting records are produced to the independent accountant for audit they must be accompanied by a statement signed by the solicitor or, in the case of a partnership, every member of the firm stating—

(a) whether the accounts are true and correct;

(b) whether all moneys received by the trustees during the financial period in question and which constitute trust moneys have been lodged to the credit of a trust bank account and disclosed to the auditor for the purpose of the audit;

(c) whether the moneys referred to have been applied for the purposes for which they were so received or are still retained in a trust account.

The auditor is required to report any irregularities to the Under Secretary and the Queensland Law Society Incorporated within seven days of becoming aware of such matters.

(2) Trust account deficiencies fall into two categories—those caused inadvertently by incorrect accounting procedures or banking errors and those caused by misappropriation.

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In respect of the former, the practitioner must rectify the position forthwith and there is no good reason why the names of solicitors in this situation should be published.

Deficiencies involving misappropriation are dealt with by the Queensland Law Society Incorporated. The practitioner involved is charged before the statutory committee and invariably struck off the roll of solicitors.

The findings and order of the statutory committee are served on me within seven days of their being made.

Within 30 days of receiving the findings and order, I may appeal to the court if I am of the opinion that the solicitor has not been adequately punished.

When a solicitor is charged in respect of a deficiency in his trust account and subsequently struck off or suspended from practice, his name is published in both the daily Press and in the professional journal of the Queensland Law Society Incorporated.

Any possible breaches of the Criminal Code are reported to the Fraud Squad for investigation.

(3) Deficiencies caused by misappropriation are extremely uncommon. There have been three such cases in the last five years, but none in the last six months.

During the period in question, one case of a deficiency caused by using incorrect procedures has been detected by the accountant from the Queensland Law Society Incorporated.

There had been no loss occasioned in this matter, which is still under consideration by the Law Society.

I invite the attention of the Leader of the Opposition to that answer, because he does not seem to understand trust accounts.

16. USE IN SCHOOLS OF FILMS ON SOVIET UNION

Mr. Gygar, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) Has the recently released series of four films produced by Film Australia on the Soviet Union been approved by the Education Department for use in Queensland Schools?

(2) In view of widespread criticism of the obsequious and servile praise for the Communist Government of Russia and its so-called achievements which are contained in the brochure for the film, will he assure the House that the films are not used in Queensland schools until such time as they have been thoroughly reviewed and a handbook is prepared which gives a critical assessment of the Russian system to counter the pro-Soviet propaganda which apparently forms the basis of these films?

Answers:—

(1) No. Five films, not four, produced by Film Australia on various aspects of life in the Soviet Union, and distributed by the Australian Film Commission, have recently been received by my department's film library. The commission deposits such films with a number of film libraries around the world, including that administered by my department, free of charge with the expectation that they will be made available to schools and other non-school borrowers.

(2) Procedures have been set up to review all films received whether by gift or purchase. The purpose of this review process is, in general terms, to provide advice to borrowers on the appropriateness of the film for their needs. Such a review is presently under way with respect to the films in question. Until this action is complete, I would not prejudge the films on the basis of the publicity issued by the commission. However, it is not normal practice for my department to prepare handbooks to accompany individual films made available from the film library. Rather, every effort is made to provide an accurate and, where necessary, detailed description of each film for inclusion in the film library catalogue and supplements.

17. SENTENCES FOR DANGEROUS DRIVING OFFENCES

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a report in "The Courier-Mail" of 15 March that Judge McNamara in the District Court had sentenced an apparently drunken driver to nine months' gaol on a dangerous driving charge after an episode in which his driving had caused damage to three police cars?

(2) As Mr. Justice Connolly of the Supreme Court noted on 8 January that the average sentence for drunken drivers who kill innocent road users is only six months and that some had only been fined, have we now reached the stage in Queensland where damaging police cars is regarded as a more serious offence than killing innocent people?

(3) What action does he intend to take to ensure that these drunken murderers receive their just deserts and that the good sense shown by Mr. Justice Connolly and Judge McNamara permeates through to all the judges of the Supreme and District Courts?

Answers:—

(1) My attention has been drawn to the report in question.

(2 & 3) I am aware of the comments made by Mr. Justice Connolly in respect of sentences for dangerous driving causing death.

The honourable member, however, should be aware that each case must be looked at in the light of its own facts and to generalise on meagre newspaper reports would be to judge without a full knowledge of all relevant circumstances, including circumstances of mitigation.

The law allows courts a discretion as to the punishment which is to be imposed, and it is not for me to ordain what sentences judges should impose.

I have power, which I frequently exercise, of appealing against sentences imposed by trial judges. This is the sole avenue available in law to me of regulating sentences.

18. TEACHERS, EARLY EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Mr. Scassola, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) What are the names of the teachers appointed to the four early intervention units for handicapped infants established by his department?

(2) What qualifications are possessed by each of those persons, in particular what special qualifications relevant to the teaching of the mentally retarded?

Answers:—

(1) Acacia Ridge: Mrs. M. Girle, Mrs. B. Yule; Aspley: Miss J. Jordan, Miss L. Sommerville; Kenmore: Mrs. M. Freed, Mrs. M. Beek; Mt. Gravatt: Mrs. L. Waters, Mrs. S. Gilbert.

(2) As I have advised in an information statement, the Early Educational Intervention Programs are based on a non-categorical philosophy. Teachers are selected in the first instance according to the general guide-lines approved by Cabinet regarding the selection of teachers for the Department of Education. Secondly, teachers for the Early Educational Intervention Programs are carefully chosen from within the Division of Special Education on the basis of personal suitability for their important and demanding task. Because they are dealing with a wide array of disabilities, the teachers in the current pilot programme have a variety of academic and experimental backgrounds.

19. SOUTH EAST FREEWAY

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

What is the date for the opening of the South East Freeway extension to Klumpp and Mains Roads, Upper Mt. Gravatt?

Answer:—

Although considerable progress has been made on this section of the South East Freeway, I am not yet in a position to give the honourable member the actual date of the official opening of this section. However, as soon as I can I will certainly make the information available to him.

20. OPERATIONS OF RURAL STATUTORY BODIES

Mr. Scassola, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Water Resources—

(1) Who are the current members of the (a) Rabbit Central Authority, (b) Rabbit Central Advisory Committee, (c) Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board, and (d) Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Board?

(2) When did each of those bodies last meet?

(3) What is the annual budget of each of the boards?

(4) To whom is each of the boards responsible and when did each of them last furnish a report?

(5) What are the statutory powers of each body?

Answers:—

(1) (a) Chairman of the Land Administration Commission who is also the ex officio chairman of the authority; and members, Mr. E. G. Savage, grazier, and Mr. E. J. Hammond, grazier.

(b) There are four Rabbit Control Advisory Committees, namely:—

(i) Charleville—the composition of this committee is chairman, Chief Rabbit Control Officer (Mr. M. McMannus); members—Councillor R. W. Somerfield (Quilpie Shire) and Councillor D. R. Utting (Murweh Shire).

(ii) Goondiwindi—the composition of this committee is chairman, Chief Rabbit Control Officer (Mr. M. McMannus); members—Councillor C. J. Potter (Inglewood Shire) and Councillor R. C. Chambers (Waggamba Shire).

(iii) Cunnamulla—the composition of this committee is chairman, Chief Rabbit Control Officer (Mr. M. McMannus); members—Councillor N. V. Sherwin (Bulloo Shire) and Councillor N. B. Moody (Paroo Shire).

(iv) Roma—the composition of this committee is chairman, Chief Rabbit Control Officer (Mr. M. McMannus); members—Councillor A. T. Leahy (Bendemere Shire) and Councillor J. W. N. Walmsley (Booringa Shire).

(c) Chairman, Mr. W. R. Drynan and members, Messrs J. J. Fanning, G. J. F. Ezzy, J. A. Mitchell and A. E. P. Mort, and the Land Commissioner, Toowoomba, ex officio.

(d) The current members of the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Board are as follows:—

R. Wicks, Chairman; R. J. Critchton, nominee of the United Graziers' Association of Queensland (Union of Employers); J. A. MacTaggart, nominee of the United Graziers' Association of Queensland (Union of Employers); C. G. J. Emery, nominee of the Queensland Graingrowers' Association; K. A. Day, nominee of the Queensland Cane Growers' Association; V. J. Coggan, nominee of the Council of Agriculture; P. A. Buchanan, nominee of the Queensland Dairymen's State Council; D. C. Sturrock, O.B.E., nominee of the Local Government Association of Queensland (Incorporated); J. R. Conochan, nominee of the Local Government Association of Queensland (Incorporated); C. R. Clarke, nominee of the Cattlemen's Union of Australia; B. A. Woolcock, Deputy Director (Field Services), Division of Animal Industry, Department of Primary Industries; L. G. Lawrence, Chief Commissioner of Lands, Department of Lands; J. T. Donohue, Executive Director, Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Board.

(2) (a) 29 January 1980.

(b) The last officially recorded meetings of the Rabbit Control Advisory Committees were:—

(i) 17 December 1974; (ii) 6 December 1974; (iii) 6 August 1973; (iv) 3 April 1974.

The committees have a continuing involvement and the Chief Rabbit Control Officer has had discussions at various times since the last recorded meeting with members of the committees. It is proposed to continue to do so and convene meetings as may be required.

(c) 14 February 1980.

(d) The date of last meeting was 13 December 1979, and the committee is meeting again today.

(3) (a) \$511,709 which includes an amount of \$243,365 to be dispersed to the Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board.

(b) Nil.

(c) \$250,960 which includes reimbursement to the extent of \$243,365 from the Rabbit Control Fund.

(d) The board has no actual budget as such but operates under two trust funds and certain Consolidated Revenue Votes

administered through my Department of Lands. The budget for 1979-80 envisages the expenditure of the following funds:—

Barrier Fence Trust Fund	\$429,508
Stock Routes and Pest Destruction Fund	\$2,589,966
Consolidated Revenue Votes for control of vermin and noxious plants and research into biological control of certain noxious weeds	\$551,856
Loan Funds for stock routes water facilities	\$103,000

(4) (a) The Honourable the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Water Resources.

(b) The Rabbit Control Authority.

(c) The Honourable the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Water Resources.

As far as (a), (b) and (c) are concerned there is not statutory requirement to furnish reports, but I am kept informed of their activities through the Rabbit Control Authority.

(d) The Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Board is directly responsible to me in my capacity as Minister for Lands and furnishes an annual report which is presented to Parliament as well as reporting periodically to me personally. The annual report for the year 1978-79 was dated 21 September 1979 and was presented to Parliament.

(5) (a) The functions of the Rabbit Control Authority are detailed in section 12 of the Rabbit Act 1964-1972, which requires the authority to control and reduce the infestation of the control area by rabbits with the object of freeing and maintaining free from such infestation such control area. The section also sets out the responsibilities of the authority in meeting that requirement.

(b) Advisory committees are established by the provisions of section 11 of the Rabbit Act 1964-1972, and the functions are primarily to recommend to the authority the programmes of works for the destruction of rabbits to be carried out in each division.

The committee shall also furnish an estimate of the cost of carrying out the works and shall carry out any other functions as required or directed by the Minister or the Rabbit Control Authority.

(c) The functions of the Darling Downs Rabbit Board are detailed in section 20 of the Rabbit Act 1964-1972, which requires that board to ensure that owners of holdings situated in the district maintain their holdings free from rabbits and maintain the rabbit check fence in rabbit-proof condition.

The responsibilities of the board to carry out these functions are also recited.

(d) The Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Board was constituted under

the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act and functions under that Act and the Barrier Fences Act.

It makes recommendations to me, as the Minister administering both those Acts, on matters relating to the construction and maintenance of stock route water facilities, control of declared vermin and noxious plant species, the administration of the dingo barrier fence, and projects for research into vermin control and the control and the chemical and biological control of noxious plants.

21. QUEENSLAND ELECTRICITY SUPPLY INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES' SUPERANNUATION SCHEME

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

With reference to the Queensland Electricity Supply Industry Employees' Superannuation Scheme as provided for in the Electricity Act of 1976, and as, according to the State Electricity Commission annual report 1978/79, the final draft of the articles was adopted by the Queensland Electricity Supply Industry Superannuation Board in May, 1979; as the articles have been approved by the eight electricity boards and the trustees of all existing superannuation and provident funds; and as the articles were presented to the State Electricity Commission for submission to him and the Governor in Council in November, 1979—

(1) What is holding up approval of the articles?

(2) When can the employees in the Queensland electricity supply industry expect their superannuation scheme to commence operation?

(3) Is he aware that many employees in the Queensland electricity supply industry who are returned soldiers could be severely disadvantaged if the new scheme is delayed much longer?

Answers:—

(1) The proposed benefit provisions need to be fully considered by the Government, particularly as regards any conflict with other public authority superannuation schemes.

(2) Once there is agreement between the Government and the superannuation board on the provisions of the articles.

(3) Where there is a proposal to improve benefits, a delay of any kind disadvantages employees and, of course, this concerns me a lot. I am not aware that returned soldiers are specially disadvantaged.

22. POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS IN ELECTRICAL TRANSFORMERS

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

(1) What action is being taken in relation to the polychlorinated biphenyls

which are contained in a large number of electrical transformers throughout the Brisbane area and stored at New Farm?

(2) Is it true that there is no means of destroying this material in Australia?

(3) Is it true that electrical equipment containing this insulating fluid is banned from food-processing factories because overseas countries have laid down strict precautions in this regard?

(4) What safety precautions are being taken to protect the health of persons required to work on electrical equipment containing this fluid?

(5) Is any action being taken in relation to persons who, through their work, have come in contact with the material previously?

Answers:—

(1) The South East Queensland Electricity Board is investigating the disposal of this material.

(2) Yes. However, the Waste Authority of New South Wales is investigating the disposal of this material in a special furnace.

(3) I have no knowledge of this.

(4) All possible precautions are being taken to ensure the safety of employees and the public.

(5) Medical checks recently taken on employees who came in contact with this material proved negative.

23. ROAD-WORKS, GATEWAY BRIDGE

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

With reference to the news item in the Press on 5 March in which it was stated that \$20,000,000 will be spent on road improvements to carry traffic from the new Queensland Bridge, and as it was stated that the first stage of the road-works on the north side will be the link from Kingsford Smith Drive to Nudgee Road and that the Main Roads Department plans to upgrade existing arterial roads to link the bridge with Highway 1—

(1) What existing arterial roads are to be upgraded to link the bridge with Highway 1?

(2) When is work scheduled to start on the upgrading of such arterial roads?

(3) Is it still planned to construct a main road linking the new bridge with Sandgate via Banyo, Nudgee, Nudgee Beach through to Shorncliffe?

Answers:—

(1) Following completion of stage 1 works from Kingsford Smith Drive to Nudgee Road, the existing network of roads connecting Nudgee Road to the Bruce Highway is available to traffic. These include Gerler Road-Junction Road,

Toombul Road-Sandgate Road and various connections between Sandgate Road and Gympie Road. Possible upgradings to several of these links were included in the proposal but final works to be undertaken will be in accordance with resulting traffic generated.

(2) The timing of the works referred to above, following the completion of stage 1 in 1985, will depend on the volume of traffic using the Gateway Bridge and the extent of funds received by Main Roads Department by way of royalties. If traffic volumes are substantial, then these works could be commenced shortly after the opening of the bridge in 1985.

(3) There is no current proposal for the construction of a main road linking the new bridge with Sandgate. However, the option for such is under examination.

24. DENTAL SERVICES, COUNTRY SCHOOLS

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

With reference to my question to him in the last session of Parliament expressing concern at the lack of dental attention by school dental clinics to schoolchildren in a number of country schools in my electorate and his answer that some electrical problems existed at these schools and technicians were trying to overcome the problems, are these schools now being visited by dental clinics on a regular basis?

Answer:—

The Division of Dental Services in conjunction with the Division of Health and Medical Physics has conducted successful trials with modified mobile dental clinics which may be operated on standard electrical outlets, and a number of mobile clinics modified in this manner will soon be available.

All small schools in the Somerset electorate have now been included on the itineraries of caravans working in the electorate.

25. HIGH SCHOOL, LOWOOD

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

As the secondary department of the Lowood school now has 250 pupils in forms 8 to 10 this year, thus qualifying for a high school, and as children from the Esk Shire are being transported to Brassall State High School, is planning in progress for a Lowood State High School?

Answer:—

There is no enrolment figure at which it may be assumed that the provision of a high school becomes automatic. Factors considered must include the likely maintenance, increase or decrease of enrolments, the rates of population growth, access to existing facilities and availability of funds.

Forward planning has taken these factors into account with respect to Lowood and provision of a separate high school at Lowood is listed in the Forward Planning Capital Works Program of my department, which is, of course, subject to availability of funds.

26. WARREGO HIGHWAY

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

As road-works providing four lanes on the Warrego Highway have been completed as far as the Laidley Creek bridge at Glenmore Grove, are plans completed for the continuation of road-works and, if so, when are they likely to commence?

Answer:—

I am pleased to advise the honourable member that plans are being prepared for further construction west of Laidley Creek bridge. It is currently planned to commence construction in the 1980-81 financial year, subject, of course, to the assumed level of funding being provided in the new Commonwealth roads legislation, details of which are not yet known.

27. AGRICULTURAL BANK LOANS TO SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr. Hansen, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Industry and Administrative Services—

With reference to reports made by the Premier of a small Business Development Council drawing financial assistance through the Agricultural Bank and as he has stated that 95 of every 100 businesses in this State are classed as small business, is it proposed to increase the limitations on lending by the Agricultural Bank to cope with the additional demand or will the Agricultural Bank be simply a referral bank to one of the existing recognised banks?

Answer:—

I would suggest that the honourable member await further developments in this matter.

28. SAX REPORT ON NURSING TRAINING

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

With reference to the Sax Report on Nursing Training—

(1) Does he intend to implement any or all of the recommendations?

(2) Have the recommendations been rejected outright?

(3) Are there differences concerning the report between the Federal and State authorities and, if so, what are they?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The Report of the Committee of Enquiry Into Nurse Education and Training chaired by Dr. Sidney Sax has been considered by the Queensland Government, which has endorsed the proposals regarding the offering of basic nurse education programmes in colleges of advanced education for implementation in Queensland as soon as the Commonwealth Government, through the Tertiary Education Commission, makes available the necessary funds for the purpose.

The Government also was in favour of the introduction of basic nursing programmes progressively into two colleges of advanced education, one in Brisbane and one in Central/Northern Queensland. The Government also decided that all other proposals of the Sax Committee should be kept under active consideration by the relevant Queensland authorities for health and for education with a view to their progressive implementation as circumstances and funding permit. These views were forwarded to the Commonwealth Minister for Education but no further advice has been received from the Commonwealth concerning this matter.

29. INQUIRY INTO QUEENSLAND FISH BOARD OPERATIONS

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

(1) With reference to the latest committee inquiring into the Queensland Fish Board which I believe comprises (a) an officer of the Department of Primary Industries as chairman, (b) the honourable member for Mourilyan representing the National Party, and (c) the honourable member for Redcliffe representing the Liberal Party, are there other instances where Government committees with parliamentary representation have Public Service officers as chairmen?

(2) Would it not be more appropriate, considering the importance of the inquiry to the Queensland fishing industry, for the committee to be chaired by the Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism?

(3) What are the committee's terms of reference?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) I would suggest to the honourable member that the important question to be resolved is the determination of the most advantageous form of establishment to continue operations presently performed by the Fish Board. The committee which has been established for this purpose is seen by the Government to be ideally composed so as to be small enough to deal with the topic in an expeditious manner and representative of sufficiently broad interest to ensure that adequate

cover is given to the main aspects involved. Non-participation of the Minister or those departmental officers presently involved in the administration of the board will facilitate the acceptance of it by interested groups as possessing an approach which is uninfluenced by past discussions or administrative experiences. Whether or not there are other committees similarly constituted is not seen by the Government as important when compared with the importance of ensuring that the best possible solution is found to the problems entrusted to the committee.

30. HYGIENE, FOOD STORE TROLLEYS

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

What action is taken by local authorities to ensure the hygienic conditions of supermarket and food store trolleys which are provided for use by shoppers, with particular reference to those trolleys which contain seats for children?

Answer:—

The provisions of the Food Hygiene Regulations of 1976 cover the responsibility of occupiers of food establishment to maintain appliances at all times in a clean and sanitary condition and it is the responsibility of local authorities to implement these regulations. The cleanliness of trolleys provided in food establishments has never been the subject of complaint to this department and a survey did not reveal a problem in this area.

31. PACKAGING OF FOODSTUFFS

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

(1) What legal provisions exist in Queensland which require manufacturers of edible products or foodstuffs to (a) package or wrap their products, and (b) state the ingredients in the foodstuffs in question?

(2) What legal controls exist over products manufactured in other States and sold in Queensland?

Answers:—

(1) (a) With the exception of specific foods which of their very nature must be packaged in a particular manner, for instance, canned foods, pasteurised milk and carbonated beverages, there is no general requirement that all foods must be packaged at the place of manufacture. There is, however, a provision in the Food Hygiene Regulations of 1976 that all foods which are ordinarily consumed in the same state in which they are sold must be delivered to the purchaser in an

effective wrapper. This is subject to exception in the case of bread delivered to a home in a covered basket, food sold for individual consumption at an eating house and most fruit and vegetables.

(b) Regulation 77 of the Food and Drug Regulations requires food not covered by a specific standard to list the ingredients on the label. Legislation to cover all packaged foods has been drafted.

(2) The same controls as exist over foods manufactured in Queensland apply.

32. SAFETY STANDARD OF IMPORTED GOODS

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

(1) What consultation and co-operation takes place between Federal and State authorities on the question of the safety standard of imported goods?

(2) What redress is available under Queensland law against importers or retailers responsible for the import or sale of faulty goods?—

Answer:—

(1 & 2) The question asked by the honourable member is a very general one, and in fact a specific answer can only be provided to specific cases because of the various legal remedies that could be applied. However, for the information of the honourable member, I would make the following general comments:—

(a) In regard to therapeutic substances, officers of the Health Department are members of the National Therapeutic Goods Committee, which makes recommendations regarding standards to the National Health and Medical Research Council.

(b) A working party on testing and maintenance of electromedical equipment was formed under the Hospital and Allied Services Advisory Council to examine methods of implementing, on a nationwide basis, standards set by the Standards Association of Australia and is considering how this might be applied by the Commonwealth Department of Business and Consumer Affairs to imported goods. An officer of the Health Department is a member of this working party.

(c) The Drugs Standard Adopting Act 1976 deals with drug standards, and sections of the Health Act 1937-1979 and associated regulations cover a wide range of goods and substances.

(d) Whenever defective imported electrical articles are discovered, it is the practice of the State Electricity Commission to report the matter to the Commonwealth Customs Authority whereupon that authority takes the necessary action to ban their importation.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN MOSCOW OLYMPIC GAMES

Mr. CASEY: In asking a question of the Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation, I refer to the unanimous decision made yesterday by the Amateur Athletic Union of Australia, on a resolution submitted from Queensland, to send Australian athletes to the Moscow Olympic Games. In view of the imminence of the games and the very real concern of Australian sportsmen and sportswomen and, in many cases, their parents, as well as thousands of Australians hoping to attend the games, I ask: While condemning in the strongest terms the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, will the State Government join the majority of Australians and sporting organisations and now support Australian participation in the games? Will the Minister also undertake to recommend to Cabinet that pressure be applied for a similar change in stance by the Australian Government in Canberra, particularly as Queensland sporting organisations are helping to frame Australian policy on this matter, so that the planning and fundraising ventures now at a crucial stage can proceed unhindered by political interference?

Mr. I. J. GIBBS: That is a very long question which requires a great deal of research. I ask the honourable member to put it on notice.

Mr. CASEY: I would have thought the Minister would have had the facts on that matter at his fingertips. I shall place the question on notice.

VALUATION OF LAND HELD BY AUSTRALIAN PAPER MANUFACTURERS

Mr. CASEY: In asking a question of the Minister for Survey and Valuation, I refer to the question of which I gave notice on 18 March concerning the valuation of certain lands in the shires of Caboolture and Pine Rivers and his answer yesterday that it was not possible to calculate the percentages I sought without a great deal of work by his department. I now ask: How is he able to reconcile this evasion of the question asked by me on the grounds of the work and time involved when the reports of his department of 1978 and 1979 were lavish in their praise of its computerised service that is able to give such speedy service to real estate agents on all sorts of valuation matters and what is termed "maintenance of valuation roll", that should make the answers sought by me readily available? As it was obvious that yesterday the Minister had a prepared answer to my inquiries, which was discarded at the last moment in favour of an evasive answer, will he now provide the answers to the questions asked by myself on 18 March?

Mr. GREENWOOD: It would be quite right to say that the department's computerised service is probably the best in Australia, but it must be realised that there are limits even to that. It is steadily being improved at great cost to the Government; but to supplement that information with a great deal of tedious work at a time when the department is extremely busy conducting an investigation into the whole rating system is something which, quite frankly, I was not prepared to do at the time.

MOVEMENT AND SALE OF MEAT

Mr. BLAKE: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: Is it a fact that his department has approved a policy easing restrictions on the movement and sale of meat into and between declared abattoir areas? Does this represent a change in National Party policy and, if so, will the policy be extended to easing the existing restrictions on the movement and sale of milk between milk districts?

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The question calls upon the Minister to answer for the policy of a political party. That is not his province. If the question relates to the Minister's ministerial responsibilities, I will ask him to answer it.

Mr. BLAKE: I seek your guidance, Mr. Acting Speaker. If I said "with Government policy", would that be in order?

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Yes. The Minister may proceed.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I was going to say, Mr. Acting Speaker, that we do not talk of National Party policy or Liberal Party policy.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SULLIVAN: It is true that certain relaxations have been made relating to meat in the franchise areas. There is a very good reason for that. Under section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, meat can come here from other States, and certain meat-works wanted to get meat into franchise areas in provincial cities up the coast. We took that action because we wanted meat from cattle bred, grazed and slaughtered in Queensland to be available. That answers that part of the honourable member's question.

I do not believe that I should have to say what we do with milk. They are two different products. The Milk Board is looking after that, and the Meat Marketing Authority is looking after meat. If there are any changes relating to the movement of milk in this State, the honourable member will be advised in due course.

SUSPENSION OF SOLICITOR T. J. MELLIFONT

Mr. CASEY: I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: Is it not a fact that the system of justice has two very important fundamental requirements, firstly, that no man can be a judge in his own court and, secondly, that every person has a right to be heard? If so, did the Statutory Committee of the Queensland Law Society suspend solicitor T. J. Mellifont this morning without giving him or his legal counsel the right to be heard? On how many previous occasions, if any, has such a denial of justice occurred, and what rights of appeal does the person concerned actually have from such a decision?

Mr. LICKISS: I believe that the decision was handed down by the Queensland Law Society at 10 o'clock this morning. I have not been apprised of it and, therefore, feel that I cannot comment. If the honourable member will place the question on notice, I will answer it in due course.

Mr. CASEY: I do so accordingly.

FIRST-AID INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS

Mr. LESTER: I ask the Minister for Education: Has any action been taken as the result of constant representations I have made since 1975 to have regular first-aid classes conducted in Queensland schools?

Mr. BIRD: On several occasions the honourable member for Peak Downs has made representations to me on the matter of first-aid instruction in schools. In fact, one of his first representations to me after his election to Parliament was on this subject. My departmental officers regarded it as a most important one and immediately proceeded to draw up a first-aid curriculum. It has been introduced into schools and will be extended progressively. I commend the member for Peak Downs for his initiative and also for his continued interest in the education of our young people throughout Queensland.

IWASAKI TOURIST PROJECT

Mr. HARTWIG: I ask the Premier: Following the recent announcement in Tokyo of an agreement between the Iwasaki Sangyo company and the Watkins company, can the Premier advise the House when a start will be made on the construction of the first stage of the Yeppoon international tourist resort?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: As I understand it, a contract has been let to the Watkins company and work has been commenced on the construction of roads and the preparation of the site. I believe that building construction will commence in April and that something like 22 weeks has been allowed for completion. The contractors

have indicated that they can comply with that condition. The value of the contract is just under \$3 million.

On the question of whether Mr. Iwasaki is buying more land, I have indicated to him—and he has accepted it as I understand it—that his buying additional land cannot be considered at the present time. Honourable members opposite, who adopt a racist attitude, have been peddling that argument. During my visit to Japan a couple of weeks ago I spoke to Mr. Iwasaki. Of course, the main point is that Mr. Iwasaki is complying with the terms of his franchise agreement and has met all the requirements under that agreement. If honourable members opposite will only be fair and decent and stop displaying a racist attitude then we will stop all the rumours that are so unnecessary, unfair and unjust. The first building contract has been let.

DISALLOWANCE OF QUESTION

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) having given notice of a question—

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! That question is ruled out of order.

CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS (COASTAL WATERS) BILL

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

Debate resumed from 11 March (see p. 2623) on Mr. Bjelke-Petersen's motion—

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

Mr. CASEY (Mackay—Leader of the Opposition) (12.5 p.m.): As was indicated by the Premier during the introduction of this Bill into Parliament, this legislation is the result of agreement which was reached at various Premiers' Conferences and other meetings over the last two years. Its primary purpose is to request the Commonwealth to pass a Bill to extend the legislative powers of the States so that their laws will apply to the adjacent coastal waters and, in some special cases, even beyond. This area has been one of great confusion, in recent years, brought about mainly because of the old Commonwealth-State rights argument that seems to have been with us since Federation.

In most cases the Queensland Government—being no different, I would add, to most of the other State Governments—tends to want to blame the Commonwealth Government for everything. This is a rather unusual case in that it is the exact opposite—they are going to get something from the Commonwealth. In the case of Queensland, of course, it is far more important than it is for any other State because any offshore legislation in Queensland, particularly within that area of the Great Barrier Reef region, becomes controversial, especially in a State where the

present Government is so keen to grant overseas consortiums access to our natural resources irrespective of the feelings of the people of the State.

