Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 12 MARCH 1981

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. S. J. Muller, Fassifern) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

PAPERS

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Report of the Department of Primary Industries for the year 1979-80

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act 1959–1980 and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act 1923–1979.

Fish Supply Management Act 1972–1976.

Meat Industry Act 1965–1977.

Soil Conservation Act 1965–1980 and the Co-ordination of Rural Advances and Agricultural Bank Act 1938–1980.

Regulations under—

Agricultural Standards Act 1952–1972.

Apiaries Act 1947–1972.

Fisheries Act 1976.

Meat Industry Act 1965–1977.

Resolutions of the 109th Meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council held in Brisbane, on Monday, 4 August 1980.

COMMITTEE OF SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

Mr POWELL (Isis): I move—

"(1) That this House do appoint a committee to be called the Committee of Subordinate Legislation.

"(2) That the committee shall consist of seven members.

"(3) That the committee consist of Messrs Fouras, Hooper, Jennings, Prentice, Scassola, Simpson and the mover.

"(4) That it shall be the duty of the committee to consider all regulations, rules, by-laws, ordinances, Orders in Council or proclamations (hereinafter referred to as 'the regulations') which under any Act are required to be laid on the table of this House, and which are subject to disallowance by resolution.

If the regulations are made whilst the House is sitting, the committee shall consider the regulations before the end of the period during which any motion for disallowance of those regulations may be moved in the House.

If the regulations are made whilst the House is not sitting the committee shall consider the regulations as soon as conveniently may be after the making thereof.

"(5) The committee shall, with respect to the regulations, consider—

(a) whether the regulations are in accord with the general objects of the Act pursuant to which they are made;

(b) whether the regulations trespass unduly on rights previously established by law;

(c) whether the regulations contain matter which in the opinion of the committee should properly be dealt with in an Act of Parliament;

(d) whether for any special reason the form or purport of the regulations call for elucidation;

(e) whether the regulations unduly make rights dependent upon administrative and not upon judicial decisions.

"(6) If the committee is of the opinion that any of the regulations ought to be disallowed—

(a) it shall report that opinion and the grounds thereof to the House before the end of the period during which any motion for disallowance of those regulations may be moved in the House;

(b) if the House is not sitting, it may report its opinion and the grounds thereof to the authority by which the regulations were made.

"(7) If the committee is of the opinion that any other matter relating to any of the regulations should be brought to the notice of the House, it may report that opinion and matter to the House.

"(8) A report of the committee shall be presented to the House in writing by a member of the committee nominated for that purpose by the committee.

"(9) The permanent head of the relevant department shall forthwith upon any regulation, which is required to be tabled in Parliament, being approved by the Governor in Council, forward sufficient copies to The Clerk of the Parliament for the use of the members of the committee.

"(10) The committee shall have power to send for persons, papers and records, provided that a Minister or members of the Public Service shall not be obliged to provide information, oral or written, which has been—

(a) certified by a Crown Law Officer to be information which, if it were sought in a court, would be a proper matter in respect of which to claim Crown privilege; or

(b) certified by the responsible Minister, with the approval of the Ministers of the Crown in Cabinet assembled, to be against the public interest to disclose.

"(11) The committee shall have power to act and, subject to paragraph (10), to send for persons, papers and records and to examine witnesses whether the House is sitting or not.

"(12) The proceedings of the committee shall, except wherein otherwise ordered, be regulated by the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly relating to select committees."

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice by members were answered as follows:—

1. REBATES ON HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE POLICIES

Mr Kaus asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

Will he give consideration to granting a rebate on the fire brigade levy and stamp duty levy on fire and householders insurance policies for pensioners, handicapped, under-privileged and disadvantaged persons, to enable them to take out some insurance on their dwellings and contents?

Answer:—

While the needs of disadvantaged groups in the community are acknowledged and recognised by the Government, rebates of the nature suggested are not considered to be the most appropriate way for the State to provide assistance to these groups. In essence, rebates of this nature are a form of income supplementation and maintenance which is seen primarily as the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government.

Nevertheless, in addition to rail travel concessions, which have been available for some years and recently extended, the State Government has now introduced a scheme of pensioner rate subsidies which will be of substantial benefit to pensioners. The annual cost to the Government of this scheme could exceed $10m.

This is as far as the State is able to go at this time, but I assure the honourable member these matters will be kept under consideration in the Budget determination.

2. QUEEN ELIZABETH II JUBILEE HOSPITAL

Mr Kaus asked the Minister for Health—

Will he inform the House, the public and the QATB the precise nature of illnesses and accidents which are allowed or are not allowed to be treated at the QE II General Hospital?

Answer:—

In accordance with a determined policy, beds at the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hospital are being progressively commissioned. At present, 64 beds are available and additional beds will become available in the near future.

The hospital is an acute general hospital for adults. However, children are treated as out-patients in the casualty department but are transferred to the Mater Misericordiae Children's Hospital if subsequent in-patient care is necessary.

The hospital is intended to treat patients with general medical, surgical, orthopaedic and gynaecological conditions. There are no maternity beds, but antenatal clinics are conducted on behalf of the Royal Women's Hospital and the Mater Misericordiae Mothers' Hospital.

I am advised that discussions have been held with the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade regarding the arrangements to be made for particular types of patients, such as those resulting from major road accidents or having suspected heart attacks. I am further advised that local medical practitioners and the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade have been advised of arrangements whereby such patients are treated in nearby major hospitals with intensive care facilities pending the commissioning of the intensive-care unit.

However, all patients who present themselves are assessed and treated, utilising available facilities, and where necessary are subsequently referred to other appropriate nearby hospitals.

3. RAIL FREIGHTS, COLLINSVILLE-ABBOT POINT LINE

Mr Muntz asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

(1) At what stage have negotiations between Mount Isa Mines and the Government reached in regard to rail freights and the subsequent development of Abbot Point, Bowen?

(2) When can Bowen residents expect a decision in regard to this very important matter that will seriously affect their future?

Answer:—

(1) (a) In relation to its proposed Collinsville and Newlands coking coal and steaming coal developments, MIM Holdings Limited has been provided with rail freight rates which are in accordance with Government policy. There have been a number of discussions between company officers and myself and Treasury officers, but no finality has yet been reached.

(b) At this stage the matter of arrangements for the development of Abbot Point is being handled by the Harbours Corporation. I understand that drafting of agreements is well advanced. If the honourable member requires any further, more detailed information he could redirect his question to the Honourable the Minister for Northern Development and Maritime Services. The proposals will come to the Treasury for consideration and comment when a later stage of negotiations is reached.

(2) The Government and its authorities have virtually completed their work on the prior planning and the financial aspects as these refer to the rail and port and are now waiting for the critical decision by the company.

4. FINANCE FOR WELFARE HOUSING

Mr Scassola asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) What total sums of money from State and Federal sources have been made available for welfare housing for 1980-81?

(2) What proportion of the respective funds referred to have been made available to the co-operative building society movement?

Answer:—

(1) $82.5m. This could change marginally by 30 June 1981, depending on returned cash flows.

(2) $2.4m.

5. SPEECH THERAPISTS

Mr Scassola asked the Minister for Education—

(1) How many speech therapists are currently employed by his department?

(2) At which schools or other institutions is each currently serving?

Answer:—

(1) The speech therapy establishment of the Department of Education is 55. Four of these positions are allocated for the part-time employment of nine therapists. At present, eight positions are vacant through resignations. Appointments are currently being processed for six of these positions and the therapists should commence duty in the near future. Steps are in train to fill the remaining vacancies.

(2) Speech therapists are based at particular centres in various parts of the State and provide services to children in pre-schools, special schools and units, and primary schools, including children attending non-Government schools. During the course of the year speech therapists will visit many pre-schools and schools away from their base centre. Information concerning all of the schools to be visited in 1981 is not presently available.

6. INCREASE IN PRICE OF MILK

Mrs Kyburz asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) What was the breakdown of the cost of one litre of milk as at 31 March 1980 vis-a-vis 11 March 1981?

(2) Which of the components have caused a price rise?

Answer:—

(1) The margins applying to the producer, processing and vending sectors of the milk industry are listed below, together with the dates from which those prices apply. The prices shown are a weighted average of prices applicable to all milk packages. The prices at those dates have been based on cost increases in those sectors during periods prior to the increases.

——	3 April 1980	17 October 1980	19 March 1981
Producer ..	25·51	28·00	30·65
Processer ..	13·07	13·98	14·50
Vendor ..	12·78	13·17	13·70
Total ..	51·36	55·15	58·85

(2) The main components of costs contributing to the increases have been wages by indexation, fuel, packaging materials and interest in all sectors, and additional large increases in fodder and fertiliser in the producer sector.

7. RAIL TRANSPORT OF STOCK

Mrs Kyburz asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) What action has his department taken to ensure that all stock is watered at Cannon Hill after unloading?

(2) Has the Railway Department given consideration to employing stock handlers on long journeys to ensure that spelling takes place?

Answer:—

(1) The honourable member is aware that, like her, I am a life member of the Royal Queensland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty and am deeply concerned that all care possible be taken to alleviate animal cruelty.

Once cattle are unloaded at Cannon Hill, they become the responsibility of the Metropolitan Public Abattoir Board. I am informed that it is the method of selling, i.e., on live weight, which precludes stock from being watered at certain times after unloading.

As I understand it, new arrangements in the form of selling would have to be made to meet the honourable member's suggestion in this instance and I believe this is a matter for my colleague the Minister for Primary Industries.

(2) It is a matter for consignors to stipulate whether spelling en route is to be arranged.

A decision as to whether or not a drover should accompany stock is also one for the consignor or his agent. I am informed that a large number of consignors do in

fact employ drovers or stock handlers on long journeys to care for the beasts in transit. This is considered by many to be in the mutual interests of both the owners and the animals.

It is my intention to seek a meeting with the Minister for Primary Industries and both departments' officers to see what can be devised on these matters.