There is always a danger that such legislation as we are currently discussing can be administered in a manner which is not in the best interests of the majority of the people of the State. Irrespective of the Premier's attempts to say that there is nothing in the legislation, there are a number of unanswered questions regarding future operations offshore of mining companies, oil exploration companies and even fishing companies, which must pose doubts in the minds of Queenslanders. I would make it quite clear that the Labor Party in Queensland believes that these controls should be in the hands of the State Government. However, with the track record of our present Queensland Government, the administration of this legislation will be closely watched by the Opposition.

In the main, the legislation covers only up to the three-mile limit, or further in specially declared cases. Just as an example, let me indicate that there is a strong possibility that the Rundle shale-oil deposits extend under the sea. There has also been the stated intention on so many occasions by the Queensland Government to allow drilling for oil and gas in the Great Barrier Reef region. For these very reasons alone, it is going to be necessary, once the proposed legislation is passed by the Commonwealth, for further mirror legislation to be undertaken by all States in relation to mining operations, or a standard mining code for any offshore mining proposals.

We have already seen that the extension of the control of fishing industries by the Commonwealth to the 200-mile limit is having a backlash in this State with the State Government's attempts to sell the Fish Board assets along the coast, in the main, to operators who want to use them only to service the facilities for foreign fishing consortiums.

We can always anticipate that, because of the attitude of the present Government, there will also be controversy surrounding any decisions in relation to offshore mining or drilling within the three-mile limit. Of course, the constitutional argument will not stop but will merely be transferred from the high-water mark to the three-mile mark. We must also remember that this three-mile limit extends around all of the offshore islands in Queensland, which has more of them than any other State, and at least those parts of the Great Barrier Reef that are above high-water mark. So the people of Queensland should not believe for one moment that this proposed legislation is going to solve all of the constitutional offshore problems.

Hopefully, what it will do, though, is finalise problems which relate to ports, harbours and dredging which are offshore, and I would instance, as an example, the ownership of the Lucinda Point jetty, which extends 5½ km out to sea.

Finally, I must correct one false impression that the Premier tried to give in his introductory speech, which is that Queensland was leading in this legislation. In actual fact, it has already been passed by Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales and, I understand, some of the other States, so we are really almost the last in the field.

Motion (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 and 2, and schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Bjelke-Petersen, by leave, read a third time.

SOIL CONSERVATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

Debate resumed from 11 March (see p. 2602) on Mr. Sullivan's motion—

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

Mr. BLAKE (Bundaberg) (12.12 p.m.): The Bill before the House is a very important one, not so much because of what it conveys but because the control of soil erosion is a very important subject indeed.

Soil is our most irreplaceable asset. I am afraid modern society took too long to learn that fact. The problem of soil erosion naturally grew with the development of agriculture and pastures, and with overstocking of the land. Some landholders were aware of the problem and cared about the state of erosion of the land, but others were both unaware and uncaring.

Awareness of the need for soil conservation has increased rapidly in recent times. In 1951 in Queensland only 2,005 acres of eroded farmland were being stabilised. In 1964 action was taken to protect 90,144 acres. At that time it was accepted that over 2.3 million acres of the State's valuable farmlands were adversely affected by soil erosion. I do not know the present figure, but that shows the magnitude of the problem back in 1964-65. Because of the extensive agriculture that is now carried on, that figure may be even greater today.

Parts of the Soil Conservation Act 1951 worked well and its provisions were carried into the 1965 Act. One must expect changing circumstances and the lessons learnt in practice and administration to be incorporated in a Bill with the intention of updating and increasing the efficiency of soil protection practices in the 1980s.

I wish to spend some time on the development of soil conservation measures, because I think that communication and

understanding between the farmer, the grazier and the soil conservation authority needs further explaining, and anything that can contribute towards communication and understanding is most worth while.

I want to make it quite clear that I am not doing this by way of criticism of the authority or the farmers. I am trying to stay with the purposes of this Bill, which is to bring about a greater understanding of the application of soil conservation measures. I agree with what the Minister said in introducing the Bill, that is, that the prime responsibility for the conservation of soil lies with the landholder. Even so, the Government has to provide the leadership and the expertise that is necessary to meet the problems of the day.

Expertise is something that is developed. Initially it was lacking in soil conservation methods at both private and departmental levels. Even today there are instances of uncaring land-owners; but even if they are caring, it does not automatically impart to them the expertise that is necessary. I have seen in my lifetime shocking land practices carried out by well-meaning but unskilled individuals. Some honourable members are aware, no doubt, of the old practice of ploughing in wash-outs—gathering in soil, filling in the wash-outs and levelling off in an attempt to rectify gully erosion. What inevitably happened was that at the next downpour there were bigger, greater but not better wash-outs.

A matter of a couple of decades ago no attempts were made in normal farming practice to control run-off from higher areas that was affecting pastures and land in lower areas. Even as a child I wondered why so many landholders did not bother to divert water in a sensible manner so that it did not cause as much destruction of what was very valuable land. I might refer to the fact that Newton, when an apple fell on his head, knew that the laws of gravity could not be ignored. When it comes to soil conservation measures, no longer can we afford to ignore the forces that water, wind and gravity can exert in wreaking havoc on arable land.

The knowledge that has been acquired and that must still be acquired is not magically inherited by Government departments or by departmental officers. As with any other art or science, it has to be painstakingly acquired whether by private individuals or by officialdom. Devastation can result and has resulted from official ignorance or incompetence, just as from private ignorance or incompetence, however well-intentioned the efforts. Put bluntly, officialdom has to learn like anybody else. Like anybody else, it has made mistakes. The difference is that those mistakes are resented more than are private mistakes. A person will ignore or excuse his own mistakes, but he will not excuse somebody else's.

I recall some of what were probably the first soil conservation measures carried out, particularly in the Isis area. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Jasper Ladewig for the part he played in pioneering many of our soil conservation practices. Like private individuals, at that time he was experimenting and working completely in the dark. Soon after that, the first soil conservation programme, or anti-erosion programme as it was called, was put into effect in the Isis district on steep cane land. Unfortunately, there was an unseasonally heavy fall of rain overnight. After the devastation caused by the breaking away of contour banks, the land was in even worse order than it had been after the years of neglect in ordinary farming practices.

The second experiment that I saw carried out in the Isis area had a similar effect. Of course, it was necessary to learn what gradient was required for the run-off drains and how far apart they needed to be, and that was a matter for experimentation. I saw another farm more seriously eroded as a result of an overnight downpour before the earthworks in a well-intentioned experiment had been consolidated than it had been eroded in 70 or 80 years of normal farming. That is why there has been such great difficulty in achieving good public relations between farmers and soil conservation authorities, and, unfortunately, that difficulty still exists to a large extent.

I have seen on my own property some of the factors that contribute to failures in soil conservation programmes. Failures have occurred largely because of the objection by landholders to contour banks or earthworks sufficient to do the job properly. Banks consisting of loose dirt 10 inches high were thrown up on my property. I said to the conservation officers, "Let me know when those banks are finished, because I want to consolidate them with a very heavy rubber-tyred tractor so that they will hold." I was told that the banks were complete. As I said, the banks were 10 inches high; but in places there were irregularities of at least 5 inches in the soil, which meant that the contour bank was then only 5 inches high. When heavy rain occurred, not only did water run through those irregularities but soil infiltrated the contour drains. Consequently, water went straight over the banks. That occurred only a few years ago, so obviously mistakes that had caused many failures over the years were continuing to be made.

I am not being critical of damage that is caused when an unseasonal downpour occurs before soil conservation work can be consolidated. That is something over which one has no control. However, possibly to appease farmers who do not want suitable earthworks on their properties, mistakes made in the past are being repeated. I hope that the lessons of the last couple of years—and I was speaking particularly of

a couple of years ago—are learnt, that soil conservation authorities have a great deal of expertise, and that farmers can now have a great deal of faith in the ability of those authorities to protect their valuable properties.

Many of the provisions in the Bill are very necessary, particularly those relating to notice of planning, earthworks, etc., and for objection and compensation. The greatest need is for co-operation and understanding between the landholder and the officers of the Soil Conservation Authority and between local authorities, river improvement trusts, drainage boards, and so on. The successful implementation of most schemes, whether for private or community benefit, often depends on the integration of facilities and the good will and co-operation of all the relevant authorities. Once a person begins moving or diverting water, he quickly learns that the water he moves or diverts affects somebody else, and all the authorities mentioned in the Bill are a necessary part of a sensible programme implemented by a trust, an authority or a soil erosion district, and I commend the provisions of the Bill relating to that aspect.

When land is involved, the area of public relations between the various organisations is indeed a sensitive one. Animals in their natural state lay claim to and fight for their territory. By instinct, dogs, wolves and other animals mark out their territorial boundaries, often by creating smells around the perimeter of their territory. The same can be said of human beings. Many have the habit, when somebody crosses into their territory, of creating a stink.

Mr. Hansen: Their hackles rise.

Mr. BLAKE: Indeed they do. So I take my hat off to the conservation officers. They are met with this natural instinct in people to resent interference, even though in many cases it is warranted.

In many instances, the task carried out by these conservation officers is a thankless one. It is, of course, a vital one. Certainly, in some instances, their opinions and expertise are sought, but when an area is declared a soil erosion hazard area they often have to carry out their work without the approval of the landholder. Their role is not always fully appreciated. I have said to some departmental officers, "You deserve appreciation on earth, but I am afraid that you will have to wait until you get to heaven for your rewards."

The intention to create the Soil Conservation Authority as a body corporate comprising four members is a good one. It is intended that the authority will be made up of the Director-General of Primary Industries as chairman, the Director of the Division of Land Utilisation, the Director of Soil Conservation and the Commissioner of Water Resources. Those officers perform inter-related and vital functions in the care of our land resources.

I have been pleased to see some of the land-use studies that were carried out. The departmental officers involved, with their knowledge and expertise, have brought forward sound plans for both the present and the future use of land. It is no good our talking about soil conservation and future land use unless these officers are involved in the protection of our soil.

Local authorities that do not already have authority to control the construction of levee banks after an area has been declared will be given such authority. This amendment is a sensible one, and I am sure it will be supported by all honourable members.

A further amendment incorporates provisions enabling local authorities and other statutory bodies to accept responsibility for the implementation and maintenance of community works. This is essential. Most of us who have had anything to do with local authority or community work have come up against the practice of passing the buck between departments. They say, "That is not our responsibility."

I have been confronted with this problem in the Bundaberg area. Farmers are coping drainage water from a drainage system that was the result of an agreement entered into years ago with the Bundaberg City Council. The terms of that ancient agreement are not being observed. Landholders have been told that, because in many instances the ownership of the land has changed hands, the agreement is no longer valid. I do not know whether that is a fact or not.

It would be excellent if the Minister examined some of the old drainage agreements between local authorities and landholders and discovered whether it is true that, simply because land has sold to different landholders, the agreements are no longer valid. I know that a blanket principle could not apply and that it would depend on the agreement and, quite often, on the small print in the agreement.

There are problems where local authorities admit that they know their responsibilities quite well in relation to the movement of water and nobody else knows what their responsibilities are. As land and communities develop, particularly in urban areas where there is more run-off water—and sensible development needs drainage and the water has to go somewhere—people will be disadvantaged more and more as time goes on. As we solve our soil erosion problems and residential drainage problems, rural people will be placed more and more at risk as the volume of water increases.

The Minister said that it is a matter of some regret that no soil conservation trusts have been constituted willingly or voluntarily up to date. I agree that this is unfortunate, but possibly the position will not alter on a voluntary basis in the future. I am afraid

that most of us, if we are left as individuals to face up to a problem, consider that the solution to our problem ends at the boundary line of our property. It is essential that some alternative to the trust system be initiated. The Opposition supports that principle.

Members of the Opposition were concerned at the reduction, from three months to 30 days, in the time in which people can lodge objections to plans, etc., of an authority or any authorised person with regard to soil conservation, drainage, flood mitigation and so on. I must admit that, if the spirit of the intention of the Bill is carried out, as was stated by the Minister, we will have no objection because the reduction from three months to 30 days is designed so that the present inspection period of three months does not remain mandatory regardless of the simplicity or complexity of the plan. I agree that if there is simplicity and no great objection, the matter should be dealt with quickly because many of the programmes, as I have seen myself, are not done seasonally. Nobody expects unseasonal rains but we do get them. If the works cannot be carried out under sensible seasonal conditions, in many cases they are bound to fail. So we do accept the reduction in time and we hope that the period of 30 days will be extended for the benefit of landholders or other people who might object to a complex scheme or a scheme of great magnitude.

An objection panel of three is to be appointed, with two representatives coming from the advisory committees. As has been pointed out, advisory committees are operating only in the Downs area. I hope that advisory committees are constituted quickly in other areas, or we will not have from the advisory committees two delegates who are able to advise in areas that have local and special problems which are peculiar to those areas.

Progression of knowledge through experience is natural. That applies more so with soil erosion control measures. I believe that knowledge will increase with the intensity of the work. It will also need to grow with the urgency of the work, and there is a great urgency to protect our lands from further erosion and destruction. No doubt there will be even further amendments after this Bill has been passed as we continue to progress with the very important function of providing expert guidance and, yes, even finance for the purpose of preserving our soil. Because we are only caretakers during our generation we have to realise that it is our responsibility, and particularly the Government's responsibility, to safeguard our invaluable soil for future generations. The Opposition has no objection to any specific parts of the Bill.

Mr. BOOTH (Warwick) (12.36 p.m.): I want to make a few comments on the Bill, but not in a critical sense. Firstly, I congratulate the Minister for introducing these amendments because I believe that

without a doubt soil is our greatest regenerating resource. From time to time it is suggested that our minerals are of great benefit to the economy, and the mining industry is sometimes referred to as a primary industry, but minerals are not a self-generating resource. Once we begin to dig them up and ship them overseas or use them in this country there must come a day when the supply runs out. But the subject we are discussing today is different.

Over the years I have heard it said that irrespective of what is done to the soil from an agricultural point of view, eventually there will be a serious deterioration in its quality or it will reach the stage where it is of not much use, but that takes a long time. Most of us have seen soil brought into production and, as was mentioned by the honourable member for Bundaberg, we have also seen it deteriorate. He suggested that some of this deterioration could have been avoided, and I am prepared to agree with that statement, but first of all we have to know that we have a problem, and it took some time before people could be convinced that we did have a problem with soil erosion.

It took an even longer period before we heard suggestions that there could be a remedy to the problem. The remedy that we have come up with, the banking or contouring of soil, is probably the best that we will ever be able to find, but nevertheless soil conservation is not an exact science. We are still learning. I suppose that is the reason why the honourable member for Bundaberg was able to point to attempts to prevent soil erosion and say that they had failed to some extent. When we are dealing with an inexact science all we can say is that both the technical and practical men are learning all the time.

When we look at soil conservation we have to admit that although there have been advances, it is still an inexact science. In addition, some advances that might have taken place have been hindered to a considerable extent by lack of finance. Quite often one talks to farmers who say, "Yes, I know I have a problem; I would like to do something about it, but I lack the necessary finance." While I am prepared to again agree with the honourable member for Bundaberg that those of us who farm the soil are only caretakers, I must point out that it is a national problem and that we should formulate some national policy on the establishment of permanent works to ensure that the best possible job is done. I am hoping that in years to come society in general will accept that they have a responsibility for soil conservation works and that responsibility for it will be accepted at the national level. I hope, too, that the State Government will give greater support to that policy as time goes by. But the initiation of this type of policy has to be done slowly, and so I am prepared to accept that what we are doing today is probably the best that can be expected.

I will now deal with the Bill itself. I thoroughly approve of many of the amendments, particularly the one which deals with the streamlining of the appeals procedure. I am not quite so happy about the constitution of the Soil Conservation Authority. That concerns me because I believe it would have been better to have included one or two practical men selected from the membership of the advisory committees. I know that there were some difficulties in this regard. As was pointed out by the member for Bundaberg, these advisory committees are not in every area of the State. I, too, hope that they can be introduced into other areas because I think that they have been a great success.

Whilst most of the members of this new authority will be technical men and will have areas of responsibility that should tie in with the new authority, I am a little worried about whether we are getting an authority that is purely bureaucratic. It would be much better if there were practical men on the authority. It is not always a matter of what one has to do; sometimes it is a matter of what one can afford to do, and other times it is a matter of what can be done. However, I accept the fact that we are to have a new authority.

Other than expressing that rather mild criticism, I think it will be best to wait and see what happens. It might turn out to be an excellent authority. It might work well and, if it does, I will be one of the first to admit that I was wrong. As I have said, at the moment I would like to see more practical people on the authority.

I now turn to works of general benefit. My area is one of the worst affected by soil erosion, and I think that these works of general benefit are one of our greatest problems. Sometimes a farmer at the bottom end of a drainage system has to accept drainage water from seven, eight, nine or 10 farms. He may be expected to build a waterway that is much wider and deeper and has a greater capacity than the waterway of a farmer further up the bank. One of the reasons why there are difficulties in getting this work done as quickly as we would like is the extra cost involved for farms further down the bank.

I am not suggesting that the Minister has not tried to get more money for this work—I am sure he has—but if ever additional Federal funds are made available, I think that they could be applied to the greatest advantage to these works of general benefit. What is done by local authorities or others in the soil conservation field is mainly governed by money. We all know that because of an escalation in the price of fuel and other commodities, the cost of combating soil erosion will increase. So financial considerations are particularly important when considering the works of general benefit.

I am not quite as critical of humanity as the honourable member for Bundaberg was when he suggested that perhaps we have

not moved as quickly as we can or that perhaps we have been a little bit selfish. Sometimes we are a little bit selfish but, by and large, I think that most farmers do their best in this area. They say to themselves, "Yes, I would love to do this, but the cost is beating me." I suggest that if any additional Federal funds are made available, we could apply them to the works of general benefit.

It is probably only in the last 25 years that we have had the equipment to do this work. Prior to that, we could bank but we could not make efficient banks. I commend the member for Bundaberg for suggesting that there is not much point in building a bank unless it is capable of coping with the run-off.

The soil conservation officers with whom I have dealt usually suggest that a bank be built so that it will carry the run-off. In my particular area there is always an argument about the spacing of the banks. We have been leaving out a bank. I have always supported that idea. However, during periods of great stress—and something like this happened in the electorate of the member for Cunningham recently—the practice of leaving out a bank had a detrimental effect. So we have to consider whether a bank should be left out. Of course, if more banks are built, there are more difficulties in working the land, particularly in harvesting grain. A number of matters have to be considered. Certainly there is a problem.

I wish to say something about the advisory committees in my area where they are working extremely well. They are to be commended, and perhaps should be tried in other areas. Their initial input into the problem of soil conservation has done nothing but good. They are dedicated people; they have to be because they do not receive any great remuneration for their work. In that respect I pay a tribute to those people who have accepted positions on these committees. They also have to fight elections. I commend those people who put their names forward and were unsuccessful; at least they were prepared to accept responsibility. We can be proud of the work that has been done, and we should be happy in the knowledge that we have people who are prepared to do voluntary work and use their expertise to help their neighbours. All in all, that is to be commended.

In the streamlining of the objection process, I think the Minister has adopted a scheme that will work. He has suggested that three people be appointed, two of them to be from the advisory committees. That will mean that when an objection is lodged those who hear it will have practical knowledge, and the objector will have faith in them. Because of that the findings should be accepted, and I think they will be accepted.

I commend the idea of greater consultation between the Soil Conservation Authority and landholders. That is a good idea. I am not suggesting at the moment that we lack

consultation to any great extent, but I think it is improving, and that is probably a step in the right direction.

The proposed tribunal to hear objections will probably get rid of a lot of problems that I have—and I am sure other members have—of writing to the Minister and suggesting that he send certain officers to look at a location to see if the work proposed is in the best interests. I am not so foolish as to suggest that we will be left without objections. When persons are not satisfied there will still be objections, but certainly the objections will be looked at by people with expertise. The Minister's officers will appear at these hearings. People of practical knowledge will hear the objections, and I understand that an independent arbitrator will be chairman of the tribunal. Great steps forward have been made in that regard.

I have no need to speak any longer on the amendments to the Soil Conservation Act other than to say that I will continue to watch these areas. I believe the amendments will be in the best interests of soil conservation in this State. Hopefully, in years to come we will be able to look back and say that these amendments were for the betterment of the State. I certainly believe that will be so.

Mr. Prest: The day before Mr. Sullivan went to London, too.

Mr. BOOTH: Wherever the Minister goes, he learns a lot. Not only does he learn a fair bit, but he brings that knowledge back with him, and that is to be commended.

Mr. Prest: He is going there to stay.

Mr. BOOTH: I am not interested in the Minister's journeys at the moment. He is such a nice guy that I am not going to hit him with them.

Mr. HANSEN (Maryborough) (12.49 p.m.): I speak in support of the Bill. Soil conservation probably has as much importance to Queensland as water conservation. Perhaps we have been a little slower to introduce these measures than some of the other States but that is because we have not had the violent examples, if I can call them that, of the mallee areas in north-western Victoria and South Australia, which were affected by water, wind and salt. Some of those areas were completely denuded by incorrect practices. Queensland is also fortunate that it did not have the rabbit problem, which contributed largely to soil erosion in southern States.

There has been a growing awareness of soil conservation measures. We are indebted to both the Commonwealth and State Governments for the document "A Basis for Soil Conservation Policy in Australia". That has been prepared very comprehensively, and it gives people an awareness of their responsibility. As the honourable member for Warwick said, we are users of the soil for only a certain time. We should be doing our best to conserve it. It is not a renewable

asset. As he said, we can use it, but there is no more of it being made. That is certainly so. Therefore, we ought to ensure that we preserve what we have. It is true that some of the worst effects of erosion have been felt on some of our best soils.

"A Basis for Soil Conservation Policy in Australia" says—

"To be effective, the integration of soil conservation and land degradation control in general with other land resource policies should be supported by research in the following four main areas:

- the mechanisms of land degradation and the means of combating it;
- a broader information and data base concerning the characteristics of land as a resource;
- the effects of land use on land degradation, particularly soil loss, and the effects of degradation on fertility and productivity, water resources and environmental quality; and
- strategies to relate soil conservation to the social and economic circumstances of the individual and the type of productive activity undertaken."

As the honourable member for Bundaberg says, people at times take umbrage when someone tells them that they are abusing the soil by overstocking. It is very hard to tell someone who has bought stock in anticipation of a good season, only to find he is facing a bad season, how he should be managing his land. However, I believe that generally there is a greater recognition of the problem. There is grazing country that has been held by the one family for generations. Usually, those people manage their properties well, because they are not faced with loan interest and redemption payments. On the other hand, when people purchase a property they find that their costs of operation mount up around their ears. They try to get the utmost out of the land, with the intention of not continuing such practices for long once they get their heads above water. However, as we all know, that does not always happen; the practice continues.

I believe that there is strong argument for Government involvement in soil conservation. Society requires protection from the transmitted effects of land degradation through erosion. Governments must be concerned when soil erosion causes damage to public assets or financial losses to other land-users for which it is difficult to apportion blame.

There is also a case for Government concern where adverse effects may be expected in the future as a result of present land management. The difference between land-user and Government responsibility for soil conservation is that, whereas it is the land-user's responsibility to protect the land he is using, it is the Government's responsibility to ensure that he does so.

A measure such as this, by setting up an authority, allows people to combine for the common benefit. I notice that the expressions used now are "community works" and "owner works". I agree with the remarks of the honourable member for Warwick on this. I can recall that some people felt that, because they were on lower land, they were copping the lot; that they carried a greater responsibility for disbursement of run-off water. I believe that at present the authority has the power to instruct land-owners on the use of their land—what land can be cultivated and what land cannot. While that advice is accepted with good grace in some areas, there are those who tend to regard it as an intrusion on their rights. Nevertheless, the common benefit must be taken into account. If there are to be long-term benefits from the land, something must be done now. The problem affects both the landholder at a particular point and the people further downstream.

The Government is assisting in the construction of dams to provide water not only for farmers but also for people in various municipalities. However, there are many examples throughout Queensland of the capacity of dams being reduced by silting, and that should be a matter of concern to all of us.

Soil conservation is very important to Queensland, and any measure that creates greater awareness of the problems and gives people more incentive to participate in soil conservation schemes is to be commended. The more qualified people who are available to advise on these problems, the greater the benefit will be to the community generally.

I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr. ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (12.56 p.m.): Before I comment on the provisions contained in the Bill, let me say that I believe that the Government has a responsibility to assist landholders to conserve their soil. If we abrogate that responsibility, we will stand condemned in the eyes of the next generation for not achieving some measure of control. Personally, I would hang my head in shame if I were to depart from this Assembly without having achieved my objectives relative to soil-erosion hazard areas in my electorate.

I pay tribute to the officers of the Minister's department in my area for the job they did in connection with the great problem that arose in the Clifton and Cambooya Shires to which the honourable member for Warwick referred earlier. Two intense tropical-type storms, which, fortunately, are not usual in the area, resulted in a tremendous disaster. The damage they caused was immense. Officers of the Minister's department were on the job quickly and, with Tom McVeigh and me, waded round amongst the damage and in the mud and slush. They did a fantastically good job of recording what had occurred, particularly as it related

to the natural disasters side of things. They produced a document that gave everyone to whom we were trying to get the message across a very real understanding of what had happened and the magnitude of the problem. So often one takes a submission to a Government department and it is knocked back, basically because it is just another submission. Someone says, "Oh, yes, another one." In this case there was a pictorial record which, even in about a minute and a half, got the message across. It was a practical example of what can be done by people who know what they are about and who are prepared to respond to a challenge and act quickly. I again congratulate the officers on their work, because I believe that it will be instrumental in having what occurred there recognised as a natural disaster.

I strongly support some of the proposed amendments. The recommendation for the change in the authority is very important. I take on board the comments that were made by my colleague the honourable member for Warwick, who had some misgivings about it. All of us felt, I think, that there may be some problems in that respect, but basically I supported the suggestion because it was put up by the area group committees. That is very important, because, as the honourable member for Warwick indicated, those committees are democratically elected and have the support of all landholders.

[*Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.*]

Mr. ELLIOTT: In touching on the role of the new authority, I restate that the whole idea of its construction was generated by the area group committees, which are democratically elected by the people in their areas. As they are democratically elected, we should be prepared to support any submission they put forward.

As I said before lunch, the honourable member for Warwick had some misgivings about the proposal. I am sure all of us would agree that we should give it a chance to work. We should be prepared to examine it after six months, one year or two years to determine whether or not it is the best way of approaching the whole matter. If it is evident that there is need for landholder representation on the authority, we should be prepared to look at it again. I do not consider that such representation is necessary, and obviously the area group committees do not think it is necessary.

What we are after is a streamlined approach. Where there is an overall drainage plan for a soil erosion hazard declared area, we need speedy action and co-ordination between departments. We do not want the situation in which a person sitting on the authority says, "I am sorry, but I cannot make a decision. We will have to go back to the head of the Water Resources Commission and ask him to examine the position." It is essential that the commissioner himself or his nominee make the

decision. This whole thing goes up the spout unless we are prepared to make decisions on the spot at such meetings.

The amendment that will give local authorities control over levee banks is commendable. A local authority in the Minister's electorate has requested this. I would be prepared to go along with this practical idea. Works of general benefit are very important. In fact, they are a key factor in this whole equation.

We in the soil erosion hazard areas of Cunningham believe that up till now the lack of local authority control over levee banks has been one of the inhibiting factors that prevented the whole programme from getting off the ground. There has been too much confusion as to who was responsible for works of general benefit and who would pick up the tab.

I call for greater participation by the State Government in the funding of works of general benefit. After all, it is not the landholder alone who benefits; the whole community benefits. Naturally, the landholders will benefit, but so, too, will local authorities, through less siltation of roads, and the Railway Department, with fewer problems where railway lines cross roads. So it is important that we re-examine the role the Government now plays in relation to works of general benefit. It is obvious that no-one was prepared to come into the trusts. The present proposal is a much more acceptable solution. It has the support of the area group committees and we must go along with it.

I shall now deal with the period for advertising. Some people have said, "What on earth are you doing? You are reducing to 30 days the period for which a plan has to be advertised." In fact, the Bill provides for not less than 30 days. The reason for it is that a decision should be made as quickly as possible in a simple matter. It should not be tied up with red tape and cause endless arguments over something that nobody is very concerned about.

If there is a real problem in a catchment area and it involves a tremendous amount of argument, that is a different matter. As an example, I refer to the Linthorpe Valley outfall catchment in my area. The decision in that matter will be very contentious. People will argue both ways and everyone, particularly if he will be affected by the decision, will consider that he has an instant solution. Everyone will want the water to go somewhere else. In such a case, people will be given much more time in which to lodge an objection and to put up an alternative proposal. This is the consultation process at its best. It is a very practicable approach.

The honourable member for Warwick and other Government members were responsible for the principle relating to appeals. There will be an appeal panel of three people, two of whom will be area group committee members. This is good because, as they

will be democratically elected, they will have the acceptance and support of the people in their area. They will have the expertise and experience to understand the problem.

It is fairly obvious that we must be careful not to allow somebody to be a member of the appeal committee if he lives close to the person who is appealing. Nobody would like to be put in the position of having to sit in judgment on his neighbour's problem. This could present a personality problem. Such a person would be in an invidious position.

The members of the panel should be people associated with an A.G.C. in the declared soil erosion hazard area but who live far enough away from the appellant not to be personally involved with him, whilst at the same time sufficiently knowing and understanding the problem in the catchment area to be able to make an objective decision.

I support the Bill. I ask that a realistic approach be made to funding. I would be the first to agree with the honourable member for Maryborough and other Opposition members that some landholders have not done enough themselves. We must all agree with that, but that does not preclude our doing everything possible. We are not doing anything like enough in funding to overcome this problem. We should hang our heads in shame if we do not overcome the problem.

Mr. MOORE (Windsor) (2.25 p.m.): It has been agreed that the second-reading stage would allow for a fairly wide-ranging debate, so I might never get to the Bill.