8. HOUSING COMMISSION RENTAL HOUSES, SALISBURY ELECTORATE

Mrs Kyburz asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

How many houses have been bought in the Salisbury electorate by the Queensland Housing Commission for rental purposes?

Answer:—

Records are not kept by electorates; but, on addresses, it appears that over many years five houses were bought into rental stock, of which two have subsequently been sold.

9. USE OF 2,4,5-T AND 2,4-D ON RAILWAY DEPARTMENT LAND

Mr Jones asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Were the chemicals 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D used experimentally on Queensland railway property in the vicinity of Cairns from October 1968 to May 1969 in conjunction with the control of tropical vegetation to simulate clearance of foliage that was required near the Australian base at Nui Dat, South Vietnam, at that time?

(2) Why was a State Government selected and not a Commonwealth instrumentality and has a precedent been thus created?

(3) Have results of such experiments been reported from other State Government Departments, or co-ordinated through the Railway Department, and, if so, which other departments were involved?

(4) Were the defoliants used in close proximity to urban or other populated areas and, if so, what were the locations?

(5) Have any medical checks been carried out on the personnel who conducted the experiments or on railway workers and nearby North Queensland residents?

Answer:—

(1) Tests of the effectiveness of several types of herbicides were carried out by the Defence Standards Laboratories, Commonwealth Department of Supply, in the Freshwater area near Cairns during 1968-69. Whilst the chemical 2,4-Dichlorophenyl-4-Nitrophenylether was included among the herbicides listed by the Department of Supply as having been used, the herbicides commonly known as 2,4-D (Dichlorophenoxy Acetic Acid) and 2,4,5-T (Trichlorophenoxy Acetic Acid) did not appear on the list.

(2) The Chief Superintendent, Defence Standards Laboratories, prefaced his written approach to the Railway Department at that time with the following observation—

" . . . we believe you may find it of value to have tests carried out on the results of treatment with herbicides of areas bordering the railway lines. This would also be of interest to us . . . ."

It was on this basis that the carrying out of the tests was approved.

It was not a novel arrangement to test herbicides on railway property. This has been done by a number of private suppliers of herbicides seeking to demonstrate their products, and I am assured by the commissioner that it is carried out at all times under controlled conditions by a qualified operator. The Railway Department has on its staff an experienced vegetation control officer to supervise these demonstrations.

I am informed by the Railway Department that they are unaware of any further tests being carried out by the Commonwealth Defence Department since the vegetation control officer joined the Railway Department in 1971.

Since this matter was first drawn to my attention by an ABC journalist about a week ago I have had an exhaustive search made of Railway Department records, and this would seem to confirm this officer's recollection.

(3) I have no information regarding any involvement of other State Government departments.

(4) Because of the time involved—1968 to now—available records do not identify the precise location where tests were conducted.

(5) The personnel conducting the tests were officers of the Commonwealth Department of Supply. There is no record of railway employees having been involved, and I am not aware that any medical tests were carried out or of the necessity for them.

Like Senator Carrick who answered a question in the Senate on 25 February 1981 —I assume that the honourable member for Cairns obtains his information from Federal "Hansard"—I am keen to see anyone who has any information relating to this matter, or feels that he has experienced some exposure to chemicals, come forward rather than play politics on the matter.

Senator Carrick has suggested that the best thing to be done would be for the Minister for Veteran Affairs (Senator Messner) to consider extending an invitation to such people to come forward to him with information. I agree with Senator Carrick's recommendation.

10. NEW HIGH SCHOOL, WOREE

Mr Jones asked the Minister for Education—

In view of the former Minister for Education's statement at the opening of the new Woree State Primary School in October, 1980 that a new high school will be opened on the adjacent site for enrolment in 1982, does this commitment stand and will he confirm the proposal as the incoming Minister and, if so, is he yet able to outline the forward planning details?

Answer:—

The honourable member for Barron River (Mr Tenni) has made repeated representations to me on the need for the establishment of further high school facilities in Cairns.

The commitment to establish a high school at Bayview Heights still stands. This is well supported by demographic studies undertaken by my department officers which clearly indicate the need to relieve enrolment pressure and overcrowding at Trinity Bay High School, the largest and fastest-growing school in the district, by a new school in the only area which will enable a viable arrestment of that overcrowding problem.

Priorities are established, and available funds are provisionally committed some months before a budget for a financial year is declared. Consequently, the funds for the 1980-81 financial year are, and have been, committed for some time. The lead time required for the amount of planning, designing, contracting and building of a new high school is such as to make the opening of the school in 1982 a virtual impossibility.

However, provisional upon availability of sufficient funds to meet whole of State needs, my department's program setting out its priorities, seeks to include the Bayview High School in building programs which aim at an opening at the commencement of 1983.

The site is secured. When the availability of funds for the purpose has also been secured, I shall request my colleague the honourable Minister for Works and Housing to order the design and construction procedures.

11. RELIEVING MATRONS, COUNTRY HOSPITALS

Mr Turner asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Is he aware of problems associated with relief staff for matrons in country hospitals such as at Tambo?

(2) As relief staff can be provided in other remote areas such as Normanton, when is it expected that this provision will be provided Statewide?

Answer:—

(1) I am well aware of problems associated with relief staff for nursing superintendents in country hospitals such as Tambo.

(2) A complete survey of the needs of these areas has been undertaken, and it would seem that the problems will be resolved in the near future as proposals submitted to hospitals boards by the department appear to be acceptable to them.

12. SOLAR ENERGY RESEARCH

Mr Turner asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

(1) What amount of money is allocated by the State Government towards solar energy research in Queensland?

(2) How does this figure compare with other States and will action be taken to substantially increase State Government subsidy in this area?

Answer:—

(1) An amount of $187,000 has been allocated directly to State Government departments in the financial year 1980-81 for this purpose. This figure includes a $50,000 grant provided by the Department of Mines to enable the establishment of the Solar Energy Research Centre at the University of Queensland.

(2) Reasonably, considering this State's overall energy resources and the potential contribution that solar energy is likely to make to our total energy requirements in the foreseeable future. The Queensland Government will be providing funds in accord with its announced solar energy policy.

13. RETAIL SALES OF PRAWNS BY QUEENSLAND FISH BOARD

Mr Blake asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) Is he aware of continuing allegations that licensed seafood retailers dealing through the Queensland Fish Board have been and are being charged the same price for prawns as the retail "over-the-counter" sales price to the public by the board?

(2) Is this practice accepted Fish Board policy and, if so, are the implications of possible stimulation to black marketing through retail outlets by such a practice fully appreciated?

(3) If it is not accepted or approved Fish Board practice, when will action be taken to restore stability of marketing to the licensed retailers through normal board sales?

Answer:—

(1) I am aware that such allegations have been made before.

(2) The board's policy is that a reasonable commercial margin be applied to its sales by retail, and that the retailers who rely on the board for supplies be effectively serviced.

The black market implications are appreciated. They apply in both directions in that some buyers at times prefer to deal direct with fishermen and use the board only as a top-up operation.

(3) The board will itself act to correct any anomalies brought to its attention.

14. IMPORT OF HAM

Mr Blake asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

What State representations have been made to Commonwealth authorities to protect Queensland's pig producers, processers and their employees from the disastrous economic effects of the large-scale and duty-free importation and "dumping" of cheap and allegedly heavily subsidised Rumanian and Yugoslav ham?

Answer:—

Following expressions of concern from various sections of the pig industry, I recently recommended that the Honourable the Premier make urgent representations to the Prime Minister, indicating our deep concern about the effects of cheap, canned ham on our domestic industries.

The Honourable the Premier agreed and a telex was despatched to Canberra on 6 March. I have urged that the Federal Government implement assistance measures that will enable the canned-ham industry to remain viable.

15. ILLEGAL IMPORT OF ANIMALS AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS

Mr Blake asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

In view of the recent outbreak of a suspected exotic animal disease in New Zealand, and a prior statement by the Director of the Australian Bureau of Animal Health that increasing air traffic had resulted in over six tonnes of smuggled animal products being detected annually at Sydney's International Airport alone, with an increasing risk of the introduction of exotic animal diseases such as foot and mouth disease:—

(1) What quantity of smuggled animal products was detected at Queensland airports in the most recent statistical year?

(2) Has quarantine inspection staff in Queensland increased in proportion to the increase in Queensland's air traffic?

(3) Is the standard of quarantine inspection services in Queensland satisfactory and, if not, what representations have been made to the Commonwealth Government for improved quarantine safeguards against the increasing risks of illegal introduction of animals and animal products, with particular regard to the imminent increase of international air traffic through Townsville?

Answer:—

(1) During the past year, 354 kg of meat of various types was seized at the Brisbane International Terminal. Additionally 187 eggs and 26 kg of egg products were detained, as well as 247 kg of dairy products and 84 untanned skins.

(2) Yes. Three additional full-time officers have been appointed to the animal quarantine service in the port of Brisbane during the past 12 months and one full-time officer is currently on transfer to service the new Townsville International Airport. One full-time officer is located at Cairns International Airport.

(3) Animal quarantine service provided by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries compares favourably with that of other States.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

WINCHESTER SOUTH COAL DEPOSITS

Mr CASEY: I direct a question to the Minister for Mines and Energy concerning the Winchester South coal deal. I refer him to the publication this morning of the companies' offer to the Government of a fixed additional levy of $1 per tonne starting in 1986 and escalating to $4 per tonne in 2005, by which time the value of the $4 will be less than $1.

I ask the Minister: Will the royalties, the Queensland Government profit figure included in the rail freights and other handling charges be pegged as a fixed levy through the terms of this contract? If not, will they escalate at the same rate or at what rate will they escalate?

Mr I. J. GIBBS: As I said yesterday, this offer stands on its own feet. No doubt it was calculated by the company on the dates put forward. Rail freights and other charges are the responsibility of the Treasury. I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition redirect that part of his question to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer.

Mr CASEY: Mr Speaker, may I redirect that part of the question without notice to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer?

Dr EDWARDS: The Leader of the Opposition would know that royalties are not escalated. That is set out in the legislation. Rail freights would be escalating according to a formula accepted by other companies. The authority to prospect will lay down certain conditions. I assure the honourable member that the present policy of the Government on escalation of rail freights will be included in those considerations.

Mr CASEY: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer a supplementary question. He said that the royalty will be fixed. Under the Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement, the royalty figure commenced at 5c. It has now escalated to $1.60. Doesn't this mean that the Winchester South offer of an extra $1 a tonne will be worthless by 2005 compared with the Government's ability under other contracts and arrangements to increase rail freights?

Dr EDWARDS: Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition is unaware of the whole situation.

Mr Casey interjected.

Dr EDWARDS: If the honourable member listens he might obtain some information and improve his education.

The honourable member asks why we do not provide documentation. Every other member in the House would know that royalties are set within the Mining Act. I thought that the honourable member would know that. If he would like a copy of the Mining Act, I would be happy to arrange for one to be sent to him.

The Leader of the Opposition should know that the CQCA agreement is a specific agreement. He should also know that the royalties are set at a percentage, depending on whether it is local or export coal.

Mr Casey interjected.

Dr EDWARDS: Because we escalated them in 1974, as the Leader of the Opposition well knows. If they had been set at the standard laid down by the Labor Party when it was in Government we would now be receiving 1c a tonne. So the suggestion that the Leader of the Opposition is now making shows his total ignorance of the situation. When it was in Government, the Labor Party's policy was a disgrace. Our policy has been made very clear: we will make certain that the people of Queensland get the best possible return in keeping with the viability of the development. The people of Queensland will continue to receive increased benefits as a result of the escalation of rail freights and port charges.

Mr CASEY: Mr Speaker——

Dr EDWARDS: I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition has asked three questions.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! A question was redirected to the Treasurer, and I rule that the Leader of the Opposition is entitled to another question.

WATER SUPPLY FOR WINCHESTER SOUTH MINE AND MORANBAH

Mr CASEY: I direct a question to the Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs, again in relation to the Winchester South deal. I ask: What proposals have been made about the water supply for the Winchester South mine and the town of Moranbah, taking into account the fact that Moranbah already suffers some of the worst water restrictions of any mining township in Queensland, that the Eungella Dam, which supplies water to some of the Central Queensland Coal Associates mines nearby is already fully committed and will remain so until such time as the Burdekin project is proceeded with, and that the Mackenzie River Weir, which supplies water to the other mining areas south of the Peak Downs Highway, is already fully committed? Where will the water come from for this project and what arrangements are being made for Moranbah, which will suffer further water-supply problems as a result of this development?

Mr TOMKINS: We are having a Cabinet meeting today, and I know that this matter will be on the agenda. I should be in a better position, perhaps tomorrow, to answer the honourable member's question.

Mr Casey: Do you want it on notice?

Mr TOMKINS: Yes.

Mr CASEY: I place it on notice accordingly.

DEMOLITION OF HOFFNUNG BUILDING

Mr BERTONI: I refer the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts to my question yesterday regarding the demolition of the Hoffnung building and again ask the second part of that question. Will he advise if any new legislation on the preservation of our heritage would bind the Crown?

Mr ELLIOTT: I can deal with the situation only when the legislation is produced, but I think it would be reasonable to assume that if we were to enact legislation along those lines it would be rather unusual if we did not bind ourselves.

SHOOTING EVENTS, COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Mr BERTONI: I ask the Treasurer: Will he advise what progress has been made in relation to the financial and administrative considerations for the staging of the shooting events at the 1982 Commonwealth Games?

Dr EDWARDS: For the past 12 or 18 months serious and delicate negotiations have been going on concerning the shooting facilities at Belmont for the Commonwealth Games. The present facilities are inadequate for competition of international standard, and the Government has been trying to negotiate a financial contribution by the Brisbane City Council. The honourable member for Mansfield, with his close association with the sport and as captain of the parliamentary shooting team, has shown a great deal of interest in this matter. He has had lengthy discussions with me about the

problem. The present position is that the council has refused to contribute in any way to the facilities for shooting events at the Games. Its first excuse was that it had no tenure of the property, but we have been able to arrange with the Commonwealth Government for a 10-year tenure of the land, so that problem has been resolved. But still the City Council has refused to contribute to this sport in any form whatsoever.

Of recent times the Commonwealth Government has promised to contribute approximately half the cost. At this stage the estimate is about $520,000, and the Commonwealth Government has assured us of $260,000. The State Government has indicated that it is prepared to assist in every way possible in the provision of the facilities.

But the agreement at the beginning was that the three bodies—the Commonwealth Government, the State Government and the local authority—would share equally and contribute $10m each. It is regrettable to me that the Brisbane City Council has not come forward with assistance in this area. The State Government is prepared to accept its responsibility, as is the Commonwealth Government. I am disappointed that the council is not prepared to do so, and that it is using all kinds of excuses because of a conflict between it and the shooting people.

I can assure the people of Queensland and the people of Australia that facilities for the shooting events will be provided. We will try in every way possible to ensure that the council lives up to its responsibility. If it does not, then the Governments, together with the shooting people, will try to provide facilities of international competition standard that will be a credit to the Commonwealth Games and indeed to the people of Queensland.

WINCHESTER SOUTH COAL DEPOSITS

Mr UNDERWOOD: In asking a question of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, I refer to the fact that in recent days there has been much controversy on the letting of tenders for the development of the Winchester South coal deposits. The most controversial aspect of this decision appears to be that it was made secretly and without reference to key authorities charged with making decisions of this nature. I therefore ask the Treasurer: (a) was he fully involved in the evaluation of the tenders placed before the Government and the subsequent letting of the tender; (b) were the key members of his department similarly involved; and (c) if not, does this constitute an irregular practice for this Government in making decisions of this kind?

Dr EDWARDS: Neither I nor my officers were involved in the discussions in regard to the assessment of the tender. But this is not necessary, and it is not unusual for the authority to prospect to be considered by the Mines Department. However, as this was a very important assessment, Cabinet directed that the matter be further discussed between the Premier, the Minister for Mines and Energy and me, as well as our officers, so that certain conditions could be assessed in regard to economics and the necessary infrastructure. Those discussions have taken place and these matters will be further discussed by Cabinet later today.

ROAD CONDITIONS IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Mr LESTER: I ask the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police: Is he aware that the deterioration of the Central Highlands road system is so bad as to be completely unforgivable? Is he aware that only last week the road conditions in the area caused a person to become a paraplegic? Is he also aware of the large amounts of money being collected from the Central Highlands through taxes and that that money is not being returned to improve the roads? In view of this situation, will the Minister meet with the Prime Minister soon? If so, will he have dinner with the Prime Minister and tell him that the member for Peak Downs is absolutely fed up with the deal that he getting on these roads?

Mr HINZE: I think it would be more appropriate if the member for Peak Downs met with the Prime Minister. I do not know of any part of Queensland, or the rest of Australia, that does more to provide the nation's wealth than the area that the member represents. In these circumstances it grieves me to hear him say in this Parliament that the state of the roads is such that it is almost impossible to export the nation's wealth.

Next week the Federal Cabinet will come to Queensland, and the Government will have an opportunity to discuss various matters with Federal Ministers. If I am given the opportunity, I will most certainly broach the subject with the Prime Minister, indicating again the necessity to reinvest some of the nation's wealth that the Federal Government is extracting from motorists. Approximately $3.6m goes to Canberra but only a paltry $1m comes back to Queensland.

REDEVELOPMENT STUDY OF CROWN LAND, KANGAROO POINT

Mr FOURAS: I ask the Minister for Lands and Forestry: Will he release the redevelopment study of the Crown land at Kangaroo Point formerly occupied by Evans Deakin Pty Ltd, which was commissioned by the Land Administration Commission from Messrs Cardno & Davies Australia Pty Ltd, in order that residents and myself, as their member, may take part in objective discussions on the future use of that land?

Mr GLASSON: I ask the honourable member to put the question on notice. As to involvement, the answer is "Yes". Discussions have taken place, but I am not aware of the stage that they have reached.

Mr FOURAS: I will put the question on notice.

FUNDING OF WOMEN'S REFUGES

Mr FOURAS: I ask the Minister for Welfare Services: Is he aware that it is becoming extremely difficult to obtain placements at women's refuges in the Brisbane metropolitan area? Is he also aware that only Queensland and Western Australia do not fully fund the difference between Federal subsidies and the cost of running the refuges, and that Queensland refuges have to fund 25 per cent of capital costs and 12½ per cent of recurrent costs? Will he, as a matter of urgency, undertake to fully fund women's refuges in Queensland, so that more refuges will be set up and more staff engaged in social work will be employed, thus enabling the refuges to function more efficiently?

Mr WHITE: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is true that there is some criticism of the funding of women's refuges in this State, and I am sympathetic to that criticism. Recently I had discussions with the Treasurer to see whether further funding can be made available for the future.

It should be recognised that many voluntary organisations make a tremendous contribution and that, at times, their efforts are sustained only by continued Government support. People running refuges in Queensland do have a legitimate complaint in that respect. That is recognised by my department, and it is a matter for consideration and further discussion between my department and the Treasury.

BEER PRICES

Mr BURNS: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Is he aware that in 1970 a bottle of beer cost 40c and a pot of beer cost 18c and that they now cost $1.03 and 59c respectively; and also that the price of beer has increased 100 per cent in the past five years while the CPI has increased 47 per cent and the wage of the average male has increased by 44 per cent? As the Government has some right to investigate beer prices, will the Minister investigate the foreign-controlled breweries, including Fourex and Carlton, and their ripping off of the ordinary working man in the public bar?

Dr EDWARDS: This Government does not believe in price control, and we certainly would not be part of——

Opposition Members interjected.

Dr EDWARDS: I have no intention of taking the matter any further.