It is well known that agriculturists throughout the world use only about 6 in. of topsoil. There is no doubt that we just cannot afford to lose that to erosion. I have to agree with the remarks made by the honourable members for Bundaberg and Warwick, but I sometimes wonder about the increase in bureaucratic control envisaged by this Bill and just what happens when we appoint somebody to run another person's farm. It is true that with the basaltic soils on the Darling Downs there are fences built on top of fences, and that 9-ft. posts supporting fences around cattle-yards have only about 3 ft. left poking out of the topsoil as a result of the effects of soil erosion. This is a problem that occurs mostly with agricultural land, but it does turn up in other places, particularly in trap-rock country. Erosion is caused by sheep watering. They erode the creek bank, and once grasses have gone erosion becomes a problem. But it occurs only in isolated areas. Our biggest soil erosion problems occur on land used for agricultural purposes.

There are all sorts of theories being put forward on how to prevent soil erosion. One is to leave the stubble and the straw on the land so that it will bind the soil. A lot more research has to be done into the effects of erosion on various types of soil. For

instance, when rain falls on the self-mulching black soil the dampness goes through to the subsoil, the topsoil becomes friable, and then along comes a storm and the topsoil all ends up on a neighbour's property. It is damned hard to overcome that problem.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: Where did you gain your expertise on soil erosion?

Mr. MOORE: If the honourable member looks at my Air Force discharge papers, he will see my occupation listed as "farmer."

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: They tell me your knowledge stops at your own fenceline.

Mr. MOORE: I have 26 perches out at Dorrington, so that ought to make me an expert on this subject.

Mr. Underwood: Is that nightsoil or day-soil?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Row): Order! I ask the honourable member for Woiston to withdraw that remark.

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: I deny it. I never made that remark.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Ipswich West, then.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I withdraw.

Mr. MOORE: I have a suggestion to make about protecting the topsoil after it has been cultivated and brought up to a certain tilth. For instance, if a farmer is planting potatoes he ploughs a certain tilth, whereas if he is growing corn or maize he can get away with a lower tilth. Some time ago, when I heard the suggestion of leaving the stubble so that the soil could be more easily brought up to a proper friable quality without putting the various cultivators through it, I wondered whether officers of the Department of Primary Industries had given any thought to the idea of planting wheat, oats or canary seed after the soil had been brought to the stage where a specific crop was to be planted but there was insufficient moisture in the soil or it was not quite the right time to plant that crop. The temporary crop could be allowed to grow to a height sufficient to hold the soil together and then sprayed with a weedicide and the other crop planted underneath at the appropriate time.

I know that problems arise with crops binding the tines of implements, but surely we could introduce something such as a coulter running ahead to do a cut when the drill is operating so that binding would not occur. I know that would be expensive, but it is damned expensive to replace soil that has washed away. Today we are talking about shorter working hours and higher costs per man-hour. There is virtually no automation in primary industry.

Reference has been made to subsidies and to the fact that the nation is subsidising the food that is produced here. If the payment

of a subsidy helps to retain the soil, then the public simply have to pay the bill. We can justify paying a subsidy to the farmers who are producing food in these most difficult areas. The areas that are most subjected to soil erosion are those that have Downs-type soil—fertile, self-mulching, basaltic soil.

Mr. Underwood: Have you ever heard of sheet erosion?

Mr. MOORE: The honourable member was probably short-sheeted.

Mr. Underwood: You obviously have never been to the Darling Downs.

Mr. MOORE: I had better contain myself. There are schoolchildren in the public gallery and I do not want to be the subject of a letter in the newspaper. I shall speak privately to the honourable member on another occasion.

There is also another problem with soil erosion. We are building dams across the very few waterways and catchment areas that we have in this dry nation. In America, dams that once held hundreds of thousands—in fact, millions—of acre-feet are silted up and hold practically no water now and are being dredged. That is an indictment of another good reason why we have to do something about soil erosion.

It has been said that we are the caretakers of the land. No responsible member of Parliament would want to feel that in his time here he did not do his utmost to maintain the land so that when he leaves it to his children or grandchildren it will be in as good condition as it was when he received it.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr. MOORE: Is the honourable member making a speech or am I?

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: You are making a pretty poor effort of it.

Mr. MOORE: I do not make any claim to being a great speaker, but I am always worried a bit about bureaucracy. If we hand over power to a body and that power is handled well, that is admirable, but personalities enter into the matter and there are all sorts of harassment. I just hope that that does not occur with the body that we are presently setting up.

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (2.34 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions. I say to the honourable member for Windsor that, from the look on the faces of the young boys from St. Peter's College in the public gallery, I think that he gave them an idea when he talked about short-sheeting. I would be surprised if, when they get home today, they do not short-sheet the beds of their brothers and sisters.

It is pleasing for me as Minister for Primary Industries and for my departmental officers to see the proposal being accepted by members on both sides of the House. The Opposition spokesman on primary industries, the honourable member for Bundaberg, made some personal comments on the matter but, generally, he accepted the measure on behalf of the Opposition.

As I have said on many occasions, soil conservation is a very important function of my department. I think all would acknowledge that the first responsibility for conserving soil belongs to the landholder—the owner—but I believe that State and Federal Governments also have a responsibility. After all, we are not making any more soil—particularly agricultural soil—although in some places such as Japan where soil is in short supply, land is being reclaimed for industrial purposes. So there is a real responsibility to ensure that everything is done to maintain our soil.

The honourable member for Bundaberg mentioned the matter of continuing agreements with local authorities. The answer, as I see it, would depend to a large extent on the individual particulars of the case; it becomes a legal matter for resolution. However, I believe that the scope of the present Act should be wide enough at least to assist in the resolution of this type of complaint.

Generally speaking, the measures contained in the amending legislation have been accepted by the honourable member for Bundaberg and the honourable member for Maryborough on behalf of the Opposition. This is pleasing to see because, after all, a lot of work went into it. Many people have been involved. The recommendations have been agreed upon with landholders and local advisory committees, people who give a lot of their time to the problems of soil erosion.

The honourable member for Warwick, who represents an area on the eastern Darling Downs, which is prone to soil erosion, as does the honourable member for Cunningham, made a very good contribution. He expressed concern that landholders will not be represented on the Soil Conservation Authority. Of course, I want to see landholders closely involved in the work of that authority. I believe that the best contributions can be made by landholders at the advisory committee level. I was pleased to hear the honourable member for Warwick and the honourable member for Bundaberg support the establishment of these committees in areas additional to the Darling Downs. There is plenty of room for input into soil conservation policies at this local advisory committee level.

I pay a very high tribute to my own soil conservation officer at Jandowae. A couple of weeks ago at the Jandowae show he had a display of information about soil conservation in the northern Downs area. It included a map of the area which outlined proposed soil conservation work. He also displayed a photograph and the name and location of

each of the members—whether it was eight or 10, I have just forgotten—of the local committee. A lot of interest in that display was shown by those who attended the show. At least they now know that if they want to talk to somebody about soil conservation problems they can see, say, Ivan Middleton in the Brigalow area or Neville Skerman over at Kaimkillenbun, or wherever it might be. I commend young Doug Muller for providing that type of display for the interest of patrons of that show. I can assure the honourable member for Warwick that there will be plenty of opportunity for input by farmers at the level of advisory committees. Ever since he has been a member of this Assembly the member for Cunningham has taken a very keen interest in soil conservation. I commend him for it. He paid tribute to the work of officers in my department and for the manner in which they came to grips with the problem in the Clifton and Cambooya Shires recently when so much damage was done by continual torrential downpours. It was shocking to see the devastation of good agricultural land there. He mentioned the pictorial evidence of it. I commend my officers for their efforts. One gets a much better idea of something from looking at photographs than by reading about it.

Mr. Moore: A picture is worth a thousand words.

Mr. SULLIVAN: That is very true.

Only a dozen copies of that storm pictorial were produced initially. However, several hundred copies are being printed, and should be available next week, as a permanent record of the devastation and damage that occurred. After those who use the land for agricultural purposes have seen photographs of such devastation I would hope that we will get 100 per cent co-operation from them.

In common with all other Government departments, the Department of Primary Industries gives very serious consideration to amending legislation. As I stated, what we are doing has the blessing of all people on the local advisory committees—involved people who give a great deal of their time, for which we express our deep appreciation. I believe that the amending legislation will be beneficial to soil conservation in this State.

Motion (Mr. Sullivan) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 28, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Sullivan, by leave, read a third time.

WHEAT MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

Debate resumed from 11 March (see p. 2627) on Mr. Sullivan's motion—

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

Mr. **BLAKE** (Bundaberg) (2.45 p.m.): The House has been told that, because of a compositor's error, a section of the Act stated twice that one person nominated by the Queensland Graingrowers' Association would be appointed to the Wheat Varieties Advisory Committee of six persons. It omitted to state the intention to appoint a person representing the Department of Primary Industries. The Bill corrects the error and the omission. Other than to state that the error should never have occurred, the Opposition does not wish to delay the business of the House any further.

Hon. **V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (2.46 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable member for Bundaberg. The Government does not wish to delay the business of the House, either, and I make no further comment. We agree entirely with him.

Motion (Mr. Sullivan) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Sullivan, by leave, read a third time.

FRUIT MARKETING ORGANISATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

Debate resumed from 18 March (see p. 2797) on Mr. Sullivan's motion—

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

Mr. **BLAKE** (Bundaberg) (2.48 p.m.): The heavy produce section of the fruit and vegetable industry produces a return of about \$20 million annually, so it is a significant section of the industry. The Bill proposes to alter the definition of "vegetable" to include in the marketing structure of the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing such products as potatoes, onions, pumpkins and swede turnips, and I understand that it will be operated by an elected subcommittee of the Vegetable Sectional Group Committee. Of course, heavy produce vegetables previously did not come under the marketing structure of the C.O.D., and the potato and

onion farmers, who at one time were represented through the Queensland Farmers and Graziers' Association, are no longer represented through that body.

I have consulted with various grower organisations in various areas of the State, and they assure me that the proposed legislation has the support of a majority of growers. In fact, after inquiring, I believe that it may have more support than was indicated in the poll taken to decide whether or not the heavy vegetable industry would be brought under the auspices of the C.O.D.'s marketing structure. The poll showed that 91.3 per cent of the votes cast were in favour. However, I believe that the number of votes cast barely exceeded the requirement that 50 per cent of the producers vote. It is a sad commentary on the industry, and also perhaps on primary industries as a whole, that it was difficult to get even a 50 per cent response to the poll. I suppose it could be said that quite a lot of producers do not care whether the matter comes under the C.O.D. or not. However, the proposal certainly has the support of the majority or persons engaged in the industry.

I want to give the House some of the reasons given by the heavy produce growers for favouring this legislation. The major benefits offered by the C.O.D. include: representation on a collective level by a heavy produce subcommittee as an integral part of the C.O.D.; opportunity for individuals to air their views through the established "grower parliament" structure or grower organised structure of the C.O.D.; a direct link to State and national organisations, such as the Council of Agriculture, the Australian Horticultural Growers' Council, the Australian Vegetable Growers' Federation, the Australian United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association and the National Farmers' Federation. I point out that the growers thought it worth mentioning that they also receive a free copy of "Fruit and Vegetable News", which is circulated fortnightly to all growers.

The heavy produce growers will have access to a range of professional staff for advice and assistance with Government inquiries, submissions and technical problems. They will also have access to grower-processor liaison services, which will ensure that growers get a fair hearing from the processors. As well, the legislation will ensure for heavy produce growers access to the fruit and vegetable growers' insurance package, by which many growers allegedly are currently saving approximately 50 per cent of their insurance costs. It will also give access to a range of sundry services, such as grower information trips both interstate and overseas, seminars, and so on. It is understandable why a majority of those who voted in the poll were in favour of bringing potatoes, pumpkins, swede turnips and other heavy vegetables under the auspices of the C.O.D. marketing structure.

Another important provision in the Bill authorises the C.O.D. to sell and market

flowers and nursery products. The trade in flowers and nursery products has grown appreciably, so it is only sensible that the C.O.D. should be allowed to engage with other agents in the marketing of flowers and nursery products. I, too, emphasise that this will not give the C.O.D. control of the trade in flowers and nursery products; the C.O.D. will trade on an equal footing with other traders. This is a matter of some concern to people who are rather strong, shall I say, in the flower-growing industry. I am sure that they will have no objection to the extension of the marketing structure, particularly as it will not entail control of marketing by the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing.

From the Opposition's point of view, there is only one other facet that is worthy of comment. It is the amendment permitting the director to appoint a deputy as his ex officio representative on the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing when he will be absent from any discussions. This is a very elementary amendment and a very sensible requirement. The Opposition has no reason to oppose it.

Mr. STEPHAN (Gympie) (2.56 p.m.): I should like to congratulate the Minister on the introduction of this Bill. The vegetable industry in Queensland will now have a reasonably united front. Previously, the heavy produce growers had another type of representation. When it fell by the wayside, they were left on their own, and it is encouraging to know that the growers have seen fit to support this proposal. I am sure that they will not be disappointed. On the national level, when the vegetable growers were represented by the C.O.D. and the heavy produce growers were represented by the U.G.A., two bodies represented the industry. That was not desirable.

The heavy produce growers will be represented by six growers acting under the auspices of the vegetable sectional group committee. In addition there will be two members of the vegetable sectional group committee itself who are heavy produce growers. So there will be eight representatives on the committee, which will be in the form of a subcommittee of the vegetable sectional group. Growers will have nothing to fear from this sort of arrangement, even though it may be in the short term. In the long term, when the industry gets on its feet, I see no reason why they could not have another look at their representation. Perhaps they might be able to have a group covering only themselves. It is a matter for them to decide if and when the occasion arises.

The fact that only half of the growers saw fit to vote in this poll is not very unusual. Quite often, growers tend to forget or ignore these things or leave them to someone else, so the voting percentage is not of great importance. However, it is a matter of concern that people do not see fit to put a pen to paper.

Mr. Blake: Perhaps they are too busy.

Mr. STEPHAN: As a grower, I know that that might be the case, but there must be a couple of minutes during the day when growers have the time to pick up a pen and scratch a mark on a piece of paper. This is something that vegetable growers tend to neglect. In a private enterprise of this nature, it is difficult to get a stick behind them and say that they have to do something.

The proposal dealing with the sale of fresh flowers is of a machinery nature. At present, the C.O.D. does not have this right. Most other businesses will have the right when the flower floor is opened. The size of the horticultural industry in the South and the flower floors in Sydney and Melbourne indicate the importance of this selling procedure. As I said, it is a machinery matter and I give the Bill my wholehearted support.

Mr. KRUGER (Murrumba) (3 p.m.): Over the past few years the heavy vegetable section in Queensland has been somewhat out on a limb. Let us look at the reasons why the Bill has become necessary. The main one, of course, is that the heavy vegetable growers have had nobody to represent them, and it is a good move to bring them under the control of a sectional group committee of the C.O.D. Most of us would be aware—those who are not in the Chamber may not know and may not be interested in knowing—that the sectional group committees have worked exceptionally well in the pineapple, papaw and banana industries and have provided very effective methods of marketing throughout Queensland. Their efforts should be recognised. Without those sectional group committees the marketing system over the past 20 or so years would have been in an even bigger shambles than it is today.

Let us go back a few years to the days of the Potato Marketing Board and the Onion Marketing Board. Why are those boards no longer in existence? The real difficulty was the farmer's natural greed and the problems that arose in the marketing system generally. We all know the problems faced by farmers, the sort of money they receive for their crops and the amount that consumers pay for that produce. I have mentioned this time and time again in this House, but let me remind members that when things were pretty good in the potato and onion industries and the boards were operating properly, there was a fluctuation of prices in the Queensland and interstate markets. When southern prices were high Queensland growers would bypass the boards and sell interstate. Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution allows for that. The growth of this practice over the years led to the phasing out of the boards because they were no longer able to operate properly and could not get the support of the growers who were selling interstate.

I believe that the Bill's provisions will bring Queensland growers back into the marketing system, and we will be able to

exert some overall control over it. Bringing them within the ambit of a sectional group which will handle their production and marketing problems will be to the advantage of the growers themselves and the community as a whole.

Mr. Blake: You feel that over the long term the growers themselves will be much better off market-wise?

Mr. KRUGER: Overall, yes. They will have to come to a better understanding with the C.O.D. They will now receive the benefits from operating within the C.O.D. system which growers in the pineapple and banana industries have had. This has created a fundamentally sound marketing system in Queensland. As I say, it was their own fault, because they destroyed a board that could have operated along those lines.

We now see a very large market for flowers throughout Queensland and interstate. Only a few years ago the market for flowers in Queensland was almost nil, but there was a very large and flourishing interstate market. I understand that the Queensland market is now also flourishing, so it is understandable that that section of the industry should also be covered by this legislation. It will mean that the C.O.D. will now be able to handle the marketing of flowers.

I believe that the C.O.D. needs revamping. I have mentioned this in the past, and I will not miss the opportunity to mention it again. It needs revamping so that we can achieve the type of control intended when the C.O.D. was first set up. Through the sectional groups we have to promote the C.O.D. in order to achieve a tightening of the control of the marketing system and an overall strengthening of the production and marketing of our fruit and vegetables including, in this case, the heavy vegetables and flowers.

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (3.5 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable members for Bundaberg and Murrumba, who spoke for the Opposition, for their acceptance of this amending legislation. I also thank the honourable member for Gympie, who is involved in fruit-growing and who represents a fruit-growing area, for his contribution. These amendments will bring benefit to the growers. I think that the ready acceptance of the measure and the points of view put forward by honourable members indicate the value of organised marketing. This is something that the industry has wanted for some time. I think that it is normal for these growers to be represented by the C.O.D.

The measure allows the C.O.D. to market flowers. This will benefit those growers who send produce to the C.O.D. The C.O.D. did not have the authority to market flowers in the past. It will have it now. This puts the C.O.D. in the same position as other agents.

The industry has requested what is contained in the legislation. I am pleased that we are able to accede to its request.

Motion (Mr. Sullivan) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 7, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Sullivan, by leave, read a third time.

QUEENSLAND INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

Debate resumed from 11 March (see p. 2603) on Sir William Knox's motion—

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

Mr. D'ARCY (Woodridge) (3.9 p.m.): The Bill is a simple measure. It proposes that a trust fund be set up to control the funds given to the Queensland Institute of Medical Research. The Opposition has no objection to the Bill. In fact, we wonder why it has not been introduced previously.

The council of the institute has actually been administering three funds—a trust account fund of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, a special trust fund of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, and an Edith and Gordon Greenwood Medical Research Fund. The sum of \$1.2 million has been paid into the general fund. This money has been provided by the Queensland Government, largely from funds received from the Commonwealth Government.

The second fund contains \$370,000 that has been received from various sources. That money has been donated to the Queensland Institute of Medical Research by such bodies as the National Health and Medical Research Council, the World Health Organisation, the University of Queensland and the University of Maryland. The council of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research has been responsible for some really spectacular work in the field but, as the Minister pointed out, on very little money. The trust will allow the operation to come under one set of guide-lines, and it will allow the council to accept bequests and donations from various people and to invest them on behalf of the institute.

For the Government to allow the trust to use the office and staff of the council is acceptable, indeed, sensible. Of course, the council uses premises at the Royal Brisbane Hospital.

In introducing this Bill the Minister stated that Queensland was fairly poorly treated by way of Commonwealth funds. As I said,

the Commonwealth Government supplies most of the research funds for Australia, but it has a very poor record in relation to the supply of money to Queensland. The Minister cited figures for the last few years, from 1975, and said that Queensland had received a total of \$2.8 million in research funds for a wide ambit of people and organisations, from the university to various semi-private organisations, through to the Q.I.T. and the institute itself. In that period over which Queensland received \$2.8 million, Victoria received \$22.8 million for medical research. Queensland received only 6 per cent of the total research funds of \$44 million made available during that period. That is an insult to this State, and proves that the Commonwealth Government has neglected Queensland. It is also an example of the shockingly poor representations made by the Queensland Government, and more particularly on the part of the Federal members who represent this State in Canberra. At the present moment in Canberra there are 16 Tory members and 3 A.L.P. members, and I put it to honourable members that they are not doing their job.

Mr. Frawley: Ben Humphries hasn't done his job.

Mr. D'ARCY: He is the only one who has been doing his job.

Young Queenslanders cannot get jobs in this field. That is evident by the lack of job opportunities. Members of this Parliament would be as aware as I am, as the shadow Minister for Health, that many requests are received from young technicians to get jobs in the field of medical technology. Those jobs just are not available in Queensland, and that is a shocking state of affairs.

Mr. Frawley: How many complaints have you had?

Mr. D'ARCY: I have had about a dozen complaints from families of young people. As a matter of fact, I received one this week from a Mr. Griffiths in Toowoomba who said that his daughter had a certificate in this field, was 21 years of age and had not been able to obtain employment in the field. Employers in this field are not engaging staff because project after project in this State is being cancelled through lack of funds.

The State Government is just as responsible as the Federal Government because it is not pushing the projects and the work. The Minister says that he is angry that projects are closing down. Of course, these young people who face a lack of job opportunities are much more severely affected than others in senior research positions who can, because of their expertise, get jobs overseas or interstate. This is causing a tremendous brain drain from Queensland.

A number of projects in various research organisations in this State have been stopped. The brother of the honourable member for Ipswich West was involved in a medical research programme in this State that was closed down. At one stage the Minister said that there was no risk of financial cuts in the medical research field. That was on 2 December 1979, yet within a few weeks an important project into cancer research at the Q.I.T. closed down. It was claimed that that project would have required only \$100,000 to complete. That is the type of thing that is happening in Queensland.

Because of this appalling lack of finance for the medical research field, we are suffering from tremendous brain drain. We have to consider the matter seriously. I know dozens and dozens of brilliant medical scientists who have left this State, disappointed that, because of the lack of finance provided by the State and Federal Governments, they cannot work in their home State. It is a disgrace. Neither the State Government nor representatives of the Federal Government in this State are doing their job.

The Queensland Institute of Medical Research has an enviable record. It has been involved in a large number of research projects that have achieved major breakthroughs in the last 13 years. We should be proud that it has obtained world recognition, particularly in view of its limited finance and facilities. It has contributed to world knowledge in epidemiology and infectious disease particularly. One must ask the Minister why the institute, which has such an enviable record in this field, has not been instructed to do anything about the serious cholera outbreak in South-east Queensland. It has not even been brought to its attention. I had my office ask Dr. Kidson, the director, if they had done any research into cholera or if they had been requested to do any. His answer was that it had been brought to their attention. As cholera is affecting South-east Queensland at the moment, I feel that the problem should be brought to the attention of the institute, which is funded by this Government and has the expertise, the facilities and the brilliance to do something about it. Those people could bring their expertise to bear in finding a solution to the cholera problem in South-east Queensland.

I was shocked by the Minister's answer this morning to the Leader of the Opposition when he said that 107 samples tested indicated the cholera virus in four rivers in South-east Queensland. That is a shocking state of affairs. The first case was detected in February 1977. From then until another cholera case was reported in one of our hospitals, the Government of this State covered the matter up. The Health Department covered it up. The Minister continually says that he did not cover it up, but according to the answer he gave today 107 positive findings were made from 1977, almost at monthly intervals. He did not inform the people of

South-east Queensland that they were under threat from cholera and that cholera organisms had been discovered in the water supply.

We know that cholera is a dangerous infectious disease. It could be dealt with quite easily, but the department has insisted that the people should not know the facts. That is what it boils down to. The Minister has covered it up in this Parliament. He has hidden it from the people of South-east Queensland. Consequently, we have had further outbreaks of cholera. How many cases of cholera have we really had? How long has the cholera been here? What is the source of the cholera? We have had all sorts of speculations. Medical authorities have postulated theories. One has referred to mullet breeding in the upper reaches of the river and transferring to freshwater creeks.

If the cholera is endemic, as the Minister is now indicating it may be, the cholera virus was here long before 1977. If it is not endemic and there is a traceable source, there has not been much attempt to find it. The Minister is telling us that in South-east Queensland we must live with cholera.

It is a very important problem, because the symptoms of cholera could quite easily go undetected in South-east Queensland. They are largely those associated with poor water supply or with water generally—upset tummies, vomiting, diarrhoea and other stomach complaints. As the Minister said, a normal, healthy person will usually overcome these problems with the assistance of his local general practitioner, who, without the assistance of extensive pathology, would have no idea that the patient had contracted cholera. That is fairly important when one looks at the situation in South-east Queensland at present.

I remind the House that, in the Aboriginal field in particular, we have never heard any further reports about the Palm Island scare. Was there cholera on Palm Island? Were full tests carried out? Is it a fact that the 190 people who were transferred to Townsville from Palm Island had symptoms very similar to those of cholera? The Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs—I see that he is in the Chamber—said it was the result of eating green mangoes. Was it cholera?

Mr. Porter: It was a fact, too.

Mr. D'ARCY: It was a fact, was it? One hundred and ninety people had those symptoms from eating green mangoes? The Minister astounds me, as I am sure he astounds every member on this side of the House, when he says it was the result of eating green mangoes. What a ridiculous statement! I am sure that the large number of green mangoes eaten in this State each year does not result in 190 members of a community being sent to hospital. I remind the House that there was a death associated with the Palm Island scare, and we still have not heard from the Minister for Health what caused the cholera outbreak in South-east Queensland.

I find it abhorrent that the Government has neglected major health problems in South-east Queensland. It is ridiculous that the Commonwealth Government and the State Government have limited research funds so significantly that less than 6 per cent of Commonwealth research funds are being spent in Queensland, particularly when some of the problems in this State are unique. I find it a little disappointing that some of the research being carried out by the institute has not really been associated with Queensland problems. Research in this State should be directed to problems associated with the health of Queenslanders.

I advise the Government to spend much more money on research in this State and, in particular, to employ young Queenslanders in the fields in which they are trained. Young people have been encouraged to become laboratory technicians and to enter the field of medical research, but they are not being employed. The setting up of this trust provides a perfect opportunity to spend much more money in Queensland in various fields of medical science, and I believe that the Government should take the bit between its teeth and do something about the problem.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Health) (3.23 p.m.), in reply: The honourable member for Woodridge has brought to public attention some matters that I should answer fairly quickly.

He commented on the failure of funds to reach this State from essential sources such as the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Commonwealth Government, and that is indeed unsatisfactory. The failure of Federal members of Parliament to represent the State better may be one reason, but I do not think so. When a Federal Government of his own political colour was in office, it performed as badly as any other Government in that respect.

Mr. D'Arcy: That was 1975. Your figures cover the period from 1975 onwards.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The honourable member can include 1975 if he wishes. The fact that Mr. Hayden was Federal Minister for Health and nothing happened, the fact that Mr. Hayden became Treasurer of Australia and nothing happened—

Mr. D'Arcy: I point out that he was never Minister for Health. He was Minister for Social Security.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The arrangements were unsatisfactory. What I am trying to do is to compensate for that unsatisfactory situation.

As to the project at the Q.I.T., there was a hiatus and it looked as if funds would not come forward. However, I am pleased to say that, as a result of political pressure by myself and others, funds did come forward. They are available until the end of

March, which is not far away. I hope that further funds will be made available to allow this worthwhile project to continue.

Mr. D'Arcy: A lot of people left that project when the funds stopped.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I understand that they were about to leave. I am not sure of the details. I met the people who were involved and I realise that people were planning to leave because they thought the funds would be terminated. I am not sure whether anyone did leave. I do know that the team are still together and working very hard in the ultrasound area, which will result in a great breakthrough in due course. The project is yet to be completed and it will take some months' work and a lot of money. I trust that the Commonwealth authorities will come to the party. I assume that they will, but that has not been confirmed.

As to the role of the Institute of Medical Research in relation to cholera—I am sure that the institute would be able to handle quite well any special research project that might need to be carried out. At this stage, the information is still very scanty, in spite of the fact that over the past two or three years a tremendous number of samples have been taken in our river systems.

I should bring to the attention of the House, because the honourable member questioned this matter, the fact that in 1977, when it was discovered that cholera was in the area, all pathology departments were alerted to test for cholera. All of them have been doing so since. They were to test for cholera if there was any suspicion that diarrhoea might be associated with it.

Palm Island was tested for cholera and found not to have any cholera present. I think I should correct the honourable member's comment in that respect.

Mr. D'Arcy: That is not what Dr. Scott-Young has to say.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The honourable member for Townsville has never claimed that there was cholera at Palm Island in this instance.

I should like to correct one impression the Opposition spokesman has. He criticised my colleague the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs for suggesting that green mangoes might have been the source of the trouble. A great deal of light-hearted comment has been made about this suggestion. In fact, a number of scientists hold the view that mangoes could contribute to the problem in some cases.

Mr. D'Arcy: In 191?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I am not suggesting it is so in all cases. The theory is that at a certain time of the year flying foxes carry a parasite that has an adverse effect on the internal arrangements of human

beings. The droppings from the flying foxes fall on green mangoes, and if the mangoes are eaten without having been washed the parasite will be transmitted to human beings. In fact, this has been found to be the case.

Because of this information, which came from very reputable research workers at the university, a considerable number of mangoes were washed and the washings were examined. They were found to contain some of the parasites that could cause problems for human beings.

We are not claiming that this problem is universal at Palm Island. However, at a certain time of the year it is indeed a problem and it can cause some stomach upsets. I do not think the claim about mangoes should be discounted entirely. In fact, it is not the mango itself but what is on the outside of the mango that creates the problem.

Mr. D'Arcy: It was not identified as that.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: That is correct.

Mr. D'Arcy: It is pretty far fetched.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It is not far fetched. A number of papers have been delivered on this subject.

The scientists at the university were most interested to receive this information, because it supported some of the views that they held. I want to make it clear that no common source of the problem was discovered by the pathology laboratories in both Townsville and Brisbane. It is suggested that, because something was discovered, that was the cause. That is not so. We are trying to find the common element. I am happy to say that the problem has disappeared, for the time being anyway.

Mr. D'Arcy: You still have no lead on it?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: No, and people are still looking for the cause. Once the obvious possibilities are eliminated, there is a vast range of possibilities to be tested.