CONTAINER TERMINALS, FISHERMAN ISLANDS

Mr BURNS: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: What strange philosophy is behind the statement of the Premier that operators at container terminals at the new Fisherman Islands terminal will operate on a "profit guaranteed or their money back" basis? Will he give details—just off the cuff—of other Queensland industries that operate on the principle that they can keep the profits and the workers and taxpayers will pay for any losses they incur?

Dr EDWARDS: I am not aware of the statement made by the Premier. I would be happy if the honourable member would put his question on notice to the Premier for Tuesday.

Mr BURNS: I most certainly will, Mr Speaker.

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

At 12 noon,

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 17, the House proceeded with Government business.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—SECOND ALLOTTED DAY

Debate resumed from 10 March (see p. 131) on Dr Lockwood's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, on which Mr Casey had moved the following amendment—

"Add to the Address the following words—

'However, it is the opinion of this Legislature that your advisers have failed to immediately initiate both the electoral and Government reform in this State as indicated by them during the election campaign and they have shown no real intent in their legislative program to properly overcome the problems of unemployment and economic hardship which face all sections of the Queensland community, despite the fact that the boundless mineral and rural wealth of this State has provided them with ample opportunity, and that they have therefore lost the confidence of this House.' "

Mr HARPER (Auburn) (12.1 p.m.): Mr Speaker, I offer my personal congratulations to you on your re-election to the most important and honoured office of Speaker of this Parliament.

In addressing His Excellency I want to record my appreciation to those who have been responsible for my own election to this Parliament. In particular, I record my gratitude to parents who provided that family atmosphere which in this society I believe to be so important, who afforded me educational opportunity at a time when this State was governed by the Labor Party—a Government which did not see fit to make educational opportunity readily available to all children; and incidentally, a master Government in gerrymander, entrenched in this House with the assistance of first past the

post voting, finally brought to account only through its own internal dissension.

I proudly place on record the support I have always received from a loyal and devoted wife, a homemaker who has been prepared to share my life be it in helping with fencing, clearing, mustering or branding —or even in politics! Likewise I record my appreciation of two daughters whose loyalty and support have made our family. Finally, I acknowledge and record my appreciation of the support given to me over a number of years by so many people throughout south-west and central Queensland, in particular the support given to me by the Auburn electorate at large.

At the November election the Labor Party put forward in Auburn a man whom many claim to have been the most creditable candidate to represent it in that area for more than 20 years, and I record that! So I am indeed proud and appreciative of the support which gave me a percentage of the vote almost identical to that obtained by the Honourable Neville Hewitt, a man who served in this Parliament for some 24 years. I assure His Excellency and this House that I intend to justify the confidence which has been shown in me and in the policies of the National Party, policies which I have helped to develop and which I hope to promote for many years.

Like our Premier, I am used to making my own way in life—and I am proud of that, too!

Today undoubtedly marks a new segment in my career and I admit to pleasure in being able to address His Excellency Commodore Sir James Ramsay. Though much less distinguished than that of His Excellency, my own service in the Royal Australian Navy was one of the more formative experiences in my life—certainly my non-political life. Enlisting from school, I would not wish to have missed the grounding given to me as an ordinary seaman. The Whitlam Government dealt a death blow to school cadets as I knew them, and I believe it is most unfortunate for Australia and its security that the present Federal Government has not seen fit to reintroduce a more universal cadet training scheme in the schools; but then it has been lethargic in so many other defence areas.

I could mention, for example, the inadequacy of our early-warning air defence and control systems as one area in which the Federal Government should be active. After years of neglect by the Whitlam Labor Government, it is one matter to which our coalition Government should be turning its attention.

I know that my cadet training was in a war environment and was probably somewhat different, but I have no doubt about its value. Largely because of it I was fortunate to be selected for officer training, and more fortunate to be young enough to receive appointment as a midshipman. That is a rather menial rank but it gave me the opportunity to develop for the future.

I am not one to use quotations, but from my years in the Navy there are two mottoes that have probably coloured my way of life, and I bring them to the attention of this House. Certainly they pass through my thoughts quite frequently.

"Fear God, Honour the Queen" is good advice for any citizen, and it is certainly embraced by the Royal Australian Navy. Claiming to be a Christian and being a believer in the role of the Royal Family in our democracy, I indicate that those few words do sum up part of my philosophy.

While serving in HMAS "Hawkesbury" as a midshipman, a ship's crest and motto was adopted. Even my commanding officer, then an acting lieutenant-commander but presently, like His Excellency, a commodore, retired, had a twinkle in his eye and an air of disbelief when we received Navy Board approval for the Latin version of "We serve but are not subservient".

School-day political appraisement was followed by a period of hibernation but that, of necessity, came to an end with my involvement in the major post-war land settlement scheme in Queensland.

As I had been interested in politics for many years, it was inevitable that my support should turn to the one party truly interested in all Queenslanders and in rural Queensland. Over the years it has increasingly been my privilege to take part in the expansion and broadening of the National Party as it has successfully met its challengers and retained its place as the major political party in Queensland. Its success lies in the democratic nature of its very organisation—participation by all members to a degree unmatched by any other political party. It is an organisation in which every member, whether he be in Parliament or at a branch level anywhere in Queensland, has the opportunity and the right to take part in meaningful debate on the policies to be adopted by the party. No other political organisation in this State or in Australia can match that claim.

Ours are real and living policies formulated by its members for the guidance of those who are elected to Parliament. The National Party is very proud of the fact that it never directs the members of its parliamentary party in the way they vote. With the party's help they choose policies, with its help they approach issues, but at no time does the party give them directions. The party certainly gives guidance and advice but not direction of the type that brought about the demise of the gerrymander-entrenched Labor Government.

Ours is a strong, united political organisation whose policies are determined by democratic processes which ensure that, once charted and set, our course is held. It is a strong party under strong leadership both within and outside this Parliament. Its leaders are determined to respond to the ever-changing needs of the development that coalition government has brought to Queensland.

My experience in local government has been comparatively brief. It has been rewarding but, as with my political experience to date, it has certainly not been financially so. The role of local government is deserving of greater recognition by the other arms of government, including the State Government. Its financial resources are limited; if they have not already reached breaking point, I suggest that they are very close to parting. Continuing recognition by the Federal Government of the need to increase funding of local government services from the common tax pool, rather than from sectional rating which is required of local government, is vital for adequate orderly development and maintenance of our community.

I am sure His Excellency will applaud the intention of the Government to make it possible for young people of experience and ability, but with limited financial resources, to take part in meeting the increasing demand for food both in Australia and overseas. The National Party proposal for a young persons' farm purchase scheme had two main achitects. I am proud to name my colleague Mr George Robertson as one and to include myself as the other. We have both experienced the traumas, the trials and the tribulations of developing closer-settled areas, of starting out with nothing but our own two hands, a shovel and a crowbar to make improvements to relatively unimproved country. Over the years we have both become experienced primary producers, and we both support very strongly the principal of giving young people in this day and age an opporunity to stay on the land or to turn to the land to produce the food which we in Australia need and which we are increasingly required to commit to export markets.

I trust that this Parliament will very soon accept the principles of the scheme. Certainly there should not be any opposition from honourable members on the other side, for they themselves adopted the original scheme endorsed by the National Party in 1979. In promoting our scheme as part of its policy during the last State election campaign, the Opposition was slow in keeping up with the amendments that the National Party made. Nevertheless, the Opposition clearly acknowledged the need for such a scheme, so I look forward, when the time comes, to its support. Because the members of the National Party and the coalition Government are anti-socialist, there will be one major difference. The Labor Party amended the National Party proposal in the area of socialist control of the farms to be made available to young people.

Development generated by the Bjelke-Petersen coalition Government has been widespread and not without its problems. The tremendous reserves of coal being proven in some of the State's best grazing lands must prompt increasing vigilance on the part of Government to ensure that rehabilitation of mined areas takes place. Laws for the compensation of dispossessed landholders must be amended to ensure that the owners of an enterprise producing food are adequately compensated when their business is acquired in the interests of energy production.

A person engaged in one form of primary production is required to leave his industry so that a form of extractive primary production can take his place. When acquisition takes place compensation for the mere market value of the property is not sufficient. A factor for social disturbance, a term which I coined some two or three years ago in an endeavour to indicate the compensation that is required, must be added as a legal as well as a moral right.

It is a traumatic experience for a person to be forcibly removed from land that he and perhaps his forefathers have toiled on and developed over the years against all the vagaries of nature—drought, fire and flood. Being forced off such land must be a truly traumatic experience that the acquiring companies and the Mining Act must recognise and compensate for.

Development of our energy reserves is accepted as being essential. But fair treatment of the landholder in all respects is just as essential, and that includes the compassionate exercise of rights and privileges given to the mining companies under the Mining Act. Those rights and privileges are quite extensive and many mining companies, if not most, endeavour to play the game; but, when they do not, they must be legally required to do so and the Government must insist that they follow those requirements.

In a decade during which we plan to proudly expand rural electrification to sparsely populated remote areas, it might be worth while to pause for a moment to look at the statutory authorities set up by this Government for the distribution of electricity. Arbitrary decisions are being taken by those authorities—decisions which seem to defy reason. In my own electorate, groups of rural dwellers in long-established, closer-settled areas are being penalised. They are being by-passed for electricity as a result of decisions taken by boards that act as judge, jury and gaoler in deciding which country people will receive electrification.

They are deciding whether country people, whom nature and markets have already penalised, should be further penalised by being deprived of this right. In the year 1981, in a decade in which Queensland has such vast energy sources, I suggest that it is no longer a privilege but a right to have electricity connected to one's residence, property or business, whether in the Brisbane area or in the far-flung centres of Western Queensland. It is certainly a right for the people living in areas such as Monto and Rannes in my electorate to have electricity connected. Here is another example of Queensland's potential for development having to be recognised by the Federal Government and fair funding allocated.

The harnessing of our water resources is one other area in which the Federal Government has been lethargic. South Australia has fared much better than any other State, receiving nearly $42m from the Commonwealth Government for water projects during the past five years. As against that figure, Queensland's share during the same period was $28m. During the same five-year period, on behalf of the people of Australia our Federal Government gave $1,130m to overseas countries for development assistance.

I put it to the Federal Government that it is time it realised the needs of the developing State of Queensland and gave us a fair share of our financial requirements to expand and to continue the development that our coalition Government, now into its third decade of office, has promoted.

Many Queensland communities would have been in dire straits but for the recent February rains. It was a fairly close call as to whether they would or would not receive summer rains; but nature and the good Lord were kind to us and rain fell in many, if not all, areas.

The actions of the Federal Treasurer during the dry spell and drought of last year make me wonder whether he realises that it is too late to construct dams once drought hits. Most of us appreciate that fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, and the Fraser Government should accept its responsibility at home and ensure that future catastrophies are avoided by adequate harnessing of water resources now. We, as members of this Parliament, must ensure that the Treasurer of Queensland continues to recognise the importance of this form of development. It is no joke to be faced with dry dams. Be it farm water, water for irrigation, or town water supply, the value of water cannot be overestimated, and judicious Federal funding of Australia's developing States is our right.

Speaking on the role of industry organisations, I suggest that members should at all times listen to advice and differing points of view. Although, in the final analysis, the elected representatives in this Assembly must make the decisions and accept responsibility for them, I believe that it is the right of affected industry to canvass its policies.

That same right of discussion is available to trade unions under National Party policy, and so it should be. It is unfortunate that trade union membership is not insisting on exercising that right. It should do so, in spite of the attitude of militant officials with suspect motives. I hope that reasonable trade union leaders will turn to the industrial relations policy of the National Party, which was mentioned in the House yesterday, make a fair appraisal of it, take the opportunity to discuss matters, and attempt to keep productivity mounting, those in the workforce in work, and Queensland and Australia progressing. Both industry organisations and trade unions are entitled to expect a responsible response from the Government to responsible representations.

Unnecessary laws are bad laws, if for no other reason than that they encourage people to show disrespect for the law in general. By way of illustration only, and influenced by the statement of the Minister for Transport yesterday, I invite honourable members who venture out of the city to remember the main Ipswich Road in the vicinity of Goodna, where traffic flows consistently at 80 km an hour in spite of 60 km an hour zone speed signs, or to the temporary speed zone signs that are left standing when the need for them no longer exists. By allowing things such as that to continue, we are encouraging usually law-abiding citizens to break the law, and so a pattern is established.

Although it is desirable to spring clean many laws, it is imperative that Parliament not allow the system to be burdened further by unnecessary laws. Consolidation and simplification of the Acts of Parliament is refreshing, and I hope that honourable members will encourage more of it.

If I achieve nothing more than placing his name on record, I must make reference to a Queensland veterinarian named Bruce Wilson, who was based in Dalby for many years. His advice was sought and respected throughout south-western Queensland, and he dedicated himself to understanding and treating what is commonly referred to as eye cancer in cattle. When others ridiculed his theories that these tumours were caused by virus transmitted by biting insects, Bruce Wilson persevered, and now those critics are quite happy to embrace his work. Unfortunately Bruce Wilson has been swallowed into a research unit from which his pioneering perseverence may eventually receive scant recognition. The Government is not entirely blameless for that state of affairs. Let it not be forgotten that it was a private Queensland veterinarian who persisted in the face of ridicule and contributed significantly to Australian knowledge of immunotherapy, and who produced a treatment that has achieved exciting regression of cancerous tumours in livestock.

I assure His Excellency, through you, Mr Speaker, that I look forward to serving his Government and my electorate, and that I am proud to fear God and honour the Queen.

Mr TENNI (Barron River) (12.26 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker——

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr TENNI: No, this is not my maiden speech. I welcome interjections.

I have much pleasure in replying to the Opening Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor Sir James Ramsay. In doing so, I pledge my loyalty and that of my constituents in the electorate of Barron River, to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Sir James Ramsay and his very charming wife are excellent people who perform their duties extremely well.

I congratulate Mr Speaker (Selwyn Muller) on his re-election. I also congratulate the Chairman of Committees (Mr Miller) on his appointment to that position. After sitting alongside Mr Miller for some six years I know that we have a very capable person in the chair today as Mr Deputy Speaker.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr TENNI: Opposition members may say, "Ha, ha!", but their nominee was not worth 20c.

I congratulate all Ministers, particularly the new Ministers, on their appointment to Cabinet rank. It would be wrong of me to say that I was not terribly disappointed that a ministerial appointment was not granted to Far North Queensland. I believe that at least another three Ministers from Far North Queensland should have been appointed to give sensible, decent representation to all areas of the State.

Mr Moore: You should have been one of them.

Mr TENNI: I thank the honourable member.

Mr Hartwig: Do you think that representation from the North is adequate?

Mr TENNI: It is far from adequate; it is completely inadequate. Any member representing a northern or north-western part of the State would be weak-kneed and weak-bellied if he didn't agree. I am not one of those. In no way will the people of North and North-west Queensland allow the matter to rest at that. Something is totally wrong with the system seeing that we had four Ministers from that area prior to the election, and now have only one. We talk about decentralisation but we do not practice it in ministerial representation throughout the State.

I congratulate honourable members who have been newly elected to Parliament. I hope that the new Government members have a long, successful and generous term. When I refer to the "Government", I refer to the coalition parties. I pay no attention to the socialists in the Opposition. Although they interject with some bright ideas at times, most of them wave the red flag and cause many problems in the community.

I thank the people of the electorate of Barron River for their wonderful support in the last election. This is my third term.

Mr Hartwig: They realise quality when they see it.

Mr TENNI: The honourable member is dead right, and I thank him for the interjection.

The seat was held by the Labor Party for a long time. Recently the Labor Party has done all of the filthiest things to me that could be done to anybody. This House has been used to issue utter abuse and to tell complete lies. Their statements have been proved in court hearings to be totally wrong. Even with all of the filth and dirt that the Labor Party has thrown at me and my family over the past six years, it has not been successful. So I am very pleased that the people of Barron River have been able to see through the socialist, Left-wing element and its efforts during the last election campaign.

Mr Hartwig: It was shocking when they tried to tie you in with the drug scene.

Mr TENNI: That came from the Left-wing element in the socialist Labor Party. The Labor Party should try to get back to what it was years ago. For instance, I would class Bob Scott as being like the good old Right-wing Labor Party members. He is well respected in his electorate. He works hard in his electorate. We do not hear him make such allegations. If the Labor Party were made up of Right-wingers like that honourable member, it would not have all of its problems. I see Kev Hooper making a few notes.

Mr Scott: What about when you were in the Labor Party?

Mr TENNI: The honourable member knows all about it. I got out of it because I saw the pink element coming in, and then things went bright red. That is why I got out of it. I had brains; the fellows on the other side have none. It is time they woke up to themselves.

Mr Scott: Were you in it when they wanted to nationalise the banks?

Mr TENNI: No way in the world was I in it then. That is when the honourable member joined it.

I should now like to deal with the problems associated with high schools in the Barron River electorate. The growth in the Northern Beaches area is, I think, the third largest in Queensland. There are urgent demands for a high school in that area, and there is no way in the world that I will wait any longer than the beginning of the 1982 school year for it to be constructed. Of course, if we had ministerial representation, that Minister would not allow this situation to exist.

A public meeting was called at Yorkeys Knob State School about October or November 1980. The then Minister for Education promised that the high school would be constructed for the commencement of the 1981 school year. He said that the Grade 8 block and the administration block would be constructed. I would be quite happy with that, provided that another grade building is constructed each year. Unfortunately, things do not look too bright at present.

The Government is crying poor and probably the school will not be built until the commencement of the 1983 school year; yet only last week I read in the paper that the Government offered $1.1m for a clapped-out building in Brisbane. If the Government has $1.1m to offer for that building—and it was not successful in its efforts—I will

take the money and build my high school with it, because it is more important to the children of my area than a lousy, clapped-out building in Brisbane.

I am sick and tired of listening to a few rabble-rousers in the streets of Brisbane screaming and complaining about the pulling down of an old building. If they love it so much, they should buy it, restore it and maintain it. They should show the people of this State that they are fair dinkum instead of whinging and crying, trying to spend a fortune on behalf of the taxpayers of this State and denying them money that could be spent for the benefit of children in my electorate who have to travel two hours by bus each day to get to and from high school. That is what the rabble-rousers think of the children of this State. They would sooner waste $1.1m on a clapped-out old building——

Mr Warburton: That is your Government you are talking about.

Mr TENNI: It might be my Government I am talking about, but I am an honest politician and I do not pull any punches whether I am referring to the socialists or the National/Liberal Party coalition.

Mr Hartwig: Wouldn't you say the Hoffnung building was worse than the Bellevue?

Mr TENNI: I do not know about it being worse than the Bellevue, but it was certainly on a par with it. At least we had enough brains to ignore the rabble-rousers in the street and wipe out the Bellevue overnight. That is what the people who bought the Hoffnung building should have done. I cannot understand how people can be prepared to push their claims so far without being fair dinkum and putting their own money into the project. The children of this State require more money for education, and that is more important than an old building.

Mr Warburton: Which political party does the Minister for Education belong to?

Mr TENNI: If the honourable member does not know that after being a member for so long, there is something wrong with him. After I have completed my speech I will take the honourable member outside and tell him which departments each Minister is responsible for. How is that?

Mr Scott: What about your ideas on culture? Do you feel very strongly in that direction?

Mr TENNI: It depends on what sort of culture the honourable member is referring to. If he is referring to Aboriginal culture, some of it is quite good, but some of it is just absolute rubbish.

Mr Scott: What about historic buildings? How do you place a value on those?

Mr TENNI: Is the honourable member genuine about wanting to preserve historic buildings? If he is, I am prepared to set up an appeal and he or anyone else can put their money where their mouth is. That money could be used to preserve and maintain the buildings in which these so-called enthusiasts for cultured things are supposed to be interested. Let them prove that they are fair dinkum Australians and not whingers.