I shall now deal with the alleged covering up of information about cholera. This information about the discovery of cholera organisms in the Albert and Logan Rivers was published in the report of the Director-General of Health and Medical Services, which was tabled in this House. It was circulated widely and was available for public comment. At no time was the information withheld or treated as being secret and not to be released. In recent days I have pointed out that, with the present monitoring system, we will probably find more elements of cholera in the river systems and, unless there is a special reason for making a public announcement, I do not intend to make one every time a cholera organism is found. If the Press, a member of Parliament or a member of the public inquiries, that information will be readily available.

Mr. D'Arcy: That was not the case following 1977, because I made several inquiries—I admit of the Minister's predecessor—and the information was not given to me. I asked the then Minister for Health several times about it in this Parliament. He said that no further cholera organisms had been discovered.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Frankly, I do not think that my predecessor would have said that. I will not accept it as being a truthful statement. The then Minister did table in the House reports that revealed the presence of cholera in samples taken over a long period.

I am pleased that the legislation has general support. I am not expecting millions of dollars to flow to the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, because it is very little known outside professional circles. It has been fully financed by the Queensland Government. But for the magnificent legacy to which the honourable member referred, most people would not know that it is available for research and is doing an outstanding job.

It was housed in dreadful accommodation in the old buildings in Victoria Park. It now has very modern facilities. Since the improvement, the morale of the people who work there has lifted. Their work over the years has been very impressive. Some of the big medical breakthroughs in the world have been made at the Institute of Medical Research and its advice is sought internationally on quite a number of matters.

The fact that the Queensland Government was financing it led people to believe that there was no need to provide any additional funds. I hope that I can change the thinking on this matter, because some national corporations and foundations provide funds for medical research and they are bypassing Queensland because they feel that it is exclusively the province of the Queensland Government. I hope that that will not be the case in future. The Government will continue to provide funds for medical research but we expect, because of the establishment of this trust, to see additional funds made available by national corporations and well wishers.

Motion (Sir William Knox) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 7, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Sir William Knox, by leave, read a third time.

MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

Debate resumed from 18 March (see p. 2795) on Mr. Wharton's motion—

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

Mr. D'ARCY (Woodridge) (3.37 p.m.): This Bill relates to the registration in Queensland of medical practitioners under the auspices of the Queensland Medical Board. The Bill provides for a change in requirements for the recognition of medical practitioners from interstate and overseas who wish to be registered in Queensland.

The Australian Medical Association is very much concerned about the number of overseas doctors entering this country. There are plenty of unfilled specialist positions in various areas, and it is important that these positions should be filled only by properly qualified doctors. Many specialist positions in Queensland hospitals remain unfilled, particularly in the psychiatric field. Applications received from overseas doctors have been rejected by the Government and the Queensland Medical Board. That is understandable, because we have a situation where there is a fine balance between the number of doctors practising in Queensland and the positions available. In the field of general practice, we are getting to the stage where doctors are saying their incomes are being limited. However, in the specialist field, particularly where the Government directly employs medical practitioners—I refer here to the more isolated areas of the State—there is concern that suitable doctors cannot be found to fill such positions. So what we are looking for is a happy medium in the employment of doctors in specialist positions.

I believe that the State Government is probably the worst employer of specialists—at least the doctors in this State feel that that is so. They feel that they get a very rough deal from this Government as far as salaries are concerned, and particularly in the conditions under which they have to work. Southern doctors claim that that is why positions in Queensland hospitals remain unfilled. I think it is important that the Government begins to look for solutions to the problems in this area.

We have to look very seriously at the doctors who are able to practise in this State. The Minister claims that this Bill is designed to maintain the very high standard of doctors who practise here. I hope that is the case. The medical profession, particularly the A.M.A., is concerned about the problems that we could face, not at present but during the next decade, with the number of graduates from the Queensland University entering the medical profession in this State. The Opposition has no objection to the changes being made by the Bill, but it would point out that these problems exist, and I believe that the Minister should look seriously at them.

Mr. SHAW (Wynnum) (3.41 p.m.): This appears to me to be a very important Bill. I would have liked a little more time to have been able to relate it to the principal Act and to make some inquiries to ascertain what the Government intends to do. Unfortunately, the Minister did not actually give the reason why the amendment is being introduced. If, as I believe, it is to attack the problem of migrant medical practitioners, and also a projected over-supply of medical practitioners in this country in future years, then some sections of the Bill appear to fall short of the mark.

The problem with migrant doctors has been pretty well documented. People from overseas whom we would regard as being unqualified, or certainly not as well qualified as some of the graduates who pass through our medical schools, are registering in this country. I think that the Government will have to face this problem fairly shortly. There is a similar situation with dentists and other professional people. People from some of the unstable countries are registering here more or less to guarantee their future. At the moment they have no intention of practising here.

I am more concerned with the problem of the over-supply of doctors. There is an over-supply of doctors already in this State. The Sax report stated—

“The Departments of Health and Employment and Youth Affairs should co-operate with the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs in a review of the composition and characteristics of medical practitioners entering Australia, with a view to revising the administration of current procedures as necessary with primary emphasis being placed on the availability of firm job offers.”

I ask the Minister, in his reply, to advise the House if that is what he intends to do. Besides requiring firm job offers, does he also intend to require residency in this country? For some years, doctors in Rhodesia have been registering as medical practitioners in Australia in case they needed to come here in the future.

The A.M.A. and similar bodies have also recommended that, in order to combat this, there should be a 20 per cent reduction in the admissions to medical schools in this country. There has been a cut-back in admissions. A type of rationing is already being applied to the numbers of people who are being permitted to qualify as medical practitioners in Australia. I believe it is quite wrong that we should make it easier for medical practitioners from another country to come here and practise whilst at the same time we are making it harder for our own people to qualify as doctors. I do not think that the doctors we get here will be of the type we really want. In most cases the people who wish to immigrate to this country want to come here for only one reason—the grass is greener here than where they are living at present.

In the past the qualification restrictions that have been placed on our own students have not been placed on the qualifications of overseas doctors. At the present time unfortunately only those with high T.E. scores can get into universities to study medicine. There is then a lot of pressure on them, and some of the young people are forced out of the course during their period at university. That is unfortunate, because many of those young people would make good doctors if they were allowed to complete their studies. However, because of pressures placed upon them and the fact that the number who ultimately qualify is under the quota, they are kept out whilst others who are less desirable are allowed to practise.

To assess the extent of this problem, it is necessary to look at the number of migrant doctors who have entered this country over recent years. Although the number has varied slightly, the yearly average is equal to the annual output of between two and four medical schools. In other words, if those migrant doctors were not in Australia there would be justification for establishing here another two to four medical schools that could accept and train our own young people. I believe that would be a step forward rather than a step backward.

Although I said that some of the immigrant doctors come here because the grass is greener, I will accept that in some cases there may be other, such as professional, reasons. However, in the great percentage of cases they come here for one reason and one reason only—money. If they were dedicated to providing care and help for poor people and working in some of the less attractive fields of medicine, they would stay in their own countries. The reason for the large influx of doctors into Australia from Zimbabwe is our more stable political climate, but they are also coming here because more money can be made here.

Those doctors will not be attracted to the areas where they are most needed, such as the Outback, small country towns and the fields of mental health and geriatrics—all areas where extra doctors can be used. However, they will not be attracted to those fields; they will want to set up expensive clinics in the cities to attract wealthy clients who can afford to pay. They will also want to make full use of the medical funds operating in this country and there is a danger that they will cause a further drain on those funds. If there is an over-supply of doctors, those funds may be drained even further if medical practitioners indulge in giving unnecessary treatment. Perhaps it is a little unkind to say that, but one must admit that that sort of pressure will be there.

A situation could then arise in which our own newly graduated doctors would be conscripted into compulsory schemes to provide services such as I have described in small

communities and in areas where there is a shortage of doctors. That suggestion was also made in the Sax report which states—

“That the options for making best use of the increasing supply of doctors occurring between now and 1991 be further examined by the Department of Health with the object of providing firm proposals for consideration during the review proposed for August 1979. Some of the possible options are set out in an attachment and relate to:

- absorbing any surplus into existing occupational categories
- the introduction of some form of national medical service for recent medical graduates
- the development of mechanisms to ensure that the deployment and types of medical practitioners reflect the particular medical services needs of specific localities and population groups
- the development of programs to encourage doctors to practise in the comparatively neglected areas of medicine; especially in health education, rehabilitation, mental health services, geriatrics and preventative medicine.”

It certainly will not be the migrant doctors who will be going to those areas. It will be newly graduated people from our own country. While it may be necessary for that to happen, I would hate to see those graduates penalised at the expense of the oversupply we presently have. The position is absurd. To my knowledge the Australian Department of Immigration is still spending money encouraging more and more doctors to migrate to this country. They are being told about a need here and growing opportunities every day, at a time when already in some States there is an oversupply.

It should be a requirement—it may exist, but I have not been able to find it; I ask the Minister to clear this point up for me—that if a doctor is to be registered he be a permanent resident of this State. This was one of the suggestions from the A.M.A., I think. It was certainly the opinion of many professional medical bodies in this country that that be a requirement. I think it is reasonable, as it would help to overcome the problem of people reserving a spot here in case they wanted it in the future.

I would like to make it clearly understood that we will always require specialist doctors to come to this country. I do not think we should do anything—I know that nothing being done by this legislation will have this effect—that will have the effect of precluding hospitals or any other branch of medicine from attracting specialists who we feel are needed here. In such instances it is entirely reasonable that they come here on the promise of a position without being permanent residents. However, it is entirely reasonable that the ordinary G.P. who wants to set

up practice should be a resident in the country and not be just reserving himself a position for later on.

We have had the problem—I think it still exists in the field of dentistry—of graduates from places like Rhodesia (from where we will get a rush of people) graduating from universities where English is not even spoken. I know that the Minister mentioned this matter in his speech, but I think a lot more needs to be said about the fact that graduates from overseas need to undergo some sort of examination. There needs to be a stricter requirement to ensure that no problem arises because of this aspect. I have spoken to people in the profession who are most concerned about it.

In conclusion and very briefly, I point out that the oversupply of doctors will not lead, as some people appear to think, to a lessening in the cost of medical services. In fact, if anything, it will lead to a more expensive service. Therefore, the public has an interest in ensuring that we overcome the problem and that we do not have more medical practitioners than we have positions for them.

Mr. GYGAR (Stafford) (3.55 p.m.): I do not think that anyone in general terms has spoken against the principles embodied in the major part of the Bill, which refers to qualifying procedures to be imposed upon medical practitioners before they are registered. However, I have severe reservations about the mechanism that is being used and, in particular, about the fact that in certain circumstances the Act itself will lay down no objective standards or objective tests that must be applied. In addition, the Bill has a major fault, to my way of thinking, in that it asks Parliament to allow Acts of Parliament to be amended without reference to the members of this Assembly.

As my criticisms of the Bill require an examination of the exact wording of clause 19, I consider that it would be best to leave my major arguments till consideration of the clauses.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (3.56 p.m.): For many years we have had in Queensland probably the most satisfactory form of medical practice, because in Queensland, as in no other State, a medical graduate has been allowed to practise with very little interference and in specialties as he wished. We have had a multi-tiered system of medical practice. We have had the full-time specialist; we have had the part-time specialist who was paid on a sessional basis; we have had the general practitioner; and we have had people who could be part of each. A man could be a general practitioner and still have a hospital appointment on a paid sessional basis. The system in Queensland, as it stood for many years, made the practice of medicine very satisfactory and satisfying for members of the medical profession.

In recent years, there has been a great increase in the number of full-time practitioners in specialist groups, particularly at base hospitals. We also have an educational system that creates problems in the number of medical graduates, in that the entry to universities is being made astronomically high and a different type of person is now entering the field of medicine in this State.

This has been the subject of a great deal of review and discussion amongst members of the medical profession and amongst academics, so much so that one university in Australia has decided that it will interview all prospective medical students to see whether they are correctly oriented, mentally as well as academically, to the practice of medicine and also delve into their ethical approach to medicine and the treatment of the sick. This practice will eventually have to be used nation-wide, because at the moment we are getting a group of people who are academically brilliant and emotionally and ethically barren, with the result that the profession is now more oriented towards money and position than towards the practice of medicine and the art of healing.

I believe that the Department of Education has done a great disservice to the medical profession by raising the standard of entry to universities, and I hope that the University of Queensland takes stock and reviews its present position.

Personally, I believe that the higher the entrance examination standard for overseas graduates, the better, because even if we set standards for overseas graduates, we do not have the detailed results of their examinations overseas and we do not know what went on in those examinations. Therefore, there should be some hurdle—a written examination and an oral examination—to jump before persons are allowed to practise in this country. This becomes very obvious with some of the Asian groups. The standard in some Asian universities is not nearly as high as it is in our universities and the courses are not nearly as detailed, and they are not nearly as advanced in the surgical field as we are.

I note in the Bill that the Minister speaks of giving temporary registration to visiting specialists who come here, probably to do research work, to demonstrate, or to give lectures. That is a very good idea, because it will give those people some standing and also give them a chance to perform operations and demonstrate their skills in this country. An internationally famous surgeon who may not be registered in Australia should be able to accept temporary registration so that he can demonstrate to students or post-graduate students a particular operative procedure. The proposed provision will be a great advance.

I am also very pleased to see that the spoken English test has not been done away with. From my own experience as a medical practitioner, I know it is most difficult to

convey in English the symptoms to a foreign practitioner. Sometimes I think it would be easier to go to a chiropractor or to a chemist and buy a pill off the counter. Some of these people just cannot understand what is being said to them and it is sometimes extremely difficult to understand them. A lot can be lost in a consultation involving them. We should ensure that graduates who come here have a good command of the English language.

The previous speaker spoke at length about doctors of Rhodesia. Most of the medical practitioners of Rhodesia graduated from either English universities and medical schools, which are of a high standard, or South African universities, which have a standard equal to ours. Any Rhodesian practitioners who wish to come here would have qualifications acceptable to us.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Health) (4.1 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their interest in the Bill. I feel I should answer some of the matters that have been raised.

Migrant doctors who come here are obliged to provide evidence of employment. Indeed, the immigration authorities check with the Director-General of Health to determine whether a migrant doctor has been offered a substantial position in this country. That is done before he is allowed into the country.

Honourable members might be interested to know that, as a result of a general tightening up in recent times, on the average approximately 30 doctors come here from overseas each year. A few years ago the annual number was approximately 600. A great number of doctors registered in Queensland and in Australia see fit for various reasons, such as to carry out post-graduate work, to go overseas and practice. They are, of course, still registered here and are entitled to come back at any time.

Oversupply in the medical profession is a cause of concern. The honourable member for Wynnun is quite correct in suggesting that an oversupply of doctors does not lead to a lowering of costs or a reduction in work. In fact, because of the way the medical profession tends to generate work rather than reduce it, the opposite seems to be the position. If a doctor sets up practice in a small town that did not previously have a doctor either at all or for some time, he will be surprised by the large number of sick people who come along to see him. Previously they were not inclined to make the special effort to visit a doctor in another town. It is a feature of the medical profession that it tends to create work rather than reduce it.

The fact that the costs will still be there is a matter for concern. The oversupply in the medical profession is somewhat aggravated by the shortening of the course in New South Wales. It was a matter of concern that in South Australia in particular the floodgates were opened to allow medical practitioners from many foreign countries

to obtain registration. I understand that the policy in that State has now been changed. Nevertheless, many hundreds of doctors were able to obtain registration in Australia as a result of what I would regard as capricious behaviour on the part of the South Australian Government at that time.

The ability to speak English is fundamental and is still provided in the legislation. It is important that that be so. The registration board has an opportunity to examine personally doctors who wish to be registered in this State. It can discover whether an applicant for registration has a command of the English language.

The unfilled vacancy problem still exists in certain specialities. While there might be an oversupply of doctors and while most vacancies have been filled, there are still vacancies in some specialities. I think I gave a list of them to the House last year in answer to a question asked by the honourable member for Woodridge. Some of those positions are still unfilled.

Mr. D'Arcy: They are specialist positions?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Yes. There is a shortage particularly in the psychiatric field. That indicates the sort of problems that have been overcome.

Among other things, the legislation makes it quite clear that the A.M.E.C. exam, which was a matter of some concern years ago, will be among the qualifications that an applicant from overseas should hold. In answer to a question some time ago I explained that, of the number of doctors who applied for registration in Australia, only a handful had passed that examination, and only one had sought registration in Queensland. So, far from the A.M.E.C. exam opening the floodgates, it had the opposite effect and restrained the number of applicants for registration in this country.

Motion (Sir William Knox) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—Repeal of and new s. 19; Registration of medical practitioners—

Mr. D'ARCY (Woodridge) (4.7 p.m.): Clause 3 repeals section 19 and inserts a new section 19, of which subsection (7) reads—

“The Governor in Council may direct the governing authority of any hospital within Queensland . . . to appoint as an intern any person . . .”

I ask the Minister why that has been inserted.

In addition I refer to subsection (9) which reads—

“The Governor in Council may by Order in Council amend the Second Schedule and the Third Schedule to this Act by adding words, omitting words, or omitting words and substituting other words as he thinks fit.”

That is executive government at its worst. Every Bill introduced lately contained a regulation to that effect. It means that Executive Council can govern without the authority of this Parliament. It gives the Government an out on every occasion. The Opposition opposes that principle.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Health (4.9 p.m.): The honourable member did not advance any reason why it should not be done.

Mr. D'Arcy: A hospital board is being directed by authority.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The buck has to stop somewhere. Hospital boards are subservient to the Government of the day.

Mr. D'Arcy: I am pleased to hear that. That has been denied a few times on that side of the Chamber.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I know. They have their authority derived from this legislation.

Mr. Davis: I thought they were completely independent.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: No Government or semi-Government body is completely independent. The honourable member knows that, and I know it. They have a degree of autonomy which is delegated to them by this Parliament. Hospitals boards have a great deal of power. They have the power to raise and spend money and do all sorts of things, but all decisions of hospital boards are subject to an ultimate veto, if necessary, by the Governor in Council.

Mr. D'Arcy: But why go right down to the appointment of an intern to a hospital at Executive Council level? That is pretty minor, surely?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: If the honourable member would like to take it out, I would be interested to hear his proposition, because he is arguing that we are giving too much power away in another clause. The point is that the Governor in Council does have that authority. In fact, public servants generally are appointed by the Governor in Council. Each week I produce minutes to the Governor in Council regarding appointments in hospitals, just as I do for appointments in the Public Service and a number of other areas. It is a new thought to me that the Governor in Council should not have that authority and that it should be delegated to a hospitals board. I have not previously considered it. At this stage it is a matter for the Governor in Council, and I see no reason to change that view.

Mr. GYGAR (Stafford) (4.12 p.m.): It is with some regret that I must remark that I consider that the proposed section 19 is totally meaningless. It is a complete farce, and I will explain why I reached that conclusion. If honourable members examine the proposed section 19 (1), they will see that it starts by explaining three

ways in which people can become registered medical practitioners. The proposed subsection 1 (a) is quite non-contentious. It reads—

“he is the holder of a primary degree in medicine and surgery granted after due examination by any university in Australia; or”.

The proposed subsection 1 (b) reads—

“he is the holder of one of the prescribed qualifications; or”.

Let us examine what a prescribed qualification is in accordance with this subsection. To do that we have to go to the proposed subsection (4) where it is provided—

“For the purposes of paragraph (b) of subsection (1) the expression ‘prescribed qualifications’ means those qualifications set out in the Second Schedule to this Act or in that Schedule as amended from time to time by the Governor in Council.”

From there we have to go down to the proposed subsection (9), where this appears—

“The Governor in Council may by Order in Council amend the Second Schedule and the Third Schedule to this Act by adding words, omitting words, or omitting words and substituting other words as he thinks fit.”

In other words, all that the proposed section 1 (b) says is that no matter what else is laid down, the Governor in Council can say that anybody is qualified merely by changing the second schedule of the Act to suit any convenience. There is no objective test placed in the proposed section 19 at all. It does not even say that a prescribed qualification has to be a university or college degree. It does not even say that it has to be a degree in anything.

The prescribed qualification that for all intents and purposes this Parliament is being asked to approve could be that they are a holder of a certificate from the Medical Board that they are a nice person, because it is quite legal under this proposition that we are being asked to approve for the Governor in Council, the Executive Government of this State, to prescribe in the second schedule, without reference to Parliament, without reference to anyone except themselves, that a good conduct certificate from the Medical Board shall be sufficient to rate as a prescribed qualification in accordance with proposed section 19 (1) (b). So, despite pages of nice words, the whole thing really means nought.

This Parliament is not passing legislation on what can and cannot happen; it is being asked to write a blank cheque for the Executive Government. There is not a single objective qualification placed by this Bill on what a “prescribed qualification” ought to be. It merely says in the proposed section 19 (4) that a prescribed qualification means a qualification set out in the second schedule of the Act, and then it goes on

blantly to state that the second schedule of the Act is whatever the Governor in Council says it ought to be.

Mr. D’Arcy: It is the same with all the legislation.

Mr. GYGAR: No, it is not. I would have the honourable member know that I have served for some years on the Subordinate Legislation Committee of this Parliament, which has taken a very close look at all of these matters. From time to time we get some really good try-ons in legislation, but this is one of the best I have seen in a long time. In fact, it is the best I have seen in the three years I have been on the Subordinate Legislation Committee and have therefore taken a more intense interest in the powers of subordinate legislation.

There are two basic principles involved in this that I find objectionable. The first is the one that was alluded to in passing by the Opposition spokesman about Acts of Parliament being amended by the Executive Government. That is what subsection (9) of the proposed new section 19 is all about. An Act of Parliament is either an Act of Parliament or it is not, I would suggest, and this one is trying to be both fish and fowl. It seeks the authority of an Act of Parliament, that is, it seeks to proclaim that it is the second schedule to an Act passed by the Parliament. But, at the same time, it ducks out sideways by saying that it shall be amended by the Executive Government. To me, the essence of an Act of Parliament is that it is a framework of legislation or rules laid down by all of the elected members of the State speaking in Parliament. That is essential. It is fundamental to the principle that it shall remain the law of the State of Queensland until such time as Parliament changes it. It is quite farcical to suggest that any matter is an Act of Parliament when the Executive Government can discard it, amend it or rewrite it at will.

There has been an increasing tendency in recent years by Executive Governments, not only in this State but everywhere, to seek to use this subterfuge of schedules to Acts, and then to throw in agreements such as that in subsection (9) of proposed new section 19 in this Bill, which effectively asks members of Parliament to tie their hands and cut their own throats. The Government says, “Thank you very much, Parliament, you have given us the authority to do it once. You will never need to give it to us again because we’ll amend your Acts as we think fit.”

I find that whole principle totally obnoxious to the parliamentary system. This has been pointed out to Ministers in this Parliament and in others over many years. No Minister or member of this Parliament can plead ignorance of this danger, because the Subordinate Legislation Committee has on three occasions—I think on four—reported to this Parliament on the dangers inherent in this system. It is my view, which I must admit I hold a little more strongly than it is held by the entire Committee, that this

whole thing is just an affront to the democratic process and should be thrown out each and every time it is tried on by the Executive. However, other members may not feel so strongly on the issue. But I do believe that it is quite fundamental and quite unacceptable.

That is the worst one. However, there is a second string to this bow in the same proposed new section of the Act. I shall explain it. It is probably irrelevant, anyway, because the Executive can do what it likes and admit whoever it wants as medical practitioners in the State of Queensland. I refer to paragraph (c), which deals with the third method. It is a more complex and tortuous method of registration and one which, on the surface, looks like requiring a considerable number of objective tests before a person can be so qualified. However, we have to look at subsection (3) of proposed new section 19, which reads—

“A person whose application for registration as a medical practitioner depends partly on the qualification referred to in paragraph (c) of subsection (1) shall not be entitled to be so registered unless—

(a) . . . he . . . holds a prescribed qualification”

Again, we have this “prescribed qualification”. Then subsection (4) states—

“For the purposes of subparagraph (a) of subsection (3) the expression ‘prescribed qualification’ means a qualification in the specialty to which it relates set out in the Third Schedule to this Act or in that Schedule as amended from time to time by the Governor in Council which qualification accords with the special conditions or conditions set out in that Schedule opposite to the qualification.”

Then subsection (9) provides that the Government can make the third schedule provide what it likes whenever it likes.

This again is a classic example of Parliament buying a pig in a poke. This Bill will stand up as an Act of the Queensland Parliament. In fact, in two or three years—in fact, in five minutes—it could look nothing like the Bill, the set of standards or tests that this Parliament seeks to pass. One could very rightly get quite excited about the limitation placed on subsection (1) (c) of the new section 19 which has this prescribed qualification thrown in again. However, I must return to subsection (1) (b) which, to me, is really the crux of the whole business. The amending Bill contains all of these words setting out what are apparently objective tests of people before they can be qualified as medical practitioners, and the whole edifice is destroyed by subsection (1) (b) which says—

“he is the holder of one of the prescribed qualifications;”.

That means there are no tests; a “prescribed qualification” is whatever the Second Schedule says it is, and the Second Schedule is whatever the Governor in Council says

it is. That is absolutely meaningless and amounts to a fraud on the parliamentary process, in my opinion.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Health) (4.21 p.m.): I understand that the member for Stafford has firm views about this matter as he has conveyed them to me before. However, the Bill should be dealt with in the situation which we face. It is true that the honourable member feels strongly about such provisions. Indeed, there is other legislation in which such a provision is included, such as the Companies Act, the Apprenticeship Act, the Valuation of Land Act, the Physiotherapists Act and quite a number of other pieces of legislation.

The reason for including a power to amend the schedule in this way is that there are numerous changes in nomenclature of universities, qualifying medical schools and lots of other reciprocal arrangements which are made from time to time that have to be recognised by the respective Governments—in this case the Queensland Government. It would certainly be tedious for this Parliament, every time one of those propositions came forward, to have to deal with such a matter as an amendment to the Act.

As the honourable member for Stafford points out, it is true that a great deal of the prescribing authority is delegated to other people, and the schedule through the Governor in Council can accommodate those changes. If the Parliament feels that it should consider those matters each time there is a change of title of a university or a new medical school comes into being somewhere in Australia or overseas that needs recognition, some reciprocal arrangement is made or a host of what would be regarded as administrative matters so that they can be included by amendment of the Act, then I would be guided by the Parliament. However, I urge members to consider the administrative processes involved and the time that would take. I feel that those sorts of amendments to legislation are regarded as somewhat trivial, and that the power to amend the schedule to look after those circumstances is reasonable, as has been adopted by this Parliament on a number of other occasions in legislation in recent times as well as long ago.

The purpose of the clause is to allow for recognition of qualifications of medical practitioners after examination by the Medical Board. Often it is necessary to change the descriptions and the qualifications of the various authorities that recognise people in other places, and those special conditions and qualifications have to be recognised by the Medical Board in this State, or they are of no value. I agree that a lot of authority is delegated to the Medical Board, particularly in the new section 19 (1) (b) which is loosely referred to in the schedule. While it may appear on the face of it that this is a very vague and grey area, it is in fact a grey area and requires that

degree of flexibility so that the Medical Board is able to make that recognition. Keeping in mind that the Medical Board is comprised of senior medical practitioners in this State, the Director-General of Health and other people who have long been associated with the medical profession, I think it is a delegation of authority that we can safely leave with the board.

The alteration of the Act from time to time as may be necessary would be an impediment to the passing of legislation in this House. I might say that the honourable member has been a very active member of the Subordinate Legislation Committee, which made representations to me that this matter should be altered. I indicated that that view would be taken into consideration. It has been taken into consideration by Cabinet, by my committee and by other colleagues, and it has been decided that this procedure is the only practical way of dealing with it.

Mr. GYGAR (Stafford) (4.25 p.m.): I agree entirely with the Minister that it would be extremely tedious to bring back into the Parliament amendments to the second schedule as it is presently structured every time we wanted it changed. The Minister stated quite correctly that he needs to have the ability to change the descriptions and the qualifications of various bodies overseas from time to time. I recognise that. However, what I am objecting to is that there are no objective tests to be applied. If the intent of the Bill is to allow flexibility so that the qualifications to various higher institutions can be amended from time to time, why don't we say so? Why don't we adopt another mechanism which I suggest to the Minister? I acknowledge that other Bills have things of this sort in them and, if the Minister thinks back, he will recall that I objected to all of those, too, when my attention was drawn to them.

There are two different ways in which to handle the problem. One is to put it in a schedule and say that the schedule will be amended by Act of Parliament. The second and more usual mechanism used by Executive Government is the nomination of a set of objective tests and then to allow regulations to be made to clarify or to lay down further details of what is required. That, I suggest, is the classic and accepted parliamentary method of delegating detailed mechanism to Executive Government.

I do not criticise the Medical Board. The Medical Board contains a great deal of skill and expertise among its number. But it will not be the Medical Board that will amend the second schedule; it will be the Governor in Council. If the Minister wanted to place this in the hands of the Medical Board, I would suggest that the proper mechanism—the accepted mechanism and the more logical mechanism—would not be a second schedule capable of being amended by the Governor in Council but in fact a set of objective tests laid out followed by a regulatory power

with some binding in of the Governor in Council to the regulations. I do not see why these qualifications, or these changes in reciprocal arrangements and descriptions, could not be done by regulation.

The guardianship of a regulation is that it can only be made within certain tested parameters laid down by an Act of Parliament. All regulatory powers that are laid down do that. They say, "Within the powers of this Act and subject to so-and-so and for the purposes of such-and-such, regulations may be made." That is a legitimate process. We would be knee-deep in legislation 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, if we did not have regulations. They have been accepted now in parliamentary circles for 60 years, and rightly so. They are an absolutely necessary mechanism. They are a well-developed mechanism. They are a mechanism which has inbuilt checks and balances. Unlike amendments to second schedules and things like that, regulations are quite specifically stated to be disallowable by the House of Parliament.

Orders in Council, on the other hand, fall into a somewhat more nebulous category. Some of them are; some of them are not. There is a state of confusion about when they are tabled and what happens if they are not tabled in the Parliament. With regulations, it is all clear-cut. A regulation must be made within the power granted in the Act. A regulation must be made around the objective tests applied to that power as given by Parliament. A regulation must be tabled in the Parliament within 14 sitting days of its being made. A regulation is capable of being disallowed by the Parliament. A regulation is a normal part of our legislative process.