To get back to my high school—it should be built and ready for occupation by the children of the Barron River electorate and the Northern Beaches area by the commencement of the 1982 school year. Because a Minister of the Crown at a public meeting promised the people of my electorate that it would be built, it will be built. That Minister might not now hold the Education portfolio, but although we have a new Minister for Education it is the responsibility of this Government to make sure that the promises made by the previous Minister are kept. If I have to go to the Press or attack my Government every day of the week, I will continue to do so until I am sure that this school will be ready at the commencement of the 1982 school year.

I now want to talk about the urgent need for new primary schools in the electorate of Barron River, particularly at Port Douglas. At present approximately 180 kids from Port Douglas have to travel the 14 miles to Mossman by bus every day, and in the wet season, because of road flooding, they cannot get to school. I admit that this does not happen frequently, but it does happen. The fact remains that the Government is paying bus operators a lot of money to transport 180 children to the Mossman primary school while there is land set aside for a school at Port Douglas. I think priority should be given to the construction of a primary school at Port Douglas to open not later than the commencement of the 1983 school year. I do not know whether it was done by a Labor Government, but years ago the schools at Port Douglas and Holloway Beach were closed and sold. They have now become large residential and tourist areas, and new schools are urgently needed to replace those that were sold in the past.

Holloway Beach is a fast-developing area. There is land in the area for a primary school, and urgent consideration should be given to the construction of a school so that it is ready for the commencement of the 1983 school year.

Another very fast-growing area in my electorate is Freshwater, which is a suburb of Cairns. There is tremendous overcrowding in the school in that area. I listen to members of the Labor Party whinge and cry about the schools in their electorates and suggest that schools in National Party and Liberal electorates receive all the attention. At least four double teaching areas are urgently needed at the Freshwater State School. So many temporary buildings have been erected at the school that it has run out of land. The Freshwater State School is terribly overcrowded and requires the construction of some permanent buildings to overcome the problem. The Government has been good to the Freshwater State School over the years. It has built a new toilet block and undercover play area and it has erected some temporary buildings,

but it can go only so far with temporary buildings. There are so many temporary buildings at the school that it is like a chequer-board. Extra land is required for the school. Right next to the school two half-acre blocks of land, with old homes on them, are for sale. The Government should immediately purchase those two blocks to give the school an extra acre of land for future development.

The Mossman State School badly needs painting. The list of problems at the school is as long as one's arm. They are being attended to, but far too slowly. Some urgent work needs to be done on the Mossman State School, and I hope that the Minister for Works and Housing, who has inspected the school, will act quickly to overcome the problems.

Mr Hartwig: That is a fair way from Brisbane.

Mr TENNI: That is right. Of course, if we had a Minister from North Queensland we could take him out to these areas regularly and show him the problems. It is expensive for the taxpayers of the State to have a Minister go up there every now and again.

Another little school in my eletcorate, the Biboohra State School, requires an extra class-room to overcome the present overcrowding.

I now wish to talk about police, police stations and the equipment that the police in the electorate of Barron River urgently need. I have been pushing this matter in questions and in other ways, but I have not been very successful yet. Now that the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police (Mr Russ Hinze) is pressing for improvements in the police force, including more staff, I only hope that he will give very serious consideration to the construction of police stations and the provision of more manpower in Far North Queensland—not just on the Gold Coast, in Brisbane and on the Sunshine Coast.

The growing of drugs in the scrub country to the north, south and west of Cairns poses a very big problem. The two new policemen who have been stationed up there are very capable men, but they lack equipment. It is a waste of taxpayers' money having them there unless they have the necessary equipment. They need a four-wheel drive utility, such as a four-wheel Datsun one-tonner, two trail bikes and a good dog. What happens at present is that the police go into the scrub and find a crop of marihuana. As soon as the men who are watering it or picking it see the police they head into the scrub. They can lose the police in five minutes in that country. If the police had a good dog they could send it in after the men.

We want to get those druggies behind bars where they will not be able to feed drugs to the kids of this nation. If we can do that we will be seen to be fair dinkum in our efforts to eliminate the illegal use of drugs. Everybody, including the Premier and Ministers, says that drugs are grown in North Queensland. The Opposition says so, too. What I have asked for will help to overcome a large part of the drug problem in North Queensland and help to prevent drugs getting into the possession of the young people of this State.

Mossman is a wonderful little town but it has a police station that is older than the oldest member of this House—in fact, it is probably older than the combined ages of the two eldest members. It is white-ant eaten and falling down. Next to it is a court-house in exactly the same condition. Ample land is available in front of those buildings on which a good police station and court-house could be constructed. I have been pushing this matter for six years—again to no avail. Yet the members of the Labor Party say that National and Liberal Party electorates get everything.

Mr Scott: We just say that you are ineffective as a member.

Mr TENNI: I hear the member for Cook screaming and complaining all the time about schools, hospitals, roads and bridges in his electorate. If I am ineffective, he is absolutely hopeless.

Mr Innes: It was very uncharitable of him.

Mr TENNI: Yes, but he sees only the Aboriginal missions.

Kuranda urgently needs a new police station. The old one has been patched up for many years. The land is available for a new police station. Consideration is presently being given to an extension to the Mareeba Police Station. At the moment police are working in the sergeant's home, which has been turned into part of the police station. Some time ago there was talk of closing down the Mareeba Police District. Of course, I opposed that very strongly. It is in a good central position to look after the Peninsula and Gulf areas.

I thank the Government for the construction of the new hospital at Mareeba at a cost of $12m. It is now nearing completion and will be a wonderful asset to Mareeba. It will serve not only the people of Mareeba but also residents in the electorate of Cook. It is very good to see a modern hospital with modern equipment and competent staff to serve that area. Many country people will take advantage of its facilities.

The current extension to the Cairns Base Hospital will cost $21m. Although the hospital is in the Cairns electorate, residents north of Cairns, including Mossman and Mareeba, use it. In the next five years I want to see planning for a new hospital at Mossman and the conversion of the old hospital into an aged persons' home. The privately-owned home at Julatten always has a long waiting list.

One of the big problems in my electorate is the age of some of the roads. Without doubt, one of the worst roads is from the bottom of Kuranda Range to Emerald Creek on the southern side of Mareeba. That road was pushed through very, very quickly by the CCC and the Americans in 1943. No soil-testing was done in those days. The road was built up simply by dragging soil from the sides of the road and heaping it up, leaving the surface with dips and bumps and hollows.

It is strange how a road that was built without any soil-testing, vibrator rollers or anything like that—it was rolled by three-ton Maple Leaf and Dodge trucks with loads of dirt on them for weight—has stood up so very well; but it has now reached the stage where it is more like an ocean. The bitumen has sunk. The road is very narrow and a driver has to hang onto the wheel and really drive or else he will be in the bush, as the saying is.

The Government commenced work on the road in the latter part of last year, when a 4 km section was constructed. However, an on-going program is urgently needed. The road is so narrow that there is not sufficient bitumen in places for two cars to pass safely. One has to get off onto the rough shoulders. I would hope that the Government continues the construction of the road and upgrades the bridges and culverts.

My electorate has been fortunate to have new bridges constructed over Avondale Creek and the Barron River at Strathford and Kamerunga. This year sees the commencement of construction of the new Thomatis Creek bridge and the upgrading of that highway and the Oak Creek crossing, which will result in what is virtually an all-weather road from the Tablelands, Mossman and North Cairns into the city of Cairns.

I congratulate the previous Minister for Water Resources (Honourable Neville Hewitt) and his assistants on having the Smithfield drainage scheme completed last year. It has been a wonderful asset to the Smithfield/Yorkeys Knob area. No flooding worth talking about has since occurred at the Avondale Creek crossing and certainly no water has crossed Yorkeys Knob road.

The fellows on the other side of the Chamber have let me down, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was hoping for some good, sensible interjections, but apparently they do not know how to make them.

I would now like to talk about tourism. With Port Douglas, Cape Tribulation and Cairns in my electorate, tourism is a very important industry for us. Sometimes I wonder whether we as a Government are doing it full justice. In my electorate is the Mossman sugar mill, which has an old tramway that comes under the Tramways Acts. The mill wants to put a tourist tram on the line from Mossman out to Port Douglas, Mowbray Valley and so on. To permit the tram to be used for carrying passengers, we consider that an amendment is required to the Tramways Acts. We have been working on it for three or four months, but so far we have not got to first base. This is a pretty poor effort by the Government when we are trying to promote tourism in country areas. Over the years the Mossman sugar mill has promoted tourism so successfully that bus loads of tourists arrive to inspect the mill, which is the most updated, computerised mill in Queensland. It is the first to be fully computerised. It is spotless. The mill has beautiful car parks, special staff for visitors and not a blade of grass out of place. Tourists are sold T-shirts, caps and stainless steel cane knives, with northern timbers used in the handles and on the boards that the knives stand in. Many other items are proving very popular. In fact, tourists go almost crazy over them.

To increase tourist interest, the mill wants to have a tourist train travelling round the mill and out to Port Douglas. I think it is a marvellous idea. I am asking the appropriate Minister to really get moving on it and to help these people. I say to him, "Don't hinder them. Don't slow them down. Get your finger out, as the saying is, and get the scheme going." That is all I ask. It is most essential that that be done.

A question discussed fairly recently in the electorate of Barron River has been local ownership of the Cairns airport. The Commonwealth Government is trying to get out from under—a shocking state of affairs! It is trying to load State Governments with the financing of local ownership of jet airports in this country.

Many people in the Cairns area thought that was a marvellous idea. Of course, they did not think in depth about the question. They did not think about what the situation would be in New South Wales, where there are two jet airports. The principal one, Sydney, would remain under Commonwealth ownership; possibly the other one would be locally owned. In Victoria, there is only one jet airport. It could never be locally owned. There are two in Tasmania, one of which could be locally owned, and only one in South Australia. However, in Queensland, apart from the Townsville airport, which is a strategic airport, and Brisbane Airport, which will remain under the control of the Commonwealth Government, seven jet airports could be locally owned. Under the Commonwealth Government's proposal, the State Government would have to pick up the tab for 20 per cent of the loss on the operations of those airports. It would be plain stupidity to agree to that.

Mr Simpson interjected.

Mr TENNI: The honourable member does not know what he is talking about.

Mr Simpson: I am agreeing with the honourable member.

Mr TENNI: Thank you very much. I am sorry; I apologise. I thought the honourable member said that I was not right. As a result of the study and research that I have done, I say to the honourable member that the only ones who are not right are those who were on the committee set up to consider local ownership of the airport in Cairns. I do not know why they supported the proposal. The facts put before them should have told them to get out and leave it with the Commonwealth. There must have been some reason for their attitude. I can understand why the Federal member for Leichhardt, David Thomson, was pushing for it. It would take the airport out of his hands, and the Commonwealth Government would save a fortune in the long run.

The airport at Cairns would be one of the worst in Australia for local ownership. It is built on a mud flat and is constantly sinking. It costs hundreds of thousands of dollars to maintain the strip. In spite of that, the members of the committee in Cairns are saying, "Let's be good fellows. Let's take the cost from the Commonwealth and load it onto the shoulders of the State Government." The Commonwealth Government gives Queensland back only cents out of the dollars that this State sends to Canberra in tax money.

Mr Underwood: Would you say that David Thomson sold out his electorate by promoting that?

Mr TENNI: I would not say that he sold out completely. I should say that he is like the members of the Labor Party who go into caucus and caucus says, "You will say this", and they say it. In my opinion, David Thomson made the wrong move, and I do not pull any punches in saying that.

Mr Scott: Like the move you made on Glen Sheil.

Mr TENNI: I did not make the wrong move on Glen Sheil. Honourable members opposite must lie in bed at night and dream things up. They should wake up to themselves.

Mr Moore: They are full of nightmares.

Mr TENNI: Yes, they are full of nightmares, and that is how they operate. It is a wonder they do not cut each other's throat in their sleep.

In my opinion, anyone who supports local ownership of Cairns Airport must also be having nightmares. It would be plain stupidity for the State Government to even consider backing local ownership of jet airports. The cost factor alone shows that. Someone suggested that a landing charge should be imposed on each passenger. How much is that to be? Is it to be $1, $2, $5, $10? It may be only $1 to begin with, but, as the years roll on, it might be $50 in five years' time. Why should people using Cairns Airport be loaded with $50 when people landing at Brisbane Airport, which would be Federal owned, would not have to pay anything? Is it suggested that the people living in country areas should again be penalised? Or is it that the airports in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Canberra should be free airports because there are more votes in large metropolitan areas? Is that why the Commonwealth Government does not give two hoots about country airports such as the one in Cairns?

When the committee was first formed, I opposed the proposal, and I have remained constant in my opposition to it and do not intend to change. There is no way in the world that any sensible, thinking person could support such a move.

I should like also to discuss electricity charges in country areas of Queensland.

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

Mr TENNI: Before the luncheon recess I had started to refer to problems associated with the electricity industry throughout the State, and particularly in country areas such as the electorate of Barron River. When people want power connected to country properties or to homes built on two-acre and five-acre blocks some distance from where electricity is reticulated they are discriminated against. The Government should look closely at the actions of boards and try to lower the excessive costs imposed on people living in country areas. I have been told of people paying up to $40,000 to get power connected although they live only seven or eight miles from an area with power. The impositions on country people, such as excessive costs for fuel, oil and other necessities, must be eased.

I come now to some of the silly things that the Government has done in the past, that it should now be trying to correct. As a Government, we virtually say, "If a taipan is about to bite you, don't shoot it." People are not allowed to shoot a lousy snake! Must people in the country allow venomous snakes to move around until they bite somebody? That control should be removed immediately. It is plainly stupid to protect venomous snakes such as the black, the taipan and the brown. I ask the Minister to immediately get rid of that legislation.

Today's "Telegraph" carries an article describing how a farmer's crop of pineapples is being destroyed by crows. He has been told that if he shoots them he is liable to a $2,000 fine, but if he gets a permit from the National Parks and Wildlife Service he can shoot them. That is akin to saying to a cane farmer who finds pigs ripping out his cane on a Saturday afternoon to wait until Monday when the office is open, when he can then get a permit to shoot them. While waiting for Monday, he might lose an acre of cane. That is the silliest thing I have ever heard. Any thing that destroys crops in this country should be destroyed immediately.

Salt-water crocodiles are becoming a problem in North Queensland.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr TENNI: One of these days I will trap a few of them, bring them down and let them loose in the Opposition benches. That will give Opposition members something to think about, and it might liven them up. We have 6 ft, 8 ft and 21 ft crocodiles on the northern beaches at Daintree and Mossman. Last year two six-footers were caught right in the middle of Cairns. They are right through the Tully and Innisfail areas, and they are multiplying so quickly it is not funny. Yet we have legislation preventing people from destroying crocodiles. We have open season on ducks, but not on crocodiles.

Mr Hooper: Are they man-eaters?

Mr TENNI: The honourable member does not know what a crocodile looks like. He is a cityite wrapped in cotton-wool.

I want it recorded in "Hansard", before the first fatality occurs in North Queensland, that I warned it could happen. Salt-water crocodiles are to be seen in residential areas. They are present in picnic and recreation areas and popular fishing spots. They come out of the salt water into streams where children swim. I have seen crocodiles 21 ft in length in the Daintree River where children swim, yet our legislation prohibits the shooting of them.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! Persistent interjections will not be tolerated.

Mr TENNI: If that is the attitude of the people in the National Parks and Wildlife Service, let them look after the crocodiles, but do not let children, adults or animals be taken by these vicious creatures. We have enough vicious creatures in the form of socialists up there without having to deal with salt-water crocodiles.

I suggest to the Minister concerned that the legislation providing that salt-water crocodiles cannot be shot, venomous snakes cannot be destroyed, pigs in forestry areas cannot be shot, crows cannot be shot—a fine of $2,000 applies to the shooting of crows—and all the other silly restrictions, should be repealed. A few ratbags have forced these restrictions on the nation, thus penalising farmers and other people in country areas and, in turn, affecting our taxable income. Opposition members object to what I am saying but they do not know. They think a cane toad is a crocodile. That is how much they know about crocodiles. It shows the standard of their mentality.

I wish to record my thanks to the former member for Mulgrave who was a member of this Assembly for 20 years. I compliment Roy Armstrong. He was a magnificent representative of the people of Far North Queensland. It was a sorry day when he decided to retire from Parliament.

Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (2.21 p.m.): At the outset, I take the opportunity to congratulate Mr Speaker on his re-election. I also congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment as Chairman of Committees. I also take this opportunity to thank the people of the Wolston electorate for re-electing me as their representative in this Parliament for another three years. It goes without saying that I thank the workers and the members of the ALP in my electorate for their active support during my last term of office.

Today, I want to expose to the people of the Redbank Plains and Goodna sections of my electorate the lies and deceit about mining at Redbank Plains that have been peddled to them by the Liberal Party. I want to prove beyond doubt that the leader of the Liberal Party, Dr Edwards, is guilty of telling untruths in his dealing with people from the Prevention of Urban Mining Association.

In 1967 Rylance Collieries and Brickworks applied for mining leases 586 and 587 relating to underground mining of land at Redbank Plains. The application was heard in 1969. The mining warden recommended the granting of the leases. No. 586 was subsequently abandoned by the company and No. 587 has never been granted by the Minister. No. 587 involves an area of approximately 572 acres, but no surface area was included. It was the company's intention to mine through from lease 583 on the northern side of the highway to Goodna, but the company said that it ran into old workings.

In 1971 the Queensland Housing Commission acquired approximately 609 acres of land, part of which was included in the area of proposed mining lease 587. The local authority was informed and it became public knowledge that this was to be a large housing development. A "Sunday Mail" article on 18 June 1972 read, "Government to spend $34m on new suburb". From 1971 to 1972 Rylance was negotiating with the Queensland Housing Commission to obtain the surface area for mining purposes but no agreement was reached. In 1973 Rylance applied for 59 acres of surface area in proposed mining lease 587.

In 1974 the Moreton Shire Council brought down its town plan and it was approved by the Local Government Department. The plan showed the land affected by proposed lease 587 and the land owned by the Housing Commission, which was zoned mainly as residential A and future urban. During the period of its ownership of the land the Queensland Housing Commission requested the Moreton Shire Council to provide sewerage and water of a suffiient capacity to service the proposed Housing

Commission development. These facilities were provided by the council. They involved the council in a cost of more than $300,000.

In 1976 Rylance applied for mining lease 736. It covered a further 738 acres comprised, in part, of more of the Housing Commission land and, in part, of more of the adjoining residential area.

In March-April 1979 the Minister for Works and Housing introduced into this Parliament—honourable members will recall it well—a Bill amending the State Housing Act, particularly with respect to the power to sell land. Section 22 (b) (v) (e) was replaced by the following—

> "(e) The Commission may, with the approval of the Minister, on such terms and conditions and subject to such restrictions, exceptions and reservations as the Commission thinks fit, sell any land vested in or purchased or acquired by it under this Act, or set apart to be used for the purposes of this Act:"

This is the important part—

> "Provided that the Minister shall not approve such sale unless he is satisfied that such land is not now required for the purposes of this Act or that such sale will serve a beneficial purpose with regard to the community in the locality of such land."

I hope honourable members take cognisance of that phraseology. Speaking in that debate the Minister (Mr Wharton) said—

> "Talking of land generally, and I refer to buying and selling land, if we are able to sell some land to enable a church, a bowling green or some particular community facility to be built, why should we not do so? We are catering for a need, and I think it is very important to do that."