Why then not lay down objective tests to do the sorts of quite acceptable things that the Minister proposes should be done by this power, give the objective tests, give the regulatory power and, if necessary, bind it to the Medical Board if that is what the Minister desires? I do not seek to write his legislation for him; but I am sure Parliament would not restrict the powers of the Medical Board, being what it is, to lay down things of this sort. But, for Heaven's sake, why use this mechanism of a schedule to an Act being amended by a body other than Parliament when there exists in law, in practice, and in precedent, the accepted and well-tried method of the regulation to implement the Executive Government's wishes in small matters falling under the ambit of Acts of Parliament? I see no reason why it should not have been done by regulation under this Act, and I see a great deal to commend the use of that instrument rather than the method that has been used.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Health) (4.31 p.m.): I think I should take on board the views of the honourable member for Stafford. He has spent a great deal of time on this subject,

as one can see and hear. He is quite correct in saying that there is another way in which this can be done, but it has been preferred to do it this way. If in the future this is looked at again, I will consider the other mechanism to which he refers.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Sir William Knox, by leave, read a third time.

MEDICAL ACT AND OTHER ACTS (ADMINISTRATION) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

Debate resumed from 18 March (see p. 2796) on Mr. Wharton's motion—

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

Mr. D'ARCY (Woodridge) (4.33 p.m.): The Bill brings into line the Occupational Therapists Act and the Speech Therapists Act so that the boards established under them will be on a financial basis in conformity with that of other boards throughout the State. The Opposition has no objection to the proposal.

I ask the Minister to indicate when he is going to do something about introducing a Dental Technicians Registration Bill. It is about time that he did.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Health) (4.34 p.m.), in reply: Might I say that the introduction of this Bill probably is one of the occasions on which Parliament takes a great deal of time amending a very small matter. I hope that if it is necessary in future to bring in an amending Bill or to introduce new legislation of substance in which it is necessary to attend to something such as this, it will all be done in the one Bill and it will not be necessary to introduce two separate Bills.

As to the dental technicians—it is Government policy not to licence dental technicians and provide them with chair-side status. At the same time, there is a possibility of licensing dental technicians with certain limitations. I have considerable support for that in the various dental professions. Unfortunately, some of the people concerned have opposed the proposal vigorously and do not want it, so at this stage it is still in the melting pot.

Motion (Sir William Knox) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Sir William Knox, by leave, read a third time.

QUEENSLAND LAW SOCIETY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

Debate resumed from 11 March (see p. 2621) on Mr. Lickiss's motion—

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

Mr. R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (4.36 p.m.): The Bill is a relatively simple one. I suppose that the most significant amendment is that which provides that the council of the society shall consist of not less than 11 or more than 14 members. The Act provided for not less than 10 or more than 13 members. The Act refers to the president and vice president of the society; the Bill refers as well to a deputy president.

A close examination of the Bill raises a number of vexing questions. I shall certainly pursue them with the Minister at the Committee stage. For example, I shall be referring to the new section 4A, which refers to the president of the society holding office for one year. That new section provides—

"Upon the expiration of the president's term of office the deputy president, if there is one at that time, shall assume the office of president whereupon a vacancy shall exist in the office of deputy president, which shall not be filled until the next election or appointment of all officers of the Society as prescribed."

I find that somewhat ambiguous in that it does not specify that the person who fills the position of president after having been deputy president necessarily has to be elected.

I have already said that the council of the society is to be enlarged. That will necessitate an increase in the quorum of the council from five to seven members.

The most alarming portion of the Bill is the following paragraph—

"The exercise of a power or the performance of a function of the council shall not be affected by the fact that at the time of such exercise or performance a vacancy existed in the membership of the council or that the election or appointment of any member of the council was defective."

The questionable section of that paragraph is the one reading—

"or that the election or appointment of any member of the council was defective."

I find that to be somewhat offensive. Imagine if it were adopted right across the board and, for instance, in the election of a trade union official. Under this principle, even if an irregularity had occurred during the ballot for his election, he could still be a party to making decisions that affected the central body.

Under the Bill a person who might have been wrongfully elected to the council of the Queensland Law Society would still be able to take part in decisions made by the council, and those decisions would have effect. The membership of the council will be increased to 14. If a vote were tied at seven all, that person would have been instrumental in the decision going either way.

It is necessary to make a number of comments about the Queensland Law Society itself.

Mr. Gygar: It did a sterling job in striking off a malefactor for five years, didn't it?

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: I take that interjection. I make it very clear that the laws in Queensland govern all people in Queensland. I am not Mr. Mellifont's keeper. He carries his own responsibility. If he was found guilty of the charges laid against him, he deserved to be dealt with as he was. I make no apologies for saying that.

The Queensland Law Society, whilst it handles complaints by the public against solicitors and other people involved in legal practice who have not played their role according to ethics, as is expected of members of that fine profession, acts as a defence committee which looks after the interests of its own—the solicitors.

I shall refer to some matters that have appeared in the Press over the years. "The Courier-Mail" of 7 March 1977 carried the headline, "Solicitors seek a better image." The Queensland Law Society and the Bar Association were endeavouring to get the public to think more highly of members of the legal profession. In "The Courier-Mail" of 25 January 1977, the Queensland Law Society came out and strongly defended members of the legal profession against charges made by certain members of the Queensland Police Force who accused Queensland solicitors of deliberately fabricating evidence in cases, usually against the police.

While that is the primary function of the Queensland Law Society, it is fair to say that, in the eyes of the Queensland public, that society is a semi-secret organisation. It is not often open to the gaze of the public. Complaints against members of the legal profession are dealt with by the members of that society and the hearings or discussions are held in complete privacy.

The law not only in Queensland but in Australia should be simplified so that it can be understood by laymen. I cannot emphasise that point enough. We have only to look at the legal terms that are used daily in the courts of law in Queensland and to read the various Acts that apply to understand that. In fact, one could forgive members of the general public for not understanding even an everyday summons that is served on them, perhaps for not paying a parking fine or something of that nature. Many of the words used in such documents are very confusing to the layman. I believe

that the whole emphasis of the law in this State today should be on looking for a simplification of the legal system so that it will become more open and available to the man in the street.

While dealing with the Queensland Law Society, I will very quickly make a reference to a Press release by Sir William Knox on 4 December 1975 when he said that allegations of misconduct by solicitors should be made to the Queensland Law Society. He was completely right, of course, but I suggest that when complaints of this type are heard by the Queensland Law Society it should be in public. In other words, once the complaint is made I believe that the Queensland Law Society should be prepared to hear the evidence against their own in a public forum. I am not suggesting for one moment that the doors should be thrown open and 200 or 300 people allowed into a meeting, but in the case of a complaint against a solicitor I believe the person making the complaint should be brought before the society with his own legal representative, if he so desires, or with someone to speak on his behalf.

Mr. Innes: Is a person allowed into a disciplinary committee of a trade union or of the A.L.P.?

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: I am not talking about the trade union movement or the A.L.P. If we want to use that argument, does the same thing apply to the National Party? Does it apply to the Liberal Party? I am not talking party politics. I am a little disappointed that the honourable member would throw up that sort of argument. After all, he is one of the people who, when he entered this House, professed to be one of the young democrats of the Liberal movement. I suggest that the public should be able to participate in the hearing of charges against solicitors or others involved in the legal profession. Where there is some complaint of malpractice or unethical conduct I believe an open hearing would be a far better public relations exercise for the legal fraternity in Queensland and would improve the reputation now held by it in many quarters. I do not want it to be said that I am casting a slur on the legal profession. Let us face it: it does not matter whether it is politicians, the Queensland Police Force, trade unions or the legal profession. I believe there are people of questionable ethics in all those areas. Nobody denies that. Unfortunately, because there are people of that type a slur cast on them has a tendency to permeate right through the organisation or profession to which they belong. But I believe that if hearings were thrown open the public would be far more easily convinced that they were dealing with honest and ethical men.

Mr. Gygar: If you did that, you would have to acknowledge that the persons who are prepared to give evidence before that sort

of tribunal would have to be granted similar protection to that given to witnesses in a civil court action.

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: I cannot see any reason why that should not apply.

It would be interesting to know how many cases have actually been dealt with by the Queensland Law Society over, say, the past 10 years and, indeed, to know the outcome of those cases. I am aware of the criticism levelled by the society at, if my memory serves me correctly, the honourable member for Salisbury when she made remarks similar to mine back in 1976. I am also aware that the Queensland Law Society requires that complaints go before its statutory disciplinary committee. Sometimes I wonder whether when people are actually trying their own or hearing cases against their own within a profession that prides itself on, and is very jealous of, its integrity and standing within the community, a certain bias or favouritism is not shown towards a fellow member of the society. In other words, I am calling for an improvement within the judicial processes in Queensland, and certainly within the Queensland Law Society, because I am sure that many members on both sides of the House have received complaints against members of the legal profession.

During the 2½ years I have been a member of this Parliament, I have received four complaints. One concerned the exorbitant amount of money that a solicitor charged his client. I think that it was \$2,300. The gentleman came to see me. He had been going through a very traumatic experience for three months, wondering how he would pay this account. He did not know where to turn for advice. Finally he came to see me. He sat down and discussed the matter with me. I referred him to a legal friend of mine. Under the statutes, a person who is sent an account is allowed only two months in which to lodge an objection against the amount charged. Because this gentleman had not lodged an objection, he was legally obliged to pay an account that was far in excess of what should have been charged. I know that other members on this side of the Chamber have received similar complaints on many occasions.

I acknowledge that it is not the first time that a call has been made in this Chamber, and elsewhere, for improvements to be made to the legal system not only in Queensland but throughout Australia. In fact, probably the most outstanding call was made by Mr. Justice Kirby on 14 July 1979. A Press article headed "Reform judge hits at 'social myopia' among lawyers" stated—

"Lawyers sometimes suffered from social short-sightedness, the chairman of the Law Reform Commission, Mr. Justice Kirby, said yesterday.

He said lawyers inevitably tended to see social problems in a special way, often blinkered by the comfortable and familiar

approaches of the past, designed in times less sensitive to the poor, deprived and minority groups in the community."

Considering some of the problems in today's society, I believe that that is certainly a fitting statement to make. The article continued—

"It is a point of principle in a democracy that citizens should have a say in the design of laws that govern them," he said.

"Increasingly, there is an awareness that a theoretical say through elected representatives is not always adequate because of pressures of party politics and heady political debates."

I doubt whether many members in this Chamber would disagree with those sentiments expressed by Mr. Justice Kirby.

I believe that the recent step taken by the Queensland Law Society to charge a fixed fee of \$10 for a 20-minute consultation is certainly a move in the right direction. An excellent directory has been published, and I think that it has been made available to all members of this Parliament. It has also been distributed to social security and welfare services, counselling bodies, police stations, clerks of the court and similar officers who attract public inquiry and give advice throughout Queensland.

When one considers the problems of ethnic groups in the community it is very heartening to note that this directory lists the names of lawyers who are proficient in particular foreign languages. Those lawyers are prominently identified throughout the directory, as are those who have some knowledge of a particular foreign legal system. The Queensland Law Society has done not only itself but also the Queensland legal profession as a whole a very great favour, because far too often some people in the community are totally ignorant of the legal services available to them. In many cases they are afraid to approach people within the legal fraternity. Indeed, on many occasions, because people are afraid to approach the legal profession they hang back and hang back until ultimately they are in so much trouble that they do not know where to turn. Any steps that the Queensland Law Society takes to make sure that the public has more ready access to the legal profession are to the betterment of the law in the State.

Mr. INNES (Sherwood) (4.56 p.m.): I rise with some pleasure to agree with many of the sentiments uttered by my neighbour (in electorate terms) and colleague the honourable member for Wolston. The statements of applause that he gave the Queensland Law Society are timely because the Law Society clearly has concerned itself with its role as an organisation of practising lawyers. That role continues to change and continues to be reappraised to stay in tune with the times in which it operates.

There is no doubt that there has been much criticism of the profession. In fact, it started in Roman times. Together with

politicians, lawyers are probably the most vilified of professionals on earth. The reality is that the law must be always subject to scrutiny, because the law is meeting a changing community with changing habits. It is easier to say that the law must be intelligible, that it must be simple and that it must lack complexity, than it is to arrive at the answer and to meet those criticisms to avoid such situations.

As long as people call for more regulations, as long as people ask Governments to do for them things that they could do for themselves, there will be laws and regulations, and there will be an increasing complexity of our legislative fabric. The problem of complexity, I suggest, simply is insoluble. It can certainly be lessened but it cannot be reduced to a level at which all laymen will understand all laws. The average members of this Parliament would know—and one would surmise or suggest that they are at least of average to above-average intelligence—that the complexity of the laws that they look at daily is such that most of the Acts of this State would still cause them problems, and that the amendments to the existing clauses that they regularly peruse are, at first blush, unintelligible.

The problem cannot be solved when we live in an age that demands galloping intervention—that demands legislation and subordinate legislation. We can only hope that the Parliamentary Counsel and the legislators will battle with the problem and make things as intelligible as possible, whilst searching for some precision in the law.

Mr. Casey: There is trouble with a lot of lawyers, too.

Mr. INNES: I suggest that most of the lawyers in the State would not pretend to understand or know all the laws of Queensland. In this day and age it is just impossible to know the full contents of the statutes of Queensland, let alone the tens of thousands of pages of delegated legislation. So one is pursuing an ideal that cannot be reached.

The legal profession must be given recognition when it acts to control itself. The issue of the directory, the fixed fee, the reduction of conveyancing fees—the slashing of conveyancing fees in recent times—are clear indications that the Law Society is attempting to stay relevant to the ordinary, average person in the community. They must be commended for it, and they have been graciously commended by the Opposition Justice spokesman.

Turning to his comments about the statutory committee—I did not make my interjection facetiously. There are rightly areas in which organisations will be self-governed. If a lawyer—a solicitor or a barrister—transgresses the statutory law, he is dealt with openly. He is dealt with in court, and that is proper. If he is negligent—so negligent that his client is caused loss—he can be dealt with, and is regularly dealt with, in open court. However, there are areas in which the Law Society (and the A.L.P., the

Liberal Party and the National Party) is entitled to police its own activities—when the actions investigated do not reach the level of criminal or civil liability but offend against the rules of the occupation or profession. That is what has been in question.

A question was asked in this House last year about the number of times the members of the statutory committee met. In modern times, it is almost weekly, when they arbitrate on anything from small peccadilloes to more serious matters of professional behaviour. They have clearly shown that they are prepared to act. If a person is subject to the suspension or cancellation of his certificate and believes he has been wronged, he can appeal to the courts, where the normal rules apply. The matter is then scrutinised by a judge. However, the Opposition cannot have it both ways. The profession cannot be criticised for governing its own, and then be criticised when it does govern its own and acts decisively. It is my submission that, whilst there have been experiments to introduce representatives of the community onto professional committees, the profession in this State has shown that it is prepared to police its own.

It is still not wrong for the president of the Law Society for the time being to come out and defend his profession. The majority of lawyers are honest. The majority are concerned about professional standards. Indeed, the punishment that is meted out is being meted out by fellow professionals jealous of the reputation of their profession.

The actual clauses of this Bill are fairly simple—fairly procedural. They recognise that a man who is president of the Law Society nowadays is removed from a demanding profession, usually from a fairly senior position, and usually at great expense to himself and his partnership. However, the demands imposed by us in calling for the Law Society to police itself and for more involvement of the Law Society in community matters are so heavy a burden that a two-year term is just not on. It means the removal of the man from his practice. It is almost a full-time job.

This is recognised by the proposed procedures. Members of the profession do not want the expense of annual elections. There is no point in having an annual election. It is costly, unnecessary and not required by the profession. Virtually all they seek is the election of two people who shall be presidents in succession. That is to meet the very real responsibilities and demands of public life and professional life imposed upon anybody who accepts the burden of being president of the Law Society in 1980. It registers the fact that the community, the Parliament and the profession expect so much from the Law Society in modern-day terms.

Professional staff are employed to assist the elected office-bearers, but modern times have obliged them to look to regular reviews of their own practices; to produce such things as the directory; and to think of such

innovations as the fixed-fee consultation. The consequence is that men have to be removed from their practices. That cannot be envisaged for more than a year at a time. It is a tribute to them and to the voluntary work that they do that this amendment is sought. Whilst there will always be some defaulters in any organisation, the great bulk are honest and hardworking, and I think that they deserve commendation.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (5.5 p.m.): The honourable member for Sherwood made much of the fact that those who serve on the statutory committee and those who actually work for the Queensland Law Society, other than those in clerical positions, do so in a voluntary capacity, and I wish to deal briefly with that point. Although the Bill overcomes some problems associated with the tremendous burden, both financially and in time, imposed on persons who serve as president or in any other capacity, I think it is a shame that we have not got down to dealing with some of the real problems relating to the legal profession that exist in the community.

Many people—in fact, more and more people—are questioning whether justice is available in the community today. I appreciate that justice depends on many factors. It is very easy to say it quickly, but we know that, when it comes to achieving it, justice depends, firstly, upon one's access within the legal processes to the courts, and, secondly, upon the availability and cost of advice, and upon the legal expertise. It depends more, I believe, on the quality of the expertise and legal advice that is available. As I see it, that is one of the more important roles of the Queensland Law Society, because if we are going to have a quality service available to people in the legal field, first and foremost we must ensure that we have professionalism. If that professionalism is to be sustained, there must be some type of self-regulation, and I personally see that as a very important role of the Queensland Law Society—to involve its members in a willingness to be introspective in the activities that they pursue, not to say, "I have to stand by rule A, B or C," but to say, "I desire to do so because I have a responsibility to the community. I am a professional person, and I have the innate desire to carry out that service."

Likewise, because, as the honourable member for Sherwood said—and I will use my own term—there are always a few bad apples in every barrel, there has to be some type of redress mechanism available to members of the community against those bad apples in the barrel who are not prepared to regulate themselves or meet the terms and conditions set by their profession. We note this in the areas of negligence and malpractice and, I might add quickly, profiteering. That is the area that we have not got down to in this debate.

There are constant complaints against solicitors about their charging. I realise that one can have costs taxed, but again there is a cost factor involved and there is the possibility of delay. A number of people in the community are afraid of the legal profession, afraid to become involved against the legal profession, and afraid to pursue anything to do with the law. Somehow we must overcome that. I am not sure how we do it, other than by a grass-roots education programme within the schools, and that would be a long-term process extending over many decades.

I feel that if the community knew that there was a readily available process of redress other than through the society, some of the dilemma that we now face would be overcome. For some years I have had the task of meeting with members of the Queensland Law Society, and I acknowledge the work that they have done. I thank them publicly here for the advice that they have given me and for the time that they have been prepared to spend assisting persons who have been to me and other members of Parliament who have referred matters to me. I appreciate that greatly, because I am aware that they have been doing that in a voluntary capacity. But I suggest that if we are going to overcome this attitude, this belief in the community that people do not get justice because they are appealing from Caesar unto Caesar, we must change our approach. I suggest that there is a different approach.

The Minister for Justice will be aware of the many occasions on which I wrote to him raising matters of complaint. Because of the terms of reference of his portfolio, he had no alternative to replying to me, "I suggest this matter be referred to the Queensland Law Society or to the complainant's own solicitor." He had no jurisdiction.

What we need to do is give the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, through the Crown Law Office, some type of jurisdiction in this area so that investigations can be carried out into complaints that are made against solicitors and other persons in the legal profession. If the Minister is given such jurisdiction, some of the problems can be overcome.

I see a solution in the setting up of some type of complaints tribunal. The honourable member for Sherwood has said that these persons act in a voluntary capacity and give much valuable time to their role, which they play at great financial loss to themselves. Whilst I commend them for that and for their participation and contribution, I see a dual role here. I see Crown Law officers having membership on some type of complaints tribunal, with a representative from either the Queensland Law Society or the profession. Such a tribunal could hear complaints and then distribute them to full-time officers in the Crown Law Office for investigation.

If action is to be taken, let it be taken by way of a recommendation from the Crown Law Office to the Queensland Law Society. That is what must be done if the principle of self-regulation is to be maintained.

Again I say the amendments will not overcome the problems. I would ask the Minister to meet with the Queensland Law Society and to ask other members of the profession throughout Queensland for their opinions on the best way to overcome this growing problem. I would ask him to consider my suggestion. If implemented, it would require a legislative change and the employment of additional staff in the Crown Law Office.

In other countries, politicians carry out similar roles. I do not suggest that we do so here. However, that is certainly so in Great Britain and America. We ought to use the facilities available through the Crown Law Office to thoroughly investigate the numerous complaints that people make about solicitors.

At present I have a complaint concerning a solicitor who has been handling a matter for 15 months. Recently I had another complaint concerning a maintenance order. It was supposed to be dealt with and a summons was supposed to be served. However, nothing had been done. The solicitor in question tried to blame a bailiff in another town. We found out that that attempt to blame the bailiff was not valid. It is very difficult to know what can be done. The solicitor will say one thing; the bailiff will say another. We must clamp down very hard on some of these persons who are not doing their job.

I ask the Minister that he consider my suggestions. I welcome the role that the Queensland Law Society is playing. I am thankful for the assistance that it gives members of Parliament and the community. However, I am not sure that that should be its sole task. I feel that officers of the Crown Law Office have a specific role to play in acting upon complaints made by members of the public.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (5.13 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members, particularly the honourable member for Sherwood, for their contribution. The honourable member for Sherwood set the record straight in relation to a few of the points raised by the honourable member for Wolston.

All honourable members will appreciate that the Queensland Law Society is a most responsible body and that the amendments, which were sought by the society, are in the nature of domestic amendments affecting only the members of the society.

I am a great believer in the imposition by professional bodies of self-regulation on their members. The Queensland Law Society has demonstrated that it accepts this responsibility and has achieved a marked degree

of success. The Queensland Law Society is progressive and responsible, and it renders an essential service to the community at large. I have always found it to be responsive and helpful. I meet the Law Society and the Bar Association regularly on a monthly basis. It is of great assistance to me to be able to discuss the problems that it faces and various other matters of common interest. The Law Society has no peer in Australia in its attendance to the affairs of solicitors.

The honourable member for Wolston rightly ranged over a number of matters that are of concern to him.

As the honourable members for Rockhampton and Sherwood said, solicitors' costs can be taxed. There have been occasions when people have complained to me that the fees of their counsel or solicitor have been abnormally high. I have referred those matters to the Law Society direct and it has taken a very keen interest in ensuring that justice was done.

The Queensland Law Society's request for these amendments is reasonable and will make for the better functioning of that society in undertaking its responsibilities in this State.

Motion (Mr. Lickiss) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 5, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Lickiss, by leave, read a third time.

INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE TRAINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Labour Relations), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Industry and Commerce Training Act 1979 in certain particulars.”
Motion agreed to.

FIRST READING

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

SECOND READING

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Labour Relations) (5.20 p.m.): I move—

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

There is one very important reason for the introduction of this amending legislation at this stage. It is the delay in reinstating in

law the discretionary authority of the Minister in relation to apprenticeships and educational standards which is the consequence of this aspect being overlooked when legislative responsibility was transferred from the former Apprenticeship Act to the Industry and Commerce Training Act.

The Bill will continue the ministerial discretion to exempt certain applicants from the provisions of the Industry and Commerce Training Act 1979 relating to minimum standard of education for entry into an apprenticeship.

As honourable members would know, the Apprenticeship Act 1964-1974, which was repealed by the Industry and Commerce Training Act 1979, provided that the Minister could exempt an applicant for apprenticeship from provisions of the Act relating to minimum standard of education for entry into an apprenticeship where, in the opinion of the Minister, special circumstances existed to justify such exemption.

Mr. Miller: A very important clause.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Yes. No discretionary power was conferred in the Industry and Commerce Training Act and many young persons who do not quite meet academic requirements for entry into an apprenticeship, but who would otherwise make excellent apprentices, are deprived of the opportunity to enter into an apprenticeship.

The applicant is usually correctly motivated in his ambition to serve an apprenticeship which will result in his achieving tradesman's status.

The employer is also aware of the applicant's academic standard and fully supports the exemption, as he considers motivation, dedication and application will enable the applicant to cope with the practical and technical responsibilities of the trade.

Research by the Industry and Commerce Training Commission shows that in most cases applicants exempted from education requirements under the Apprenticeship Act successfully completed the practical and technical responsibilities associated with the trade calling.

The proposed amendment to the Industry and Commerce Training Act 1979 adding a new subsection 3 of section 9 will restore the arrangement applying under the repealed Apprenticeship Act.

The further amendments contained in the Bill merely correct drafting errors and minor defects.

Debate, on motion of Mr. Yewdale, adjourned.

REPORTS OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

Debate resumed from 18 March (see p. 2778) on Mr. Ahern's motion—

"That the House takes note of the seven reports of the Select Committee on Education in Queensland which were

tabled in this House on 5 December 1978, 27 March 1979, 24 May 1979, 7 June 1979, 9 August 1979, 4 October 1979 and 11 March 1980."

Mr. FOURAS (South Brisbane) (5.25 p.m.): At the adjournment of the debate I was making the point that the Minister was, in his own words, very apologetic that the cuts that were made in education spending were "not my recommendation and . . . (were) against my better judgment". I believe that the worst aspect of the last State Budget was the education cut-backs. I believe that the Treasurer tried to sell this Parliament and the electorate of Queensland a pup, because he assumed that too much of the cake was going to education. In that assumption, of course, was the suggestion that education was doing nicely. Of course, some few months later, when all the reports of the Select Committee have come home to roost, we find that a large amount of money would be needed in the future to implement these much-needed recommendations.

We have been told that programmes for isolated children are way behind the mark and that there needs to be a large increase in per capita expenditure on them. If there is going to be any chance whatsoever of the positive recommendations in the report (which I believe has been very well received in the community) being implemented, I believe that the Government must rethink its funding of education.

I wish to look now at post-secondary education. There is a continuing demand for post-secondary education. Many students, after a period in the work-force, are returning to gain post-secondary qualifications. There has been an uneven development of post-secondary education institutions throughout the State as a result, of course, of the Government's failure again to supply facilities and to meet the growing demands of the community in this field. There is a need for existing institutions to be co-ordinated to provide greater opportunities for people in areas of the State where opportunities are not available.

The Select Committee reported that the "participation rate in all sectors of post-secondary education of people in Queensland lags behind that for Australia as a whole", and I believe that the State Education Department must be cognisant of that fact. The committee stressed that administrative machinery should be drastically revised to ensure greater co-ordination between universities, colleges of advanced education and technical and further education institutions so that there would be less duplication of the educational services offered and a wider extension of services to cope with the existing demands.

One of the proposals of the Select Committee concerns the establishment of a Ministry for Post-secondary Education, separate from the present Education portfolio, thus giving the present Minister more time

to devote his energies to the pre-school, primary and secondary education system. This consideration seems, on the surface, to be very worth while. But I cannot support it, for a variety of reasons. First of all, it would create one more extra level of bureaucracy. Government members often see themselves as the paragons of private enterprise and do not believe that we need an increased bureaucracy. Of course, they tend to equate that with democratic socialist parties. I believe that increasing the numbers of public servants on proposed supportive advisory committees and councils would result in the making of political appointments.

I believe that the academic staff would feel that this could place a restriction on their autonomy, because university campuses have traditionally been arenas for the dissemination and expression of ideas and thought. I think that some of the best brains in our society and some of the best suggestions have come from there. One has to be careful. If one sets up a bureaucracy, it can ultimately lead to some degree of censorship or political control over these freedoms, and I believe that that would be unthinkable.

Mr. Ahern: There is already a Board of Advanced Education with quite a considerable number of public servants in its employ.

Mr. FOURAS: I thank the honourable member for his comment. If there were a separate ministry, I believe that there would be a possibility that that Minister would perhaps be more under the political control of the Treasurer and, worse still, of the Premier, in the decisions that were taken. So I would be concerned if there were a splitting of the Education ministry.

I now wish to talk briefly about the recommendations concerning the funding of tertiary education. Of course, it was recommended that tertiary education be funded through the State Government, not directly to tertiary institutions.

Mr. Ahern: That is what the Constitution says.

Mr. FOURAS: Whatever the Constitution says, I find that proposition unacceptable.

Such a scheme would make the proposed Minister for Post-secondary Education subject to the Treasurer. If funds were not available to maintain primary and secondary education because of demands made by them, possibly the Treasurer could take away some of the allocation to tertiary institutions. If Cabinet is allowed to hold the purse strings on tertiary education, once again that could be the basis of a very effective political control. Those involved in tertiary education see that as threatening their autonomy. They are concerned about it, and I believe they have every reason to be concerned. If the academic freedom of tertiary education is restricted by punitive political measures, that is unacceptable.

I wish to make one comment about S.T.O.P. and C.A.R.E. In the first part of my speech in this debate on Tuesday last, I said that it is abhorrent to me that minorities can press their views upon the community by becoming very vocal pressure groups. Putting forward an opinion that is not representative of that held by most in the community can be to the detriment of views held by the community at large. I believe that the representatives of minority-opinion groups such as S.T.O.P. and C.A.R.E. receive, as do all minority groups, a disproportionate amount of publicity which is so obligingly given to them not only by the media but also by members of Parliament. I believe that if everybody accepted and adopted this view and removed the publicity that this "one percenter mob" get, minority groups such as S.T.O.P. and C.A.R.E. would fade away into well-deserved insignificance.

I also wish to comment on the teacher discipline guide-lines in the Final Report. I am well aware that there is a need to ensure the moral and professional quality of teachers. I have no opposition at all to control over the rare instances of misconduct. The Final Report suggests that the disciplinary powers that a principal has over his teachers be strengthened by extending his arbitrary powers to suspending a teacher from duties for two days. A principal can also ask the regional director to extend that suspension to five days or the Director-General of Education to suspend indefinitely the teacher concerned.