In approximately July 1979 the Housing Commission sold the whole of the land owned by it by private contract to Rylance Colliery and Brickworks without first offering it for public tender or auction. In other words, it completely disregarded the people of Redbank Plains. It did not give a damn about the possible implications; it sold that land without authority from anybody and without reference to the local community. Not only did it not consult with the local authority but it did not notify it. The Moreton Shire Council did not find out about the sale until after it had been completed. The deal was subsequently approved by Cabinet, I suppose in much the same way as the shoddy deal we have heard about in this House over the past couple of days, namely, the lease that has been granted for Winchester South. What is probably the most reprehensible aspect of the whole transaction was that in order to enable the mining company to complete the purchase the Housing Commission advanced the company $558,000 out of a purchase price of $620,000, or 90 per cent of the total purchase price, money which could have been used to provide additional housing for people in this State who most need it. The terms of the loan are as follows—

> "1. That the Mortgagor will without any notice whatsoever from the Mortgagee pay to the Mortgagee the sum of $558,000 over a period of ten years from the date of possession and the first of such payments shall be paid by the Mortgagor on the date three years hence from the date of possession . . . ."

In other words, for three years out of the ten-year contract the mining company has not had to make one repayment. But if honourable members think that is bad enough, then they should listen to the interest rate—a generous 9.7 per cent. Who else in this State could go to any Government department, bank or other financial institution and receive a loan of that amount at an interest rate of 9.7 per cent? It is shocking, and obviously smells of illicit dealing and collusion between the Housing Commission, the people associated with it and Rylance Collieries. Incidentally, the date of possession was 1 August 1979. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would ask your permission to have included in "Hansard" a copy of the bill of mortgage covering the sale by the Queensland Housing Commission to Rylance Collieries. It outlines in clear detail the financial transactions involved.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! It is the usual procedure for Mr Speaker to see a document before its inclusion is approved. I will have a look at it, and as long as it is not too extensive I will accept it.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: It is a photocopy of only one page.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Very well.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Being the fair-minded Deputy Speaker that you are, I know that you will rule in my favour.

Mr Moore: You should have followed the same rules as the rest of us.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: The member for Windsor wouldn't know anything about rules because he consistently comes into this House and breaks them. I suggest, before he interjects again, that he should shave his head more closely.

Let me demonstrate the gross hypocrisy of the Liberal Party in Queensland. I refer to a motion that was passed at the Liberal Party conference only last year, 1980. That is a significant date, and this is a significant happening. At that time the Liberal Party conference passed the following motion under the heading "Mining Development"—

> "(c) use all its influence to prevent new coal-mining ventures in close proximity to established residential areas and prevent the reopening of mines and mine sites, if such mines have not been producing coal or been used for other mine related purposes in the previous five years."

That motion was passed at the Liberal Party conference in 1980, and the Deputy Premier and Treasurer (Dr Edwards) was in attendance when it was passed.

Dr Edwards: It is part of our policy.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Of course it is part of Liberal Party policy. As I say, he was in attendance at that Liberal Party conference when that motion was passed, as were members of the Liberal Party in my electorate and in the electorate of the Minister for Education (Mr Gunn). This is what they voted for, and the Deputy Premier and Treasurer did not speak against it.

Dr Edwards: I still support it.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I am pleased to hear that because I will show very shortly in this documentation that he has been leading people up the garden path, and has been anything but honest with the people from PUMA and Redbank Plains.

Dr EDWARDS: I rise to a point of order. I take exception to the suggestion that I have not been honest with people, and I ask him to withdraw the remark.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to accept the word of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer and withdraw those remarks.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I cannot understand why they need to be withdrawn. I have made an imputation which I shall back up with documentation.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Wolston is well aware of the procedure in this House. I ask him to withdraw the words.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I withdraw the words. I am sorry if I impugned the Deputy Premier and Treasurer and said that he was dishonest. However, it is obvious that he has deliberately misled those people.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! When I ask any member of this House to withdraw words, I expect him to do so without any qualification whatsoever.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: With respect to you, sir, I withdraw.

It is important to note that the Deputy Premier and Treasurer interjected at that particular part of my speech, because on 23 November 1979 he met with people from PUMA and told them that he did not know anything about the mining that was to take place at Redbank Plains.

Dr Edwards: That was before that policy was made.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I am not disputing whether the policy was in force at that time or not. Nevertheless, he did inform those people that he was not aware that mining was to take place. However, on 1 August 1979 a Mr O. Preuss, Engineer and Assistant Manager, Exploration Department, Japan Overseas Coal Development Coy Ltd of Tokyo, wrote to Mr Neeson, the Deputy Commissioner and Secretary of the Railway Department in Brisbane. I ask members to bear in mind that members of PUMA met with the Deputy Premier and Treasurer on 23 November 1979, and the latter is dated 1 August 1979. Mr Preuss said—

"Dear Mr. Neeson,

"Since early January Mr. Adachi, Senior Mining Engineer and Assistant Manager Exploration Department for Japan Overseas Coal Development Co. Ltd. Tokyo, has visited Queensland three times . . .

"The Japanese power companies are very interested in obtaining steaming coal from Queensland. Since the first week in January negotiations have taken place with Rylance Collieries & Brickworks Ipswich, and Oilmin N.L./Transoil N.L. Authority to Prospect 77c Brigalow in connection with the opening of new mines and also to participate with some equity in the projects."

He continued—

"Investigations are now proceeding further in connection with coal from Queensland, and during the last week a visit was made by Mr Adachi and myself to the central district . . .

"Preliminary discussions have already been held with Messrs Boyd & Kane., and to continue the feasibility study on the projects it would be appreciated if information on the following items could be supplied.

"(1) Rylance Collieries & Brickworks Goodna Area: Cost of transporting 500,000 tonnes of coal from colliery to new port of Brisbane.

"Cost required for extension of railway siding to colliery bins."

On the same date a copy of this correspondence was sent to Mr Leo Hielscher, the Under Secretary of the Treasury Department. I do not accept for one moment that once this correspondence was sent to the Under Secretary of his own department the Treasurer can claim that he knew absolutely nothing about the mining development taking place at Redbank Plains.

Dr EDWARDS: I rise to a point of order. On no occasion have I seen or heard of such correspondence. It certainly was not shown to me by the late Mr Preuss or by Mr Hielscher. I will endeavour to locate it so that I can see on what date it was received by my department. I have not seen such correspondence.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I am pleased to hear that, but it obviously is a clear indication that the Treasurer is completely out of touch with his department and that officers of that department are running over his head.

Dr EDWARDS: I rise to a point of order. Something like 200 letters a day are received by my department. From what I hear that letter was obviously for information purposes. If the honourable member thinks that I have time to read every letter that comes into my department he is greatly mistaken.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I don't think there was any point of order. I am surprised that the Deputy Premier is so touchy on this subject.

We find further correspondence, dated 30 November 1979, to Mr Hielscher from the Acting Deputy Commissioner and Secretary of the Railway Department, Mr Sheehy, in the following terms—

"Dear Mr. Hielscher,

"RYLANCE COLLIERIES COAL PROJECT: GOODNA AREA

"Mr. O. Preuss in his letter of 31st July, 1979, addressed to the Department, copy to you, sought the examination of a number of coal transport options. The Rylance Colliery option is the one being considered in this letter.

"The Task

"This project envisages the export of 500,000 tonnes of steaming coal per annum through Fisherman Islands. The mine site lies approximately 8 kilometres south of the main railway line between Goodna and Redbank and it is not at the present time connected to the rail system."

I have in my possession a copy of a map of the proposed rail route to Redbank Plains. Also given is the amount of tonnage to be exported from the Rylance Collieries at Redbank Plains if the project is approved.

The letter is dated 30 November 1979, some time after the Deputy Premier had discussed the matter with PUMA. I suggest that the Deputy Premier would have had knowledge of this project by this time because the letter was sent to Mr Hielscher. It continues—

"There is no existing rail route to the mine site. However, an investigation of the area indicates the feasibility of providing a spur joining onto the end of the Wacol Industrial Area railway near the Rumevite Factory dead-end. From this point, the spur will extend for about 3 kilometres inside the D.C.I.D. property. The route will be fairly circuitous from this point to the mine because of the character of the traversed mine area."

In the correspondence Mr Sheehy then outlines to Mr Hielscher the capital requirements: the construction of 10 km of spur line, $3.1m; construction of the Yeerongpilly overbridge, $0.25m; reconstruction of the Doboy Creek bridge, $0.24m; rolling-stock requirements, $1.647m—a total of $5.237m.

He then goes into the operating costs and, as a summary, he says—

"1. All costs quoted are as at 1st August, 1979.

"2. The material to be transported is steaming coal.

"3. Departmental estimates do not cover track work and facilities which will be required for this operation on Fisherman Islands and

"4. Your assessment of this project together with an early indication of the freight rate to be charged is requested."

These facts and figures obviously speak for themselves, and they speak very clearly.

Then we come to another very important document. I believe that the following documents that I will mention to honourable members will show very clearly that the accusations that I have made against the honourable member for Ipswich, who is also the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, are totally correct. The Treasurer again met people from PUMA on 17 January 1980, when he said to them that he thought the proposal to mine at Redbank Plains was absolutely terrible. That is what he said.

Dr Edwards: And I agree with that totally.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Fine. I am glad that the Treasurer does agree with it.

Dr Edwards: I do agree, but it's about time some people who are in the gallery told you the full story, because they told me a few things about you.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I am pleased that the Treasurer does agree that he said he thought it was absolutely terrible.

Remembering that he said this to the people from PUMA on 17 January 1980, there is a Treasury memorandum—a brief—for a meeting to take place with Mr W. Roche, a consultant on mining (who incidently, I understand, appeared as a witness in the proceedings in the Mining Wardens Court, which would appear to me, to say the least, to be highly irregular); Mr D. Broadfoot, the general manager of Rylance Collieries; Mr Torri, the deputy general manager of Showa Oil Co