I do not agree with giving greater powers to principals, as on the odd occasion they could lead to arbitrary abuse. I also draw to the attention of honourable members the position of a teacher who returned to face a class after a period of suspension for a misdemeanour. His authority in the classroom would be damaged to such a degree that his position would become untenable and it would be very difficult for him to regain the authority and professionalism he would need.

I now wish to comment on the representation on advisory boards and committees by parent and community group interests. On the surface that seems to be a very good idea, but how is appropriate representation to be determined? Representatives of certain groups will reflect the views of those who appoint them. I believe that in many ways those who would come to prominence as delegates of parental and community groups would be likely to have much more conservative views than those generally held in the community. Because of that, and because of the political nature of the appointment, there would not be true representation of parent and community groups.

Notwithstanding areas in which the committee's report has shown the Government's past performance to be seriously deficient, once again we are faced with the problem of financing future improvements. The

improbability of this Government's willingness to provide funding for existing education needs makes it almost certain that it will continue to procrastinate with the implementation of the Select Committee's recommendations.

Again I would like to congratulate the Select Committee on its findings. I congratulate it on not shelving issues that were perhaps seen to be dangerous or a little difficult. Overall, it has done a very good job. In putting the interests of the students in our school system and the demands of the community at large in the proper perspective of utmost priority, the Select Committee was able to provide a thorough and well-balanced resume of the entire education system in Queensland, and it is to its credit that it has proved on the whole to be a sensible and balanced investigation.

Mr. INNES (Sherwood) (5.35 p.m.): I do not want to take up the time of the House for too long. I am quite happy to abide by a 20-minute period of speaking. First I commend the Select Committee. It has done an admirable job. Everybody who has some objectivity has an admiration for the work done by the member for Landsborough (Mr. Ahern) and his committee.

The inquiry started in an exceptionally adverse climate—one that was inflamed by the extreme views of opponents from very polarised and divergent positions. One would have thought it unlikely that a committee of this House could arrive at a report and recommendations that would achieve the respect of people from all sides of the political fence and from all sides of the community—from, shall we say, those with liberal views as opposed to the more conservative attitudes to education. The only people left wanting, shall we say, are the minority who remain strongly committed to some very localised, very restricted, pre-occupation with a component of education.

A famous 20th Century philosopher said that teachers are, more than any other class, the guardians of civilisation; that they should be intimately aware of what civilisation is and desirous of imparting a civilised attitude to their pupils. Education has to involve something more than the three Rs. I would not want my children to be taught by teachers who had anything as restrictive as the three Rs in contemplation. They have to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic, of course, but one would hope that they are taught far more than that; that they are taught the history of our civilisation, that they are taught the range of disciplines that are available to modern man and that they are left with a self-generating thirst for knowledge and ability to acquire knowledge which would stand them in good stead through the whole of their adult life, because learning does not stop when people leave school. In fact, for many it only starts and achieves impetus when they get out into the adult world.

Mr. Hansen: As soon as you stop learning, you're dead.

Mr. INNES: Indeed, and so is civilisation.

I would cavil, with respect, at a statement by my colleague—on this occasion I think I rightly use the term—the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs. I do not share his opinion that society is going to the pack or that there are signs that our society is about to disintegrate. At my younger age, I find that as I get older I have to resist in myself a tendency to conclude on occasions that the world is not the same happy place it was when I was younger. It is my belief and observation that it is part of the ageing process that causes a person to believe that society is going to the pack or the morals of young people are degenerating. In fact, I now attempt to prevent my own children doing things that I quite happily and blithely did, despite the opposition of my own parents, at their age. So when we look at this subject we must be conscious of the subjectivity with which one should approach the whole issue.

There has been one surprise to me. I had left the early part of my children's education to just looking at the results and allowing my wife to go to the meetings of the parents and citizens' association. One of the consequences of my fairly brief period in Parliament is that I have had to get to know something about the education process, and I have been impressed—totally impressed—by 99 per cent of what I have seen. I cannot recall that at the age of 8 or 9 years I had to resort to textbooks on geography and diplomacy to find out the raw materials in various African countries. I think that came about four or five years later in my school career. I find that my own children are occupied with that at the moment. They know more, they know it earlier, they are more extrovert, they are more articulate, and they hold views more readily. I see nothing wrong with that. That is the strength of our form of civilisation as compared with more totalitarian forms.

I turn now to specific aspects of the report, and I wish to deal for a short time with a couple of them that have not, as I recall, been dealt with so far.

First, there is the question of class sizes. I believe that important recommendations are made in regard to class sizes. They certainly are important in their effect on the Treasury, because the Ahern committee has recommended ideal class sizes of 25 for Grades 1 and 2 and the later grades and 30 for the interim grades. Personally, I agree with that, both on observation and on a subjective basis.

The committee referred to study that had been done, and I think it referred also to the fact that many studies have diverged as to the relationship between class sizes and the end product. There is no doubt that the capacity and quality of the teachers probably is the dominant determinative of the quality

of teaching and the ability of the child to absorb knowledge. But assuming an equality of teaching performance, the study referred to in the report by Glass, which reviewed earlier works—and I think it was suggested that over 900,000 pupils were covered by the various surveys—showed that there was a relationship between class size and performance. I should have thought that it stood to reason that more personalised attention would have led to better performance, either from the component of the total time that the teacher spent with each person sorting out his or her particular problem or just in the sense that the smaller the class the more readily pupils feel that the teacher's eye is upon them. Everybody who has had anything to do with the control of other human beings knows that the larger the group of people the more difficult it is to instil or demand standards of behaviour.

If problems occur in a class, they inevitably occur in the back row. The performance in cinemas and the performance in class-rooms is very much parallel. That is because at the back of the room a person feels very much out of sight and to some extent out of mind. So quite clearly, from the point of view of discipline—but not purely for the sake of regimentation and discipline—if pupils think that they are individually under the eye of the teacher, they are more likely to devote their attention to what they are being taught.

The Glass study showed that very little distinction could be shown between, say, 30 and 25, or even as low as 20, but there was a measurable difference in the performance of pupils over the spectrum of education as the class size dropped from 30 to 20 for each teacher. When the class drops below 20, the curve goes up dramatically. The inference that is drawn, and I think it can be supported on just seeing children in the class and their response, is that smaller class sizes do assist more children and particularly assist children with problems. The Select Committee has found a balance between what is ideal and what is practicable.

I assume that nobody would suggest that this year all classes in Queensland could be converted to the recommended sizes. Such a step would require a building programme and a level of funding that cannot be countenanced. Any member of Parliament who knows the reaction of parents to the problem of class sizes would agree that classes of 30 for ordinary students and 25 for younger children, those undertaking complex subjects and disadvantaged children in terms of mental ability are desirable. The Government should accept those class sizes as ideal, and should work towards attaining them over a reasonable period.

There is nothing unreasonable in the sizes that are sought. The schools in my electorate are comparatively lucky in that in Grade 1 the average class size is 27, which is getting close to 25, and in other grades the average size is near 30. State schools, of course, have no right of refusal and are not able to predict exactly from year to year

what their enrolments will be. To attain class sizes of 30 or 35, the education system needs more teachers and more class-rooms.

I am sure that all consumers of education would like to minimise the occurrence of composite classes throughout our education system. Not that composite classes should necessarily be undesirable. It is probably only in schools that people are regimented according to age. In every other spectrum of life, people are put together according to common interest, common purpose in life or common ability.

Mr. Shaw: Composite classes of wide age groups and large numbers are not desirable.

Mr. INNES: Composite classes based purely on age groups are not sensible. However, in terms of ability, they are probably quite sensible.

There are probably more occasions in both primary and secondary schools on which groups could be put together according to interests, such as in art and music, where performance has no real bearing. Performance is not measured for future purposes.

The arts and other extracurricular activities, such as those involving environmental field studies, did not receive their just deserts. They were rightly included, albeit briefly, in the final report.

I know from experience gained in my electorate that familiarity with the arts, including music, and access to the teaching of music are keenly sought by parents with children who are fortunate enough to attend schools that have music teachers or an active music programme.

Access to the arts is access to our civilisation. The arts are the essence of our civilisation. The ancient Egyptians are dead and buried, but the flowering of their arts can still be seen in the pyramids. Most civilisations are remembered for their artistic creations. If we cannot, with the richest civilisation on earth which we enjoy in the 20th Century, devote part of our education processes to teaching our children about the finest flowerings of our intellectual life and our ability, we have come to a very sorry pass. Perhaps that materialism which my colleague the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs adverts to as a decline has set in, because certainly our education system should set store on imparting to the young that tradition of civilisation which is found in the arts.

The final matter to which I refer is trade training and secondary education bordering on tertiary education or technical training. There is still something wrong in terms of the school system performance dovetailing in with preparation for work and dovetailing in with the inclination that many pupils have towards preparing themselves for a career. It is certainly one of the functions of education to allow people to prepare themselves for an occupation or profession in life.

I find it disturbing to hear instances of shortfalls in trained people in the community and shortfalls in the trades. I am told there is a real shortfall of some 1,400 or 1,500 diesel mechanics who will be necessary for our great raw-material expansion in the 1980s. There is an abundance of young people who wish to be trained and qualified in trades. Private enterprise and the Government combined are not training all the people who want to become tradesmen, and they are not training all the people who will be necessary for the development that we face.

We are told that we can expect to face a sponsored migration programme of hundreds, even thousands, of trained overseas tradesmen. That seems to me to be unthinkable. If there is to be a toss-up, I would prefer to see young men trained for three or four years in a trades school with a year's internship, to use a parallel word in medicine, when they could go out virtually trained to an employer who has avoided the problems of the waste structure which we are told deters them from taking on apprentices, even though they are financed by the Government. It would be better to train a diesel mechanic the country will need rather than train yet more arts graduates with which this country is already over endowed. If we are looking at priorities, the priorities should be in favour of the man who wants to go into productive life and will go into productive life. Without tradesmen, we will not have the wheels and the cogs to keep up our civilisation and our standard of living.

I strongly advocate that the Government must dovetail the schooling system to recognise where there will be shortfalls and to alter the system to cater for shortfalls. There could be no better situation than to train the young people who want to be apprentices and who, we know, will find employment in the 1980s but, because of other problems, cannot get apprenticeships.

I understand that an interesting situation exists in Mt. Isa. The company tries to take all of its apprentices from the town. It employs over 130 or 140 new apprentices each year. However, because of the arrangement of subjects in schools, all of those who want to learn trades and have the mental equipment to become tradesmen cannot get the basic qualifications.

Many settled for social maths, which is about 60 per cent useful for their trade and 40 per cent not useful. They are not good enough to do the more academic maths subject which is next in line. It is about 40 per cent useful for their trade and 60 per cent theoretical and abstract maths which they could not master.

They leave school but cannot become apprentice electricians because they do not have the necessary ability in maths, which is the fault of the education system and not their own lack of ability. So Mount Isa Mines Ltd., with a far-sighted and accommodating school system, has devised a special

programme, 50 per cent in free time and 50 per cent in school-time, under which the young people who want to do so prepare themselves specially for the maths component they will require for their trade. It seems to be a sorry pass that we have young people who want to do maths to a level to allow them to become tradesmen but they have to go outside the school system to achieve it. Something is going very far wrong, and I would strongly urge that the education system, whether it be by the device of technical high schools or whatever, and by the use of people who know what the trades want rather than schoolteachers who do not know what the trade wants, devise curricula and programmes to allow young people who want to become tradesmen to gain an apprenticeship.

I also strongly urge that the school system take up the slack, where we find that private enterprise and Government combined cannot provide the necessary apprenticeships, to prepare the trained tradesmen who we know will be needed, and can project now will be needed, in the 1980s for our necessary development. It is a criminal waste of the talents of our young people to contemplate importing skilled migrants when we have thousands of young Queenslanders who want to be tradesmen.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (5.57 p.m.): I join with other members of the Assembly who have commended the committee for the tremendous work it has done, and the results of that work, because, having considered the seven reports, and certainly studied in detail the last report, I say that it is quite obvious that its task was an onerous one. But its members must be pleased with the results. They must be pleased indeed with the public acceptance of many parts of the report, or, if not acceptance, certainly the interest that has been created in education because of this in-depth report.

I have listened very carefully to community remarks about the recommendations that have been made. One group said that they were very progressive. One person said that they were controversial. Another person said that they were not unexpected. I could go on and list a dozen different comments such as "positive", "progressive" and, as one person said about some of the remarks on sex education, "courageous".

Mr. Moore: Did you read that part?

Mr. WRIGHT: Yes.

Mr. Moore: Homosexuality and all that tripe being taught to kids.

Mr. WRIGHT: Just a minute. I am not suggesting that these are views held by everybody; I am just referring to the different remarks that have been made. I will be pleased to hear the honourable member for Windsor speak on the aspect of homosexuality at a later date if it is dear to his heart.

Mr. Moore: I am looking at you. I am just wondering about that limp hand of yours.

Mr. WRIGHT: Your name's not "Justice" is it? No!

Getting back to where I was before I was rudely interrupted by the honourable member for Windsor—while I have accepted and expected many of the comments that have been made, I was rather surprised by some of the attitudes expressed by some Government members in the debate. I was certainly surprised at the challenge that was made by a senior member of the Liberal Party, in fact the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs, to the concept of pre-school education. I certainly hope that his views are not held by the majority of Government members. I would not like to see us go back to some laissez-faire approach of some kindergarten system under which those who could afford to go along, went, and those who could not just missed out.

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

Mr. WRIGHT: Prior to the dinner recess I had made some comments about the attitudes expressed by some Government members towards pre-school education. I was making the point that it is beyond doubt that pre-school education is vitally important and is now a prerequisite to the normal school programme. A number of studies have been carried out in this area. Teachers of Grades 1, 2 and 3 say that students who come into their classes after having had that initial training in pre-school, have a marked advantage over those who haven't. It was rather surprising to hear the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs express some concern about the suggestions in the report about pre-school education.

I note in the summary of recommendations that the committee said that pre-school attendance should not be made compulsory. We have to be very careful about compulsion, not because of a lack of desirability of the course, but because the real problem here is trying to meet the demand. Because we have not got the pre-schools, young people all over the State are missing out on pre-school education. I hope that this comment in the report is not an out for the Government; that the Government will not say, "We don't have to try to build pre-schools now because the committee said pre-school education should not be made compulsory." Let us try to get to the situation where the vast majority—in fact 100 per cent—of our children have the choice of going to pre-school. I hope that eventually it does become part and parcel of the school programme.

Another aspect that was questioned concerned the mature-age student returning to the normal class-room for secondary school studies. Whilst it may be difficult for a person of 30 or 40 years of age to go back into a class where there are young people of 16, 17 or 18 years of age, surely if mature-age students want to do this they

ought to be allowed to do it. I do not want to see the suggestion of a Government member followed through, whereby they would be put in some small class. The concept of allowing persons to retrain themselves by going back to study is an ideal one. If we had a community college concept, which I know has not been fully supported in the report, there would be an opportunity for those persons who did not take full advantage of their opportunities at secondary school to return and continue their studies. There would also be a possibility of transferring in courses, but that is another aspect.

I listened with amazement to the comments of Government members who gave acceptance to the cut-backs in the financing of education. I am disgusted that members of this Parliament can stand up and say that they are quite happy about cut-backs in education expenditure. The member for Mourilyan did not help herself very much here when she said that she believed it was reasonable. In my mind, it is totally unreasonable. Because of her comments, I think that the people in her electorate will hold her in question at the next election. Those comments are not affecting her individually; they are affecting hundreds—in fact thousands—of young people throughout this State.

I noted also her support for a reduction in the supportive staff—teacher aides, groundsman, etc. It is amazing that a person who holds herself up to be progressive should be saying that it is all right to cut back the number of teacher aides. I expect National Party and Liberal Party members to support their Government in some of these areas, but not to back regressive, backward and negative proposals or policies as they have done here.

I have to accept that it is impossible for any Government to suddenly implement everything contained in this report. However, I would ask that a clear timetable be established by the Government, through the Education Department, of when the numerous recommendations can be implemented. I accept that it cannot be done overnight, but we want to see some action. It has taken two years for this committee to study, investigate, interview and report on the various aspects of education in Queensland. I hope that the report is not going to be shelved, but that is the danger. If one thinks back to the Select Committee on Punishment of Crimes of Violence in Queensland—

Mr. Davis: That is right.

Mr. WRIGHT: The member for Brisbane Central was on that committee. We have yet to see many of those recommendations even considered. There has been at least some support for a number of recommendations that were made but, in the main, the report seems to have been put aside.

Mr. Ahern: That is not so. A lot of amendments were included in the Criminal Code.

Mr. WRIGHT: Yes, but that took something like 2½ years. I was involved in the shadow Justice portfolio at that time, and I recall that it was about 2½ years before those matters were brought forward. Some of the recommendations about changes in children's services took about three years. Surely the honourable member for Landsborough would not want to wait three years to see implemented many of the recommendations here that will cost nothing. That is where I take the Premier to task. He talks about a cost of millions of dollars to implement many of the recommendations. I do not think that is fair. Perhaps he is trying to find an out for himself and for his Government. Surely the honourable member for Landsborough would want to see implemented as many of these recommendations as possible.

There are problems. We must have community co-operation. Now that the report is before us the next step is to gain that community co-operation. There are numerous recommendations, such as the one for school-based courses. Local employers should be involved in syllabus preparation. That is just one aspect. There are numerous areas where the community ought to be involved. I would like to see the Government start to engender community interest so that something can be done to hasten the implementation of these recommendations.

In the short time I have allotted myself I will not have time to canvass all the aspects which I would like to, so I will get to a couple of vital points. As I said at the very outset, I commend the members for their initiative and the way in which they undertook this task, but I question whether solutions to the real problems have been obtained. As I have travelled around the State, especially visiting schools, I have noticed that one of the problems of the education system is the number of casualties in schools. That is the only way I can describe them. They are in fact casualties—the 15 to 20 per cent of students, and sometimes even a higher percentage, who have not been able to achieve their full capacity.

I think back to my own education and wonder about the different approach I may have taken to the subject of Latin had I had a teacher who was more interested in individual standards. All members might say that they missed something in their own education because the teachers did not take enough interest in individual students. There may have been excuses for this, such as class-room sizes, the individual ability and individual attitudes of teachers, the workload, and the transfer system which creates a lack of continuity in the class-room. Too many teachers are being transferred. In a recent instance brought to my attention, four

teachers taught one class in a period of four months. It is no wonder that some children suffer.

Under our system there are casualties. Sometimes children go into the wrong course areas. They may be pressed into a course because their brothers or sisters before them studied certain subjects, and they had to take those subjects because of the cost of books. One could come up with myriad reasons, but the fact is that there are casualties in our education system. Something has to be done about that.

I suggest some type of review mechanism should be built into the education system, say, at two phases within a child's normal school career. It could well be that at the Grade 5 or 6 area educating the child should be brought to a stop so that a three-month review could be undertaken. That time could be used to go back over the child's education to find out in what respects he was failing. I am told by the member for Wynnum that similar suggestions were put to the Select Committee. Those persons apparently seek a need for review—a need to stop for a moment and recheck what is being done. Sometimes a child will continue through because of an ability he has to cope in certain areas; he goes on and on, but never has the necessary skills to finally achieve his full capacity. I suggest that that will get worse, so that the number of casualties will increase drastically in the next few years.

Today I attended a dinner where a Mr. Brian Willersdorf made the point that within a very short time—three or four years—15 per cent of today's schoolchildren will not get jobs. He said that 85 per cent of children at school now will have to take jobs below their qualifications. I suggest that they will be casualties of the education system. I note that the report says nothing about catering for that aspect. Apart from the reference to computer training there is nothing in the report to really come to grips with the technological changes that we are encountering at the present moment.

So I say that the study by this committee and this Parliament into education is not finished. Because of the need for a timetable of implementation it has really only just begun. It has just begun because of the need to review some of the recommendations in terms of application and then, as I have said, to go further than that and look at the new problems that are now arising because of the changes in our society. Unless we come to grips with the changes taking place we will have a trail of failures from our schools.

I commend the members of the committee, and the report generally, for their endeavour to grasp hold of some of those problems. Let us make sure we go further. Let us make sure that this is only the beginning.

I suggest—I make this as a personal point; it is not a view that my party holds—that we are in some cases overtraining children

It is not necessary for many students to go to Grade 12. Perhaps they should be streamed into technical fields well before that is now being done. It concerns me greatly that we are saying to young people, "You can't get anywhere unless you have a Grade 10 qualification and unless you have gone on to Senior." In years gone by, a person went into the teaching profession having a Grade 8 education. Then he had to have Scholarship. Then he had to have Junior. Then he had to have Senior. Then he had to have an A.Ed.—an Associate in Education; six units at the university. Then he had to have a primary degree. Then he had to have a secondary degree. So it has gone on.

I question that the teachers of today are so much better than those of yesteryear, even though they have all these extra qualifications. I have had the chance to see some of the courses that our teachers are encouraged to undertake while they are out doing practical teaching, and I am not convinced that they are of any great advantage. I see the real advantage as being in the classroom, learning from experienced teachers.

Because I have also undertaken studies, I understand that there is a need to improve one's own qualifications. However, from the point of view of the students, it is possible—it is happening now—that some students are encouraged to become over-qualified. With the changes in—in fact, the removal of—employment opportunities, there will be tens of thousands of young people who are over-qualified. What Brian Willersdorf said today will be true: 85 per cent of our young people will take jobs well below the qualifications they have. This is serious. I do not know the answer to the problem, but I suggest that this is a matter for further study. There should be a review system by means of which a child can undertake a course in Grade 9, say, and be able to opt out in Grade 10 and still not lose the full 12 months. There is a need for further review.

There is a need also to consider some of the problems in our schools. I raise this matter in the last minute that I have available to me. I speak specifically of discipline. I said to the member for Landsborough today that it was rather good to be depicted in a cartoon. As a passing point, I thought that that cartoon of the member for Landsborough in today's paper was rather fitting.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: It shows that you have arrived.

Mr. WRIGHT: Yes. I recall that after my first speech in this Parliament 11 years ago I, too, was the subject of a cartoon. I think that made history, because no other member had been depicted in a cartoon after his first speech.

At that time I made the point that there ought to be a system of discipline under which, when a student reached nine points, he was out. There is a need to toughen up in the schools. Whilst the committee has

brought down some rather progressive recommendations—and I commend it for them—about the need to involve the parents, the teachers and the students before really heavy disciplinary action is taken, I am not quite sure that having it in the regulations will be the solution. We have to make an example of some students. We have to get tough. I know that it takes away the rights of a few, but I am concerned about the lack of discipline in State schools at the moment. I have had discussions in the last three months with parents who are concerned and express the view that it is better to send students to private schools for discipline alone. It is not because of the quality of teaching; State schools can match them on the quality of teaching.

Mr. Underwood: Private schools send the trouble-makers down the road to the State school.

Mr. WRIGHT: That could well be so. However, there is a problem with discipline and we need to get tough. I would like to see the Education Department accept the disciplinary regulations proposed by the committee and implement them. It is no good the principals having the power unless they are able to use it.

I make the final point that I am pleased the report is finished and I am pleased that members will have a continuing opportunity to debate the recommendations. However, I ask again that the committee press the Government—and especially the Premier, because he seems to have the most say—to have a clear timetable for the implementation of these recommendations.

Mr. SCASSOLA (Mt. Gravatt) (7.30 p.m.): I join with those who preceded me in this debate in commending the Select Committee on its work. The committee, as has been said, engaged in its task over a period of some two years. The quality of the reports that came out of the committee's deliberations brings credit not only on the members of the committee but also on this Parliament, and I hope that, as a result of the significant success of this Select Committee, we will see many more such committees in the years to come.

I direct my attention and the attention of the House this evening to one of the recommendations that the committee made, that is, the recommendation to the effect that "the recommendation of the Advisory Council for Special Education 'that the Minister for Education seek amendment to the Education Act 1964-1974 whereby the provision of education for handicapped children up to 18 years of age is the statutory responsibility of the Minister' be supported".

The report of the Advisory Council for Special Education is one of the most significant documents on the subject of special education to be published in this State for more than a generation. It contains some 20 separate recommendations, some of which are fundamental and of vital importance to

the future of handicapped children in this State. The first of those 20 recommendations, which is the one to which the Select Committee referred, is of paramount importance, because it acknowledges that every child in this State is entitled to the basic human right of a free and compulsory education at Government expense.

The principal recommendation of the advisory council, which is supported by the Select Committee, raises two very basic and fundamental questions. The first question is: who are in fact the handicapped? The second is: are the handicapped really different?

The handicapped are those who in some way do not measure up to what society defines as normal, either physically, mentally, or behaviourally. The standard of normality, however, is not absolute. It varies from society to society; indeed, it varies from individual to individual.

As to the second question—the handicapped child is, first and foremost, a human being. He experiences elation and disappointment, joy and sorrow. Like others, he responds to love and affection and encouragement, and he suffers and is crushed by oppression and rejection. He enjoys health and suffers sickness. He requires food and clothing, shelter and medical care, and he requires education. He is, then, an ordinary child who, because of some disability, requires special provision.

For centuries the handicapped have been, and still are, treated as different. They have been incarcerated in institutions, in some cases with the mentally ill, where they have languished until a premature death. For centuries no attempt was made to understand their problems or their difficulties or to ensure their physical or mental development, and their needs—such basic needs as food and clothing, shelter and comfort—were left to charity and to the initiatives of the few. For centuries they have carried labels which, to say the least, are inhuman.

The Fifth Principle of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which was adopted unanimously in 1959—and I remind the House of it—says that the child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by his particular condition. The proposition contained in the first recommendation of the Advisory Council for Special Education supports that proposition. It has also been supported by a number of inquiries and commissions in this country in the last decade. I cite merely as an example part of the findings of the Senate Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, which, in its report published in 1971 on the mentally and physically handicapped in Australia, said—

“The Committee supports the principles that education is the right of every child and that education should be free and compulsory. Those States which are not providing free education to a particular section of the handicapped population are,

in fact, discriminating against the basic rights of a fairly large section of the community.”

For 118 years the education of children in this State has been recognised as a function of the Government. Under the Education Acts education is compulsory for all except those for whom a “reasonable excuse” exists. Moreover, the community has accepted that there is a right of choice in education, a choice between a Government-funded and operated school system on the one hand and a private school system on the other, each of which has the same broad educational programmes and goals set by the Department of Education. That freedom of choice extends from early childhood education through to secondary education.

In contrast, the handicapped child has no such choice. Indeed, he has no right to any education at all. Since 1952, when it was decreed in this State that only educable children be catered for in opportunity schools—to quote the words of a report—all handicapped children save those who were regarded as being mildly mentally retarded have been denied entry to the State school system.

There are, of course, exceptions to that. They relate to children who basically are sensorially handicapped. In those circumstances, parents of mentally retarded children could do little other than seek assistance from voluntary organisations that were formed at about that time in an attempt to fill the vacuum and individually catered by and large for specific categories of handicap.

The current position is that handicapped children, other than those who are deaf, or blind, have no right to education, let alone any State education. If a child happens to fall into a recognised category of handicap that is catered for by a voluntary organisation, he may have the opportunity to attend a school conducted by that organisation. If, on the other hand, he does not fall into one of those categories, he simply has no opportunity to receive any kind of education, whether or not it is provided by the State. But in either case the handicapped child has no right to seek entry to any such school of an organisation or any Government school.

The Advisory Council for Special Education in its report examined the role of voluntary organisations in the provision of educational services to handicapped children. It ought to be said that for a very long time those voluntary organisations provided a most valuable contribution to the welfare of handicapped people and, in particular, handicapped children. They provided a service at a time when there was literally nothing else.

Having said that, I nevertheless concur with the view expressed by the Advisory Council for Special Education, as follows—

“While recognising the valuable contribution that such groups have made and are making in this area, Council does not support the view that an evolutionary development of the type that has taken

place over the last two decades should be perpetuated in its present form into the foreseeable future."

The needs of the handicapped child and the raised expectations of people connected with the handicapped child make it imperative that standards of education are set and that the handicapped child has a legislative right to an education funded by the State. As the chairman of the Select Committee said in his speech the other day—

"We can no longer look in the rear-view mirror."

It is time that we looked forward and looked ahead. The revelation in the advisory council's report that more than half the number of teachers employed by voluntary organisations have no specialist teaching preparation is a matter of grave concern. Research over a number of years has clearly shown that the effective education of the handicapped more than any other group is dependent on highly skilled teachers who design and tailor programmes for individuals, which programmes are applied by means of systematic modern teaching techniques and methods, and close observation and reporting of individual progress. Unless children have the benefit of such skills and techniques, they are severely and permanently disadvantaged. The community insists that teachers of all normal children have appropriate skills and qualifications to enable them to discharge their duties. The community should demand no less from those teaching the handicapped.

The Advisory Council for Special Education makes the observation that "with the growth of some voluntary associations and associated development of bureaucratisation direct parental and community involvement has diminished", and there is evidence to support that statement. It has been recognised that support and participation by parents in programmes for handicapped children are an integral and vital part of their development and educative process, and more important here than in any other area of child education.

Parents of children attending any educational establishment conducted by voluntary organisations have complained that participation and co-operation in programmes are not sought or encouraged. Complaints have been made by some parents that they are not consulted, nor do they have an effective voice or contribution to make in the decision-making process. As one person put it to me on one occasion, "We are relegated to the kitchen." Some complain that they are regarded solely as a fund-raising mechanism and little else.

The fifteenth and sixteenth recommendations of the Advisory Council for Special Education advert to the rights of parents and the problems currently existing that arise out of the rules relating to the admission of people to voluntary organisations and establishments. I agree with the findings of the council that parents of children in

institutions conducted by voluntary organisations have a feeling of subservience and vulnerability and that, in part, this feeling arises out of the attitude prevalent in some voluntary organisations that children are not admitted as of right but by the grace of the executive committee.

Those feelings are reinforced by the rules of some of those voluntary groups, which rules, in some cases at least, whether they are adhered to or not, constitute a violation of the principles of fair play. For example, one finds that in some cases the children have to be re-enrolled annually. This means that parents do not simply enrol when the child is first admitted to the establishment. There is a requirement that the child be re-enrolled annually.

The admission of a child to the establishment is conditional upon the payment of fees, conditional upon the child's parents being admitted to the membership of the relevant association, and conditional upon continued membership of that association. Moreover, the continued membership of a parent in the relevant association is conditional upon the parent's demonstrating "loyalty", whatever that might mean.

The rule which makes people feel very vulnerable and totally subservient is the rule which enables the management committee to refuse admission or to exclude any person already admitted at any time without giving any reason whatsoever. The point that ought to be made is that in many instances the particular association is the only one of its kind offering the relevant service in the State, and if a child is excluded from admission to that particular establishment he really has nowhere else to go.

The attitudes to which I have referred, and the rules of some organisations to which I have referred, effectively suppress any criticism by parents who privately express the view that any observation on or any criticism of any course of action may result in their child's being excluded, in which event the child would have no opportunity for any education at all. In some cases, where persons have raised legitimate queries, they have either been ignored or told peremptorily that the association would have no objection if the child were removed from its programme.

The Advisory Council on Special Education expressed its concern at the attitude of some voluntary organisations and their rules in these words—

"Council is concerned that continued availability of services to handicapped persons should not be jeopardised through any activity or inactivity or criticism of the Association by parents or other advocates."

Parents, as taxpayers, are denied adequate educational opportunities for their children simply because their children are handicapped. I make the point again that the statute ought to be amended so that every child in this State has a basic legislative right to an education appropriate to his needs. The

attitude of some people, and their resistance to change, leads one to believe that in the minds of some the continuation of the status quo is of a higher priority than the welfare of the children whom the associations were formed to serve.

The Advisory Council on Special Education adverted to the question of accountability in education for handicapped people and I concur totally with the views expressed in that document. The voluntary associations receive substantial contributions from the Government towards their programmes. At the moment there is little or no accountability for the expenditure of that money. Equally, there is no accountability for the programmes that are conducted. I suggest it is not unreasonable that organisations account for the moneys received from government. Equally, it is not unreasonable to suggest that standards ought to be set for the programmes that children, whether they be handicapped or otherwise, undertake.

The Advisory Council on Special Education adverted to the lack of support facilities available to handicapped children. In its reports, the Select Committee referred to the need for early intervention programmes. The provision of early intervention programmes, including support services to handicapped children, is absolutely crucial to progress and development. After all, many of those children are unable to communicate, and adequate communication is vital to any sort of progress at all. The Advisory Council on Special Education made it quite clear that, in its view, support facilities for handicapped children were inadequate. Clearly, those support facilities, especially speech therapy services, are unco-ordinated and fragmented; they are simply inadequate.

The problem is twofold. In the first place, there is clearly an insufficient number of speech therapists, or indeed other therapists, in the State education system and in the programmes conducted by voluntary organisations. It is said that the ceilings that are imposed preclude the appointment of a great number of therapists in the State school system. I submit that that is no argument. It merely reveals that there is not yet a recognition of the importance of speech therapy and of other types of therapy to the development of the handicapped.

The second problem is one of allocation of available personnel. From examining the appointments, it seems to me that there is a very real need to look at the priorities in this area. If one examines the appointment of speech therapists—and I refer to them because there are very few other kinds of therapists in the State system—one finds that many of them are made to State schools on a Statewide basis. At the same time, many hundreds, if not thousands, of handicapped children in this State have no speech therapy programmes at all. They simply have no accessibility to speech therapy. What

is required is a re-examination of the priorities so that preference is given in the first instance to those with the greatest need.

I refer honourable members to one other matter, and that is the question of an at-risk register. In its Third Report the Select Committee referred to the need for early intervention in terms of literacy. Early intervention has long been recognised as being of very great value. In particular, it is of enormous value in the development of handicapped children. The committee said in its Third Report that there was a need to identify at-risk children before they passed critical points in the education stream and, coupled with that, there was a very real need for a series of early intervention programmes. With all of that I totally agree.

In their submission to the committee the special school principals suggested that an appropriate at-risk register should be established on a national level with access to individual State departments. It seemed to me that they were referring to an at-risk register that would be compiled at the point of birth. Dr. William McBride of Foundation 41 advocated in 1977 the establishment of a national register to record babies' birth defects. In the context of the handicapped, the recording of known defects at birth with the subsequent availability of information to education and medical authorities would be of enormous benefit to those charged with the teaching and development generally of those people. I believe it would certainly save an enormous amount of time; it would assist those who have to frame programmes and it would lead to a much better future for handicapped children. The argument against that proposition is that an at-risk register would label children. I suggest that is no argument as handicapped children are already labelled for life. The community labels Down's syndrome children as mongoloid, cerebral palsy children as spastic and mentally retarded children generally as subnormal. Moreover, the mere fact that handicapped children have no right to enter educational institutions conducted by the State is in itself a stamp or a label.

The establishment of such a register has been undertaken. It has been undertaken in the United States because the 1975 Education of All Handicapped Children's Act provided that schemes were to be established throughout the nation to ascertain the number of handicapped children within the boundaries of the States.

Although there have been some advances in this State in recent times, the point ought to be made that those advances have been made by administrative decision and not legislative action. The legislation that effectively excludes handicapped children from the education system remains substantially unchanged. It is time the relevant legislation in this State was looked at. We need to enact legislation that will guarantee handicapped children a useful and worthwhile future.

In closing I quote the words of Eunice Kennedy Schriver, the Executive Vice-President of the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation. I believe they are apt words here this evening. Referring to the handicapped she said—

“It is the obligation of each of us to value and nurture above all the moral principles which teach us that all human beings are equal in law. That those who have the most gifts have the greatest responsibility, that indeed those with the least must be entitled to the most in a compassionate society and that every human being must count as one whole person”.

Mr. BERTONI (Mt. Isa) (7.59 p.m.): I, too, rise to voice my appreciation of the work of the Select Committee on Education and to say what an excellent report that committee has produced for this Parliament to discuss. I also wish to pay tribute to the chairman of that committee, the honourable member for Landsborough, who has acquitted himself in a most distinguished manner to the people throughout the electorate. I am sure the recommendations in the report have the support of at least 90 per cent of teachers and parents throughout this country. Those who criticise the report are indeed a minority.

The report was widely canvassed in all sections of the media. It created a great deal of discussion—and so it should have. It was something that was badly needed for our education system. The report covered a cross-section of our community, including teachers and parents, thus getting a realistic feedback from the community.

We must ask ourselves what the recommendations of the committee have really done for education. Firstly, and broadly speaking, they have given the teaching profession a badly needed shot in the arm and raised its morale and its standards. They have also proven that the Queensland education system is the best in Australia and comparable with any overseas. The inquiry was not a witch-hunt into the teaching profession, as it was first feared it may be. It has given a sense of purpose and direction to our education system. It has given a policy on education. It has given our educationists the direction in which to shape the lives of young children for many years to come. No-one would be so naive to suggest that all is perfect in the system. This inquiry has shown that there is no room for complacency. As long as we are conscious of this, we will continue to progress for the betterment of education.

Tonight there are two main areas on which I would like to speak. The first is the Fourth Interim Report, the one that has received most publicity and is regarded as the most contentious—and no wonder. It relates to the emotional issue of human relations. We have been showered with literature for and against the introduction of sex education in schools. It is indeed a touchy area, but I believe that the committee

has given us a well-balanced and unbiased report. I took the liberty of taking a survey team into my electorate to canvass 700 homes on this subject. I had teams out door-knocking, asking people a series of questions on the most contentious subjects that we could discuss—and sex education in schools was one of them. I am pleased to announce that nine out of 10 people in my electorate want some form of sex education in schools. Therefore, I can do nothing but support the findings of the committee.

I have heard comments to the effect that sex education is the responsibility of parents, but I assure honourable members that not all parents accept that responsibility. Therefore, the recommendations of the inquiry have my full support. Although people speak about “sex education” in our schools, we are really talking about human relationships, which is more than sex education. There is the need to teach at various levels in the schools how to get on with one another, how our attitudes should be developed towards one another, and how to handle such situations in the schools as the bully who continually hits the timid child. That is what human relationships are all about: how we treat one another, how we get on with one another and how we adopt positive attitudes in handling situations.

The Joyners and other groups have been continually pressing home the fact that it is just sex education in the schools and that we are allowing our schools to follow the patterns exhibited in some of the literature she has been flooding us with. I am sure that the members of this Assembly will formulate strict regulations and guide-lines when the time comes to implement this small section of the recommendations of the committee.

I support the proviso that teachers be specially trained. As long as sufficient explanation is given to parents concerning the programme and how it will be implemented, surely it is our duty to make all pupils aware of the facts of life in a manner that is not detrimental to them. In my opinion, the Government should take the bit in its teeth, ignore the small minority who squeal so loudly in criticism of anything that is contentious, and provide a realistic course that will lessen this State's deplorable record of having more juvenile pregnancies and ex-nuptial births than any other Australian State.

To a thinking man, education is a continuing process, and we cannot go on burying our heads in the sand and ignoring the problems that surround us on this subject. There is nothing as small as a small-minded, ignorant person.

Mr. Davis interjected.

Mr. BERTONI: I will take the honourable member's interjection. Yes, I believe I would. It was not part of my course when I went to school, and I think it would be very beneficial if such a course were introduced under the guide-lines that

I have indicated. We cannot continue to ignore the thousands of voices raised in support of the report.

The second matter that concerns my electorate is the section of the Fifth Interim Report dealing with isolated children. Again I took the opportunity of forwarding to all students in my country electorate a copy of the Fifth Interim Report so that their parents could clearly understand the recommendations of the committee. Then I took the opportunity of speaking to isolated parents over the Royal Flying Doctor radio network and discussing the recommendations with them. I assure the House that I have the full support of country people on those recommendations.

I am pleased that the committee has made a number of recommendations that are tremendously beneficial. One of the points made most frequently during my discussions with country people was that there were not enough frequencies on the Royal Flying Doctor radio network and that that was hampering children in the West. After repeated requests through the Education Department and through Telecom, additional frequencies were refused. If we are to do anything positive, we should take immediate steps to increase the number of frequencies available on the Royal Flying Doctor radio network to fulfil other sections of the education programme.

Another matter that was brought to my attention was the position of itinerant teachers. At the moment, itinerant teachers are attached to the School of the Air. They fly to country areas but, because they can stay only two or three hours at any one station or with any individual students, they cannot properly supervise the work of the children. As a result, many problems are either missed completely or cannot be discussed at length. Therefore, I think it is important that more itinerant teachers be attached to the School of the Air to assist with correspondence courses. One of my first suggestions would be that these itinerant teachers should fly out and stay at least three or four days at a time to supervise the work of country students and give them the additional assistance that they need because of their isolation.

Another recommendation concerns the provision of additional finance for country people travelling in country areas. I cannot stress too strongly the problem that will arise from the changed school holidays next year. There will be a great need to provide financial assistance to country people.

Some parents in my electorate will have to travel as far as 1 000 km to pick up their children from boarding school and take them back again at the end of the vacation. The cost involved, taking into account loss of time, cost of petrol and travelling time, could be as high as \$300. The altered holidays will cause tremendous problems next year for country people. I wrote to the

Education Department concerning this problem, which will be compounded by the introduction of altered school holidays.

It is imperative that the Government either look at a means of keeping the country children in boarding schools or pay subsidies to allow them to travel to their homes. A tremendous burden, apart from all the inconvenience and isolation, will fall upon country people.

The School of the Air should be organised as a classified school. In my electorate alone, the School of the Air has 130 students. The principal, however, does not enjoy the rights that are normally enjoyed by a principal. She is a schoolteacher doing her job for one year. Instead of having a teacher employed for a one-year term, the School of the Air should engage experienced teachers who understand the problems associated with living in the country.

Mr. Davis: Could they get them?

Mr. BERTONI: Certainly, from a specialist field. Such teachers should be made available, as they are at other schools.

Mr. Davis: Do you agree with the incentive scheme?

Mr. BERTONI: Yes, I do, but perhaps not on the same basis as the honourable member. The isolated teacher should be offered some incentive scheme. Such a scheme should provide for promotion as well as monetary compensation.

An Opposition Member: What is your party's policy on it?

Mr. BERTONI: At the moment I am not concerned about my party's policy; I am just stating my views.

An Opposition Member: What's the Government's policy?

Mr. BERTONI: I could ask the honourable member what is the Labor Party's policy. It may not be the same as the honourable member's.

My view is that an incentive scheme should be introduced, based, as I say, not on monetary compensation alone but on promotion as well. Perhaps a points system could be adopted so that a teacher who amassed a certain number of points obtained some benefit, such as a low-interest loan for the purchase of a home. There should be an incentive scheme to induce teachers to accept transfers to country areas.

Some people have claimed that the implementation of the Select Committee's report would cost as much as \$100,000,000.

Mr. Davis: The Premier said that.

Mr. BERTONI: Then let me say that regardless of what it costs, it should be implemented.

Mr. Prest: You're broke now. Where are you going to get the money?

Mr. BERTONI: Let us get the money from our city counterparts if we have to. For too long the country people and the isolated people have been ignored. For too long this Government has tended not to assist the people in the isolated areas.

Mr. Ahern: It will certainly not cost \$100 million to implement the Fifth Report.

Mr. BERTONI: I agree. I think those figures were simply plucked out of the air to impress people about the cost of implementing the report.

Mr. Prest: The Premier said it.

Mr. BERTONI: Whether the Premier said it or not, I do not believe it.

It is time to stop penalising the isolated children. They do not have the funds and facilities that their city counterparts enjoy. These isolated children might be few in number but they should have the opportunities, facilities and benefits enjoyed by children in the coastal areas. We would be at fault if we did not consider the needs of isolated children. They put up with the most inconvenient of conditions and they complain the least, because we as legislators ignore their cries for help.

The third and final matter that I should like to discuss tonight concerns teachers and administrators. Our teachers have been unduly criticised. They are genuine, dedicated people. For this, we are indeed very fortunate. Generally, the calibre of young graduates who go to country areas, even those who have been conscripted, cannot be faulted. They readily fit into a different social life and are usually the leaders in those communities. They have my deepest admiration. I, for one, will not accept the endless criticism of our teachers by so many people who speak from ignorance and misunderstanding.

As I said before, no-one here is naive enough to suggest that all is perfect in the education system. This inquiry has shown clearly the need for change. I believe that the people want a change, and as legislators we must force a change in our education system. It is our moral duty to ensure that these reports are implemented as quickly as possible.

Mr. PREST (Port Curtis) (8.19 p.m.): After many hours of debate, most of the areas in the report have been covered. One of the matters on which most members have agreed relates to the good work done by the committee. I, too, congratulate the members of the committee and their advisers on the work they did before bringing to the House the many recommendations we have before us for consideration. No doubt these recommendations will not be 100 per cent acceptable or accepted without some criticism.

One I can mention is the human relationships course in schools. It must be handled very gently if it is to be accepted. I do

not and will not go along with it if it is to be as it has been described as some—a sex-education course in primary schools. I agree with the honourable member for Mt. Isa that it should be a human relationships course covering much more than just the sex instruction that critics of the recommendation endeavour to say it would be. It should be broadened. That would be of great value to the children in senior grades at primary school. It would help to fit them for the future, particularly when they commence secondary school. I find today that children are more open about their knowledge of the facts of life, and this has no doubt been brought about by the society in which we live. This information is openly and readily available in our own homes, where television programmes leave very little to the child's imagination.

Mr. Moore: If you put your foot on your glasses, you couldn't make a speech.

Mr. PREST: If the honourable member put his foot in his mouth, he would shut up.

I believe that what is required in our society today, more than ever before, is for children to be educated to the highest possible standard, and that means in human relationships, too. We are burying our head in the sand, as a previous speaker said, if we believe that children today are not seeking advice or instruction in human relationships. A great number of parents want to believe that their sons or daughters are so quiet and shy that they just would not and should not be interested in such a course, and therefore human relationships should not be a school subject. Some parents cannot or will not communicate with their children, but they cry to high heaven when they find that their children have had to find out the facts of life for themselves. I therefore believe that an acceptable programme on human relationships should be introduced into the Senior course. I hope that all the work that was done before the recommendations were framed will not have been in vain. I hope that the recommendations are not pigeon-holed, as has happened to past reports, not only in this house but also in other Parliaments, both State and Federal. I realise that to implement these changes in our school system money, and lots of it, will have to be found. But we knew that before the committee was set up, so now that its work has virtually been completed it is up to this Government and future Governments to make money available to improve the education system.

I do not intend to speak at length on this report as I believe that the evidence and submissions made to the committee should have been sufficient to show that changes are required in the education system, but money must be spent and it is up to the Government to provide it.

The Minister for Education said that the Queensland Teachers' Union had caused great problems in the schools, but I do not

believe that that is correct. The Queensland Teachers' Union is a responsible body representing a group of responsible and very important men and women. I have the highest regard for the teachers of this State, and over the years I have found them to be dedicated to their profession. They are dedicated to the interests of the pupils under their control. The union is deeply involved in this issue. If teachers are to do their job in the most professional manner we must have adequate school accommodation. By that I mean adequate class-rooms of an acceptable standard, adequate furnishings, adequate staff rooms, adequate covered areas to cope with varying weather conditions, adequate staff, including teacher aides and supply teachers to allow for acceptable class sizes, adequate sporting amenities and adequate teacher housing and accommodation. When all these things are provided I am sure that the union will have far less work to do. Teachers will be happier and morale in the schools will be much higher. Parents and pupils will be satisfied that we have their interests at heart, and I am sure that the standard of education will improve immensely.

I am sorry to have to say that at this time the standard of facilities in our schools is not up to the standard that I, as a parent, teachers or union delegates regard as acceptable in today's conditions. When we make requests or demands of the department we are always told, "Sorry, we haven't got the funds to carry out that work."

Finally, I must draw the attention of the House to the urgent need for specialist education—specialist teaching for handicapped children. I fully support the remarks made by the member for Mt. Gravatt who has gone into the subject much more thoroughly than I have. He has had vast experience in this field. I believe that children in special schools are being catered for up to a point in most centres. However, some centres are overcrowded. Although the teachers are doing a wonderful job, they need relief from overcrowding. More special schools must be built. The special school in my area should be expanded. The teachers at the Gladstone Special School are wonderful, and the children really appreciate what they do to help them. Unless handicapped children live in a major centre, they are neglected.

The parents of handicapped children find it terribly difficult to convey their children for many miles in their cars. I know that some parents travel up to 100 miles a day just so that their children can receive a lesson for half an hour or an hour in a major centre. At times, handicapped children have to be sent away from home for the whole week. They live with foster parents so that they can receive some specialist education.

There is a need for a greater number of specialist teachers to be employed by the department. I fail to see how a parent

with a handicapped child in the more remote areas in the central and western parts of the State can cope with the situation. I know the plight of a handicapped child in a provincial centre. All children, whether they come from the cities or country towns, or live on properties in the country, or whether they be handicapped, should have equal education opportunities.

I am concerned that pre-school education is not available for all children. This is another area in which money has to be spent. We need more pre-schools. All children should have the opportunity to attend pre-school. Pre-school education should not be available just to the favoured few. Overall, this Government and future Governments must give greater priority to education by making the necessary money available, and the money should be spent well and wisely.

Today more children are staying at high school to Grades 11 and 12. More children are seeking further education. The main reason for this is that jobs are not available for them. Many are not able to obtain the jobs for which they apply because they are not adequately educated. Only the education system can be blamed. Let us make these major changes so that we give every child an equal opportunity for education and employment.

Mr. SIMPSON (Cooroora) (8.28 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to rise in this debate and comment on the recent education inquiry that took some two years to complete. It has been a very important review of education in the State. It was undertaken at a time when there was so much criticism of education in Queensland. Whenever there is criticism of any system, people tend to become disappointed and look for faults. In fact, they tend to undermine the confidence of those involved in the system. I believe that this inquiry has done a lot to return us to a state of normality. I hope that it will impress the importance of education on those in power who make decisions on the course education will take from now on in this State.

I do not think anyone can deny that education is a subject that most people hold very dear to their hearts. That is why there has been such a tremendous interest in the report of the committee. It is why an array of submissions were made to the committee.

The main problem ahead is to find sufficient funds to carry out the majority of the recommendations made by the committee—certainly the most worthwhile ones. I say that in the light of the reduction in certain education services that have occurred in this State since the last Budget. I still think of them as cut-backs in education but, of course, the Treasurer is quick to remind me that in fact an additional \$49.5 million has been made available for education, and therefore it was not a cut-back in funds but a cut-back in certain services. Those cuts in services are as unfair to one Queenslander

as they are to another. I instance the reduction of services by teacher aides and clerk-typists. The principal at the Kenilworth school, which includes a pre-school, a primary school and a secondary school, has to leave his class-room to answer the phone. That is a duty that he should not have to perform, and it is surely a waste of resources.

Another area of cut-back is that of janitor-groundsmen. The work of janitor-groundsmen is a great assistance in the operation of a school. Travelling allowances for specialised teachers have been restricted. In my electorate seven small schools have been disadvantaged because the music teacher no longer calls on a regular basis. He was a properly qualified and dedicated teacher. He gave inspiration to the children in those schools. The teachers at those schools now have to perform that job although they have never been properly trained for it.

That these programmes continue to be cut back is a shame. The Treasurer assures me he is endeavouring to find extra funds to restore those programmes to their previous level. I certainly hope he can do that.

The recommendations made by the committee have created great interest throughout Queensland. I hope that interest will convince Cabinet, particularly the Treasurer, of the need for greater education funding.

Mr. Moore: They get too much money now.

Mr. SIMPSON: I do not agree with that. Education is the most important thing in our lives.

Mr. Moore: Of course it is. That has nothing to do with money, though.

Mr. SIMPSON: Efficiency in education is something that should be looked at and reviewed continually so that we get value for money. It is very difficult to assess. I think all honourable members would agree that such statistics and facts are not readily available in relation to education. That is one matter that the committee noted. It is very difficult to compare our standard with that of another State or nation. If we are able to assess the position of education now in some sort of finite terms, I hope we will be able to assess its position in X number of years. If education is compared to the attainments of man in other professions, it does not show up in a favourable light. It has not increased the capacity of people to learn by 500 per cent, as may be the case at the work-place where technology has had a great effect. Only slight increases in the effectiveness of education have been achieved, but they are increases.

I was interested to hear the honourable member for Landsborough speak of the distances that some children had to travel in remote areas of the State. He mentioned that some of them drove themselves. I can only say that the remote areas of Queensland will have some young and very skilled

drivers. In my opinion, the ability to survive on the roads should be taught in our schools.

Mr. Moore: How are you going to do that? Teach them to drive a semi-trailer?

Mr. SIMPSON: No. We must insist on adequate education programmes, which other States and countries have, and the requirement that a licence not be issued until the person has the necessary mental stability and is properly trained in the skill of driving. In Japan, the standard of teaching people to drive is ever so much higher than it is here. It is so exacting that the parent gives up the wheel to his younger, properly trained sons and daughters. They drive with great precision on roads that have narrow lanes. I was most impressed with their standard of driver education. There are properly set-up areas in some centres for teaching children about road sense. I believe that Victoria has a centre in Shepparton that provides a service for the whole State. There is a soundly based scheme to teach road sense to children from the toddler stage up, and teenagers are taught how to drive. Even truck and tractor drivers receive tuition from that school. I believe that to be important.

The primary purpose of education is to produce responsible citizens—responsible citizens being those who need to work not just for the work ethic but to cope with the responsibility of living, of having families and of maintaining and supporting others. We must be taught to help others in the community and to become responsible citizens. The interesting point is: do we in fact educate our young people for so long that they lose the ability to acquire the work ethic? They remain at school or college until they are 20 or 22, by which time they do not easily accept the discipline of working for others or even of working for themselves.

With the changing technology in our community, it may well be that young people will have to adapt themselves to new work styles and occupations. They may be better off if they leave school at the age of 15 or 16, at which time the wage structure allows them to compete in the workplace far more competitively against working mothers than they are now able to do. They would have that advantage, and also learn the work ethic. They could then further educate themselves, either in the evenings while they were working during the day or by full-time studies.

Many aspects of the practicality of education should be looked at. There is the matter of students being assessed earlier to discover whether their aptitude fits them to be tradesmen or artisans in our community. There do not seem to be the numbers willing to take those work positions at the moment. Should we be teaching young people at the primary stages of education to use typewriters? That would have a twofold benefit: it would improve the legibility of

the written word and it would fit them to move into the computer age which at the moment is (I was going to say "keyed" to the keyboard) operated from the keyboard. With the introduction of new technology, the stage might be reached at which sophisticated machines would be voice-operated rather than operated by a touch on a keyboard. I believe that to enable people to get through more work and express their thoughts legibly, children should be taught to use a typewriter at a very young age.

Mr. Hansen: We would then be able to read it, too.

Mr. SIMPSON: That is correct, and their ability to communicate with their fellows would be much improved.

Some people are still demanding the use of external examinations instead of the present system of assessment. However, the committee found that the present system is the better one, so it seems that the old system has gone for good. In my opinion, external examinations had merit in certain circumstances, and certain employers still support them strongly. The difficulty with assessments, as with other aspects of the present system, is to determine to what extent they are based on practicality and to what extent they are made by academics whose point of view is far removed from the class-room and even farther removed from the work-place.

The question of human relationships is probably attracting too much attention. An honourable member has suggested already that one should take note only of what one sees and hears. What I have observed in my electorate is that if only a minority of people are suggesting that the sex-education part of human relationships should not be taught in schools, they have certainly got their message through to me. They have done it not in an organised way—one can pick that type of approach quite readily—but in a very personal and concerned way, and many people, including a number of church leaders, have come to my office.

Mr. Davis: You would not be too hard to sway.

Mr. SIMPSON: I did not say anything about being swayed. It is no good talking about people who do not go to the trouble of making an appointment to see a member of Parliament in his office but simply send reams of mail.

Mr. Davis: I want to know which you support, "Yea" or "Nay".

Mr. SIMPSON: Do I support personally?

Mr. Davis: Yes.

Mr. SIMPSON: I support the introduction of a scheme that is properly prepared, taught by properly qualified people, and acceptable to parents.

People in my electorate are concerned about guide-lines, but I do not think it is fair to go into the matter in detail until guide-lines are actually laid down. One must wait till they are laid down and then see whether it is possible to implement them. When new ground is being broken, tests must be conducted to see whether or not it is suitable.

Mr. Davis: I support it because I have seen it work in private schools.

Mr. SIMPSON: That is the type of information that should be assessed.

Mr. Davis: It has been assessed and evidence has been put before the committee.

Mr. SIMPSON: Concern has been expressed in my electorate and, if it is introduced, it must be strictly in accordance with the guide-lines laid down. If the incidence of venereal disease and promiscuity were to increase, it would indicate that the scheme was not succeeding.

I pay a tribute to the great work done by p. and c. associations, which provide additional facilities in both the class-room and the playing areas.

Mr. Lester: They deserve great credit. They are a great help to this State.

Mr. SIMPSON: Indeed they are. Often I hear criticism to the effect that they are only a milking cow and exist only to raise funds. That, of course, is not so. Unless people are given an opportunity to strive for a common goal, they will quickly lose interest.

At one school in my electorate the p. and c. association decided its task was not to raise funds but to look into the class-room activities. The attendance and support for that association fell right away, with the result that it became quite ineffective. Now, it is raising funds. The parents have a common interest and are contributing a good deal even at the academic level. I commend that p. and c. association as well as all the others.

I commend those dedicated teachers who take a personal interest in their students. It is easier for a teacher to do that, of course, if he or she has a small class. It is also easy at small schools. One school in my electorate, the Kin Kin Junction State School, presently has 14 pupils. At one time its enrolment was as low as seven. Its p. and c. association, instead of having an attendance of 5 per cent at meetings—which is the average throughout the State—has a 100 per cent attendance. The meeting is attended by 14 or 15 people representing the five or six families who have children attending the school. That is an example of the dedication of the parents whose children attend small schools.

I pay a tribute to parents who live in remote areas and teach their children because they simply cannot send their children to school over vast distances. Some parents

are forced to send their children to private boarding schools located hundreds of miles away. Such parents deserve special tribute.

As the honourable member for Mt. Gravatt pointed out, some children are in need of special education. In my electorate, a band of parents in Nambour and the surrounding district take their children to Brisbane regularly so that they can benefit from a special scheme known as CHILD, which stands for "Children with Learning Difficulties". For years those parents have done that without any financial assistance. People like those have paved the way for new programmes in our schools to help children who are really in need and are not given proper attention in our education system.

Other persons who are in need are migrants and refugees. They need help in learning our language and our way of life. Assistance in this area and special education in languages are very important.

It is a disappointment that the parents do not show the interest in languages that they should show and that the Education Department does not support and foster the teaching of languages used in the area surrounding us. I refer particularly to the Asian languages. That area of study should be fostered and developed. People are inherently lazy. English-speaking people certainly are. They tend to stick to their own language and learn no other.

I commend the committee members on their dedication and work. I hope it impresses the Treasurer so that most of the recommendations come to fruition and give us an even better education system in Queensland.

Mr. P. N. D. WHITE (Southport) (8.51 p.m.): Firstly, like most other members, I should like to commend the members of the committee, particularly the chairman, and their advisers. They have done a tremendous job and have contributed significantly to education in this State.

We have a very sound education system in Queensland. We have certainly come a long way in the last few years. Recently, at the centenary of the Southport State School, I saw examples of the old desks, slates and books that were used 100 years ago. Looking at them, I realised how far education has progressed in the past 100 years and, more importantly, in the past 30 years since I was a pupil at a State school. In a lot of cases, the criticism of this system is unjustified. It is up to the pupils and their parents to make the most of a system that is provided for their benefit.

I should like to say a few words about the assessment and reporting system. Assessment and reporting are not the aim of the education system. The aim is to teach and impart knowledge. Nevertheless, assessment and reporting do have a profound effect on the future of many pupils, so it is important that it is accurate and fair.

Suggestions have been made from time to time that we return to a public examination system. I am happy that the committee has very strongly recommended against a return to such a system. The public examination system is the one that I grew up with and I do not think that it is the best. It encourages crammed knowledge rather than an understanding of the subject. It is a sudden-death way of passing or not passing the Senior Examination after 12 years of education, particularly if a student is not good at examinations or is affected by nerves at examination time.

The current assessment system was introduced under the Radford scheme. Whilst I have no bone to pick with the Radford scheme, I make the observation that it was introduced in haste and without preparation. It is only now, some years later, that teachers are understanding it. We have a long way to go before some of the parents and most of the students understand it. I strongly commend the Select Committee on advocating no major change in this regard. The present system is working and improving and we do not want to tamper with it.

I would warn against over-testing under the Radford scheme. Continual testing at schools on a weekly basis, by subject, in many schools, leads to tension in some pupils. Whilst it is hoped that most of them can cope with that tension as distinct from big tensions twice a year, there is no doubt that it creates other problems in young pupils. One of them is, and I see this more and more, that some children who have been subjected to this system for some years are being burnt out by the time they reach the end of their Senior year. It is very interesting that a few years ago a fairly large proportion of pupils wanted to go to some tertiary institution, but now a lot of them are not interested in going on because they believe they have been literally flogged in the school system by the testing programme. They are no longer interested in acquiring further knowledge. I think that is a very sad reflection on the Radford system. I am not advocating a change in the principles of the system, but I would warn against the over-testing which is part and parcel of the Radford system.

I think that the proposed change to a semester system as against a term system as we have now will be good. When children go on holidays in May, although they should be able to relax and enjoy themselves, they are worried by the thought of having end-of-semester examinations some weeks after they return to school. I must commend the Government for this change, although it has taken some time to introduce a semester holiday system in line with the semester examination system.

I would now like to make a few remarks about the reporting system. The Select Committee has recommended a change to a competency-based system as opposed to a norm-based system. This is a refinement of the recommendations made by Professor Scott.

I believe it is a very sensible approach, and what is more, it has general support within the education community. But it is no good adopting the new competency-based system unless it is properly funded. We do not want to see a repeat of the introduction of the Radford scheme, which was introduced without proper funding and is only now being understood. I do not know how expensive it will be to introduce the competency-based system, but I know that if it is not properly funded it is not worth pursuing, and I would ask the Government to take note that it is going to cost money and must be done properly. Syllabuses will have to be rewritten and training programmes for teachers introduced. I can only say that if the Government is not prepared to undertake the proper funding for the introduction of this system then it should be postponed until such time as funds are available.

While on the subject of funds, I would like to raise a point which is not covered by the Select Committee's report but is very fundamental to the education system in this State. I am talking about payments or, more pertinently, lack of payments for the members of the Board of Secondary School Studies. There would be very few boards or authorities, of which we have too many in this State, whose members do not receive remuneration or allowances for their work. As far as the Board of Secondary School Studies is concerned—a body which is absolutely fundamental to secondary school education in this State—its members receive no payment whatsoever, and many of them do not even receive a travelling allowance to attend board meetings. I must say that this knowledge has only been lately acquired by me, but I find it astounding that a board which is so important to education in this State is not properly supported. The chairmen of most authorities receive substantial amounts of money. The chairman of the Board of Secondary School Studies is the only one who receives an allowance, and it is what I would regard as paltry.

Mr. Moore: How much is that?

Mr. P. N. D. WHITE: It works out at something like \$10 or \$12 an hour for up to four hours, and then he is on his own.

Mr. Moore: It is a pittance.

Mr. P. N. D. WHITE: Yes. It is inconceivable that we ask a board that has wide responsibilities to operate on goodwill alone. How can anyone expect this board to perform with any enthusiasm over long hours without recompensing its members in some tangible way for the work they do? Quite frankly, I believe that it is an imposition to ask the board to do it. If we are going to implement some of the very sensible changes put forward by the Select Committee, how can we ask the board to be responsible for those changes? How can its members initiate and supervise all the work that is required if

they are not paid? Many members of boards in my area are paid reasonable fees for doing considerably less work. If we are to ensure that the recommendations of this Select Committee are implemented, it is time that we recognised the work of the board.

While I am talking about the board, there is a second change that I would strongly recommend. It is high time that a full-time chairman was appointed to this board and was fully paid. I would also strongly recommend that this full-time chairman come from outside the Public Service.

Mr. Lester: We need a man of the highest possible calibre for this job.

Mr. P. N. D. WHITE: I could not agree more with the honourable member.

I do not wish these remarks to be taken as a reflection on previous chairmen of this board. Nevertheless, the fact is that the four chairmen to date, able men as they were, have all been members of the Education Department. I think it is important that this Board of Secondary School Studies is not seen as an extension of the Education Department and is not controlled or chaired by someone who is familiar only with the Education Department system. It should be an independent body, subject to the Minister but with an independent chairman who can bring some expertise to bear on the subject. I believe that until there is a full-time independent chairman—and by “independent” I mean someone from outside the Education Department—and until the board members are reasonably paid, we will have Buckley's chance of carrying the recommendations of the Select Committee into the secondary school system.

I now turn to the subject of human relationships courses in schools.

Mr. Moore: Hear, hear!

Mr. P. N. D. WHITE: The honourable member for Windsor will no doubt appreciate what I am about to say. It is a contentious subject. It has been discussed here at length over the last few days. At the outset, I point out that I respect the views of others on this subject, and I hope that they will respect mine. There is no doubt there is a very heavy body of opinion that any human relationship courses in schools impinge on the rights and duties of parents, and I would agree with that. It would be all very well to leave the whole subject alone if all parents accepted their responsibilities in this matter. But the fact is that they do not. Some will not and some cannot. A lot of those who cannot are single parents.

This is a growing problem in some areas. At one school on the Gold Coast, 70 per cent of children come from single-parent families. At a school in my electorate, which one would have thought has a more stable environment than the electorate containing

the school I previously talked about, the figure is 50 per cent. From the information given to me I doubt if any school in the State has less than 20 per cent of its pupils who come from single-parent families. So a lot of children will never get the chance of talking to a parent on human relationships or sexual education, partly because their parent is working and does not have the time and, quite obviously, partly because the parent finds it difficult to talk to his or her children of the opposite sex.

The fact is we have to decide whether this sort of education is the responsibility of the Department of Education. I think it is. But in any case we have to take a close look at the problem of single-parent children in State schools. Teachers throughout this State are becoming counsellors as well as teachers. They are not trained to be counsellors but many of them do their best. The provision of special counsellor-teachers in schools with a very high percentage of single-parent families must be looked at very closely.

A proposal of the human relationships courses is that parents attend with their children after school. That is all very well but I suspect, and I think most members would agree, that those parents who will make the effort to attend such a course after school with their children are the very parents of children who do not need the course at all. It is the children who have only one parent or no parent who have a need for such a course.

Abortion has been mentioned here before, and I mention it again. Some complain about abortion and the abortion laws in this State, yet if some positive action was taken with children at a younger age, many of the problems which can subsequently arise would not appear. My wife is a physiotherapist and she conducts child birth education classes from time to time. The ignorance of some 14 and 15-year-olds in these classes is appalling. Pregnant girls of 14 or 15 have literally not the faintest idea of how they became pregnant and, what is more, have not the faintest idea of how the baby will be born. If we are prepared to put up with that sort of ignorance without trying to do something about it, we stand condemned.

The Select Committee has tabled various figures which show that births outside marriage in Queensland are higher than those in other States. Queensland's V.D. rate is certainly nothing to be proud of. I have heard it mentioned in this Assembly that because only a small percentage of schoolchildren in this State have become pregnant or have V.D., we should do nothing about it. I fail to see the logic of that argument at all. Certainly a large proportion of young women in this State do not have abortions; and the majority of people do not have V.D. But why do we ignore a significant minority because the majority does not have a problem? I cannot understand the logic of that argument.

Human relationships courses are supported by most of the churches—by the Catholic Church, by the Anglican Church and certainly by the Lutheran Church. To my certain knowledge the Lutheran Church has a very sophisticated and proven human relationships course in a school in Brisbane, and probably has them in schools in other parts of the State. The National Party as a matter of principle supports it and certainly the Liberal Party supports it. The number of human relationships courses is growing in the private school system in this State. I fully recognise that its introduction in the State school system must be handled carefully, through a judiciously developed syllabus, as recommended by the committee, by teachers trained under a special programme. What I want to see—and I hope I do see it—is human relationships courses become a normal part of the State school curriculum. Sex education is part of life. I do not see why it should be abnormal in an education system that is teaching children to take part in life.

I shall now direct a few comments to SEMP. The aim of the SEMP material is to develop an understanding of society and the forces that shape that society, to encourage responsible participation in social life, and to develop the student as a person. It was developed by the very highly regarded Curriculum Development Centre in Canberra, a body whose job it is to provide material to support schools, not to dictate to them. SEMP is not an attempt to centralise our education system but to produce material at a reasonable cost from which schools can draw as they wish. SEMP has generally been accepted in all States. It is controversial material. No-one is ramming it down any school's throat. It is there to supplement a course. The significant benefits of the material, I believe, are that it teaches people a regard for others, their personal responsibility in relation to others, some responsibility to community life and, finally, a regard for family life.

I was very disappointed to see what I regard as a knee-jerk reaction when the SEMP material was banned in Queensland. I suspect that it was banned by people who had either not read it nor did not understand it. It is also a very sad reflection that it was banned in response to a minority group of people who did not wish their children to be exposed to attitudes and values contrary to their own. This, I believe, is the absolute height of prejudice and insularity.

During this debate there has been much emphasis on the sexual content of the human relationships course. It is certainly part of it, but those extremists who take a puritanical stand, such as Mrs. Rona Joyner, are doing the children of this State a great disservice. Most parents in this State want a human relationships course in the schools their children attend. What is more, most children need it.

In conclusion, let me say that the education system in this State is very good. It can

be improved and I believe that the recommendations of the Select Committee will go a long way towards improving it. My one fear is that the thrust of the recommendations of this report will be rejected by people who do not understand.

Mr. LESTER (Peak Downs) (9.14 p.m.): Today has been a very pleasing one for me because this morning the Minister for Education gave formal approval to something I have been advocating ever since I became a member of Parliament—the introduction of first-aid classes into Queensland schools. When one has tried for so long to help people, it is very heartening to see that common sense has eventually prevailed and Queenslanders who now pass through our school system will learn something about first-aid.

The first-aid classes will consist of three sections. There will be special classes in general first-aid for Grade 1 to Grade 7; there will be more specialised types of first-aid classes from Grade 8 to Grade 10; and there will be further first-aid classes in Grades 11 and 12. Those completing the course in Grade 12 will qualify for a St. John Ambulance Certificate. Without going into very much detail, I thought I should announce that to the House.

The honourable member for Landsborough and the members of the Select Committee tried to find sensible solutions to the problems besetting the education system in Queensland. I commend them for not having stayed in Brisbane. They travelled the State and saw all the different facets of the education system. That is the way in which an inquiry ought to be conducted, and that is why the report of the committee has been well accepted generally. Probably it is the most important inquiry ever undertaken in Australia, because its findings have been based on common sense and will assist children greatly in the years to come. In fact, because of the improvement in the standard of education, the community generally will be assisted.

Every child, no matter where he lives, has a right to primary education, secondary education and tertiary education. Why should education systems throughout the world favour those who are fortunate enough—or, perhaps, unfortunate enough—to live in cities? Why should not education be brought to country areas so that it can be grasped by all who wish to make the most of it? It must be remembered that times are changing and that people need more qualifications if they are to obtain employment and play an important role in the community. I repeat: education must be taken to country areas, and every person living in a country area must have the opportunity to become educated to the degree that he wishes.

Let me remind the House that country people are not a lot of bumpkins. Many important people have received their early education in country areas of Australia. Sir Robert Menzies received his education in

Jeparit, a small town in Victoria. Sir Donald Bradman grew up in Cootamundra. Yvonne Goolagong, possibly the best ambassadress Australia has had, grew up in a small western town in New South Wales. Where did Sir Charles Barton, the former Co-ordinator-General, receive his early education? In the town of Clermont, where I live. Sir Jack Egerton also came from Clermont. Arthur Beetson went to school in Roma. All those people came from country areas, and their names are better known than those of many people who grew up in the city. Amongst them there are people of real quality.

One of the greatest boons to country people has been the introduction of mobile schools to Central Queensland. That came about as a result of my liaising with the Minister for Education, Mr. Bird, and with Mr. Cyril Connell of P.C.A.P. and other people in the Education Department. They came with me into Central Queensland to a small place named Mt. Douglas, which is on the banks of the Belyando River half way between Clermont and Charters Towers. They met with people who had travelled hundreds of miles. On that night somebody stated that, no matter where the school was located, most people would have to travel 50 or 60 miles each way each day to enable their children to attend school and that therefore a school could not be built in the area. On that night was born the idea of the mobile school.

I must not forget that young Bob Katter attended the meeting. He and I persuaded authority that country people needed a go. They were given a go. They are still being given a go. I understand that the mobile school system has been so successful that moves are under way to extend it.

At present, a mobile manual arts centre travels around Queensland. A mobile arts and crafts centre is needed, as are back-up people who can teach parents how to teach their children. Parents who teach their children through correspondence face tremendous problems. When I went to school, things were different. Since then great advances have been made. Advances will continue to be made. But those parents who live in the remote parts of the State and teach their children deserve gold medals. They certainly need help.

On occasions, people who live in isolated areas are brought to a central point and given tuition. I hope that Camp Fairbairn will be used for that purpose. At the present time the camp at Tallebudgera is used successfully for that purpose. Much remains to be done. It must not be forgotten that parents who are trying to educate their children must be helped. If they are not helped, the whole system will fall down.

Let us not forget the efforts being made by parents who organise play groups for children from many miles around. The little sports meetings that are conducted for isolated children are helping those children face up to the challenges of life. I cannot praise too highly the members of the

Isolated Childrens and Parents' Association, nor can I praise too highly the officers of the Education Department who are doing their best to help them. Cyril Connell deserves special praise for his wonderful work. He came to Mt. Douglas on the night that I mentioned and saw the need to help country areas.

In the country we have come a long way. In recent times, we have seen the introduction in the Peak Downs electorate of dental therapy units and at Moranbah and Blackwater the establishment of special education centres. I hope that a similar centre will soon be established at Emerald.

Many new schools have been established in my electorate. For example, last year the Premier opened the new high school at Moranbah and early next year the Moranbah East State School will be opened.

Mr. DAVIS: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is not speaking to the Select Committee's report. He is talking about his electorate.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Row): Order! I suggest that the honourable member refer to the report.

Mr. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My comments relate indirectly to the report, because the committee members came to the remote areas in my electorate.

I should like to say how totally disgusted I am with A.L.P. members for trying to stop me from putting forward the voice of the country people. It is one of the most scandalous things that has happened in this Parliament whilst I have been here. I have been sticking up for the country people and somebody living in Brisbane is trying to stop me talking in their interests. That is A.L.P. members! They could not care less about the country. Every time they are put to the test they cry Brisbane. I hope that the honourable member will sit down and keep quiet.

One achievement in this area has been the provision of a teacher at Camp Fairbairn to teach children in the art of bushcraft. When committee members came to my area they had the good fortune to see this operation. They were able to see kiddies coming from all parts of the electorate to Camp Fairbairn for upwards of three days at a time to be taught bushcraft, water safety, how to deal with snakes, etc. The committee members, having come to the country, have tried to prove that they are looking after country interests. It is important that I relate, in this Parliament, some of the things they are doing, even to mention that the committee met in the Moranbah High School, so I am speaking to these very important reports.

The committee has recommended more education facilities in the Central Highlands. As a result of that recommendation and many representations, a new school in Emerald North commenced operation this

year, and last year a new school opened in Blackwater North. Enormous amounts of money have been spent on extensions to schools at Capella and Comet. When the committee received representations from Capella, the need existed for a secondary school complex to Grade 10. I hope that will become a reality.

I do not think it is fair that we in the country areas should be compelled to cry out continually for more. I do not know what some Ministers must think of me because every time they see me they say, "What do you want to do next, Vince?"

Mr. D'Arcy: Do all people in the country, like you, make gentlemen's agreements?

Mr. LESTER: I do not quite know what the honourable member is referring to. I say to him, most respectfully, that I inherited the most run-down electorate that ever there was in Queensland. It was represented by a very wonderful person but he lived in Brisbane. I inherited awful roads—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I must insist on relevance to the reports.

Mr. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You might keep those fellows in order a bit.

Why should we in the country have to continually cry out for speech therapists and music teachers?

Mr. D'Arcy: Mainly because it is your Government.

Mr. LESTER: Don't talk about my Government in regard to schools. The only run-down schools existed under the A.L.P. You hardly had any high schools in Queensland. You had broken-down buildings.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Davis: How do you stand on sex education?

Mr. LESTER: I am coming to that. The way Opposition members are going, they will take up all of my time.

We should introduce courses for parents so that they are able to help their children with their homework.

Mr. D'Arcy: Compulsory courses?

Mr. LESTER: It is difficult to introduce compulsory courses for them. Certainly they should be made available for parents who want them. Parents should be encouraged to undertake them.

I should like to see an extension of the TAFE system so that further education can penetrate more into country areas. Frankly, I believe we need more regional education centres, and I cannot think of a better place for one than Emerald. There is already a

rural college in that wonderful area, and there is no reason why in time this could not be extended and eventually become the basis for a campus in the Central Highlands area. We have to do more research on education, but I do approve of what has been done so far.

I want to highlight the fact that the report has mentioned the wonderful work done by the staff of the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education in Rockhampton and their considerable expertise in computer programming, computer design and cross assembler techniques. The institute has stimulated programming for Queensland primary schools and this programming is designed to help primary schoolchildren through their syllabuses.

I might explain that by pointing out that computerisation will be a big thing in education in the future. But only American-type programmes are available for these computers at the moment and American-type computer programmes in the town of Comet would not quite fit. Unless programmes are designed to meet the needs of Queensland children, those who use small computers will only be able to get the American programmes that are available. They are written in an American style, using American words and an American syllabus. These are not suitable for Queenslanders, particularly the small communities in Central Queensland. It is essential that the programmes be written by top-quality qualified Queensland teachers, because that is the only way the programmes will become properly designed teaching aids.

Another way to do this would be to have trained computer programmers look at a syllabus and then develop a programme which, although not arranged by professionally qualified teachers, would at least have an input from people in the field. The computer will become an all-pervasive teaching aid and will have such a strong influence on children's learning that programmes must be designed by professionally qualified teachers.

If Queensland children are to get the full benefit of a programme, even though it is designed for other countries, we should try to make sure that the syllabuses are designed with this in view. In fact, this programming should be done on an Australia-wide basis. Why should separate programmes be written in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and so on? This simply means that a lot of money and manpower will be wasted and it will be more difficult for children to transfer from one State to another.

Computers can be used for teaching such things as spelling in Grade 5. They can be used in small schools and by isolated children. The uses of computers are unlimited, but we must use them properly. Programmes used by Queensland children should be written by Queenslanders with expertise and common sense. We should not be importing some high-flown sort of programme that is totally irrelevant to our schoolchildren.

That concludes my reports here tonight. There is much more that one could say about the field of education, but I have been asked to limit myself to 20 minutes and my time is now up. I will prepare another report covering those aspects with which I have not dealt in this speech to be delivered in the not too distant future so that we can continue our input, from the floor of the Parliament, in helping to expand the education facilities of the young children of Central Queensland and, indeed, Queensland as a whole.

Mr. ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (9.35 p.m.): In rising to take part in this debate I would firstly like to take the opportunity of congratulating the honourable member for Landsborough and the members of his committee on the tremendous job they have done. I should include in that the people of Queensland, whether they be educators or just people in general who have taken part in the activities of this Select Committee. I think it would be fair to say that Queenslanders of the future will be very grateful for the great job that they have done during the last couple of years.

I believe we should be very grateful that this report has brought out what I might term a greater degree of communication and consultation. At about the time when the education inquiry was announced, this area of communication and consultation was rather tending to break down. There was a fair amount of controversy surrounding SEMP and MACOS. All of us were rather concerned about how the education system was rating in the community and about the sort of relationship that existed between Parliament, the community and the educators. I believe that this committee has cemented the relationship between those bodies and that we owe it a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Mr. Davis: Now get off the back-slapping and get on to the report.

Mr. ELLIOTT: That is fair enough. I shall do that for the honourable member.

There has been criticism of the standards of students today. This has been mentioned by many people but I think that it bears repeating. People who are seeking what I might term middle-of-the-ladder jobs today possess a lower standard than that possessed by people who sought these jobs many years ago. Today, so many children continue on to higher levels of education. They do not seek interviews for jobs in industry and commerce. That is why many employers who are seeking clerks, secretaries and so on are complaining about the literacy and numeracy standards of the children seeking those jobs. As an employer, I am concerned about the obvious lack of ability in the educational area in some of the people who confront me. If people do not have the basics in English and mathematics, it is fairly difficult for them to carry out even fairly basic jobs that involve the solving

of monetary problems or using just day-to-day English in order to get the message across or to communicate with people.

The ability to communicate is obviously a very real asset. Irrespective of the level of schooling we may have achieved, it is important that we are able to communicate with other people and to get our message across, whether it be by the telephone, person to person, or by letter. I believe that employers face a problem in this area, and I hope that the Minister for Education, in particular, will endeavour to come up with a solution for it. This view is supported by many high school principals in my area.

Employers also have a problem in comparing the rating assessment from one school with another. I think that we must try to come up with a solution to this problem that is acceptable to the educators, to parents and, in particular, to employers, because, when it is all said and done, they are the people who will employ the children. This has a very real bearing on their future.

I was therefore glad to see that the committee has recommended more involvement of the people from commerce and industry in the committees of schools, both to make recommendations and also to gain a feedback from that system. That can only do good. As the honourable member for Landsborough said, it is building bridges between the community and the educators. That is something of great importance.

I would also like to see a greater degree of co-ordination and co-operation between the Children's Services Department and the educators, because there are some problems in that regard, particularly in high schools. In areas such as my own there is really not a problem with primary school children, who are basically fairly well behaved. But once the high school area is reached, there starts to be a need for discipline when problems arise with children who are not interested in school. The problem is not only that they do not achieve anything for themselves, but that they bring down the overall standard of the classes. Therefore it is very important that we ensure that principals have the right, and are protected within the legislation, to administer discipline to these children. In some cases principals must be in a position to suspend such children for varying periods of time if they cannot be controlled, because they bring down the overall standard in the class-room and jeopardise the very future of those children who have to be educated with them.

While I am talking about discipline I wish to say that that discipline should also cover the teachers themselves, because at times some teachers are totally unsuitable. Fortunately there are not many of them. In the six years in which I have been in this place, only two teachers have fallen into the totally unsuitable category. I could not see them out of the education system fast enough. I believe there must be provision

to suspend, or to sack for that matter, teachers who are not suitable. It is not good enough for parliamentarians to be placed in a position in which a lot of pressure is brought on them by p. and c. associations who want a particular teacher shifted. Where can I try to get a teacher shifted to? What would the member for Brisbane Central say if I had an unsuitable teacher shifted into a school in his electorate? He would not appreciate that. That area must be looked at very closely.

The recommendation concerning the use of school facilities and buildings is of very real interest to us all. It is a tremendous waste of the public's money and its assets if they are not used to their best possible advantage. Those facilities are suitable for adult education, community participation and this sort of thing. The public use of these facilities has, I might add, an additional benefit. If people use them more often, the community gets the benefit of them and, in addition, it could help to overcome some of the security problems that have been encountered in the past, such as when schools have been burnt down. Therefore I support this concept wholeheartedly, as would, I feel, anyone with common sense.

We should endeavour to build up the profession of educators. It is essential that it be seen by the public to be a noble profession. If it is not held in the highest esteem and put up on a pedestal, we will not attract to it the very best of the young people leaving school. In that respect, that profession bears some relationship to this place. One of our problems here—and we bring it on ourselves—is that the minority tends to bring down the decorum and standing of the Parliament. The minority discredits the majority. We should all take note of that.

I now comment on the personal relationships aspect of the report. I support wholeheartedly the concept that everyone has the right to put his point of view; but let us not allow any one group or an organisation of people or bodies using their collective power coerce members of Parliament. In my opinion, that is what has been done to the honourable member for Landsborough in his electorate. I abhor that type of behaviour.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: He has stood up to it admirably.

Mr. ELLIOTT: Yes, he has indeed.

It is just not good enough. It has been done to me to a lesser degree. I suggest that those people have a close look at the legislation relating to doing a detriment to a parliamentarian. Some of them are sailing very close to the wind. I repeat that it is not only in Landsborough but also in Cunningham.

I stand right behind the recommendation that we have a human relationships course in this State. It has been voted for in all political parties. In the National Party the vote taken on this matter at our last conference resulted in a 10 to 1 majority.

Mr. Davis: Why are your Premier and his wife so much against it?

Mr. ELLIOTT: All I am interested in is what the majority want. We are here to legislate for the majority in our society. That is our right; it is our duty. I am not worried about which way particular people will jump on any issue. In my opinion, everyone has the right to put his point of view, and I will defend that right to the death. However, that is very different from coercing and pressuring members to vote one way or the other. I was absolutely horrified at the article in today's "Telegraph" that a Catholic parent organisation, which the member for Landsborough indicated the other day was a group very much in the minority, stated that the member for Landsborough should do something one way or the other because of his religious conviction. That is absolutely abhorrent to me.

Mr. Ahern: Those people have been advised by the bishop that their statement is wrong in fact.

Mr. ELLIOTT: I understand that to be the position. I intended referring to that.

That this should happen is absolutely abhorrent to all of us. It is, as the member for Landsborough says, a minority group within the church. The members of it stand condemned for their actions.

I wish to touch very briefly on a few points that have particular relevance to my electorate. First, I suggest that we should be prepared to tackle the problem posed by children who are not suited to courses of an academic type, and there are many such children.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Yourself, for example.

Mr. ELLIOTT: Possibly that is true. I might have been better suited to a manual arts course. That is a fairly unkind comment. I thought that the honourable member for Archerfield had changed his attitude and was going to be nicer to me. Instead, he sits on the back bench and makes nasty remarks about me.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: Casts aspersions on you.

Mr. ELLIOTT: Casts aspersions on me.

Let me return to the point I was making. We must come to grips with the problem and provide manual arts and similar courses that will include subjects that will be useful to children when they leave school. It is no use putting square pegs in round holes; they just do not fit; but there has been a tendency to try to push children into courses for which they are totally unsuited. Not only is the education system guilty of doing that at times; parents also are guilty of doing it. Many times, when attending speech nights in my electorate, I have said to parents, "One thing you must be careful of is not to try to push your children into some profession that you would like them to be in but for which they are

entirely unsuited and which they have no desire to enter." Unfortunately, often my advice is not heeded.

Let me now touch briefly on rural training schools.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Very briefly.

Mr. ELLIOTT: I shall be very brief. I know that the honourable member for Archerfield gets very tired sitting on the back benches.

In my opinion, the rural training schools are doing a very good job. Some of the children in my electorate who have gone to those schools have benefited greatly. However, I believe that there is a big challenge to all of us to ensure that rural training schools do not develop into institutions that tend to show children only the good side of, say, agricultural technology. We do not want schools that show children only new Caterpillar tractors, new headers, new trucks, new equipment—nothing old, everything looking as if it has been bought in the last year or two. It is all very well to show children that side of the coin, but it is absolutely necessary that they understand that on many farms today the capital commitment for equipment is so high that farmers just cannot afford it. Children going to rural training schools must be given the basic ability to make a compromise, to be able to improvise when problems arise, to be able to make a part for a vehicle and keep old vehicles going. I ask the committee and the Minister to take my suggestion on board.

I commend the committee for its good work.

Debate, on motion of Mr. Wharton, adjourned.

PAY-ROLL TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Pay-roll Tax Act 1971–1979 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

FIRST READING

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

SECOND READING

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House) for **Hon. L. R. EDWARDS** (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (9.55 p.m.): I move—

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

The Pay-roll Tax Act was amended in December last year in order to give effect to the pay-roll tax concessions announced in

the 1979-80 Budget. Honourable members will recall that these amendments increased by 20 per cent to \$150,000 the pay-roll level below which no pay-roll tax is payable and increased the minimum pay-roll tax exemption from \$27,000 to \$30,00 per annum.

These concessions are to the benefit of all businesses, but in particular are directed to the relief of small businesses, the cost structures of which do not afford the advantages of economies of scale experienced by their larger counterparts.

Queensland has led the way in the area of pay-roll tax reform. Its maximum exemption level is well in excess of that of any other State. However, it is a fact that the Government's commitment to pay-roll tax relief can only be maintained if the revenue from that source is not eroded by schemes designed to avoid the tax. Accordingly, the Government has maintained a constant monitor of pay-roll tax liabilities in order to detect the establishment of avoidance schemes from their outset.

As a result of this monitor, a scheme which is designed to avoid the payment by a group of companies of very large amounts of pay-roll tax has come to notice since the enactment of the 1979 amending Act. An amendment to the Act is required to counter this scheme. The scheme involves the establishment of a charitable foundation which, amongst other things, pays the wages of persons employed in relation to the activities of a group of companies. On the grounds that it is a "public benevolent institution", the foundation claims a "blanket" exemption from pay-roll tax in respect of all of the wages paid by it, notwithstanding that many of the employees are engaged in the companies' normal commercial operations. The proposed amendment will ensure that only the wages of a person employed exclusively in the work of a public benevolent return are exempt.

The existing Act also provides for exemptions from pay-roll tax in respect of wages paid by certain other bodies and institutions, which could be used as vehicles for similar schemes involving claims for "blanket" exemptions in circumstances where it is not intended that such exemptions apply. Accordingly, the amendment needs to also define more closely the limits of the exemptions provided for in the Act in respect of wages paid by these bodies and institutions.

The amendment will ensure that those exemptions extend only to those wages paid to persons engaged exclusively in work for the purposes or activities in respect of which the exemptions are granted to those bodies or institutions.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr. D'Arcy, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 9.59 p.m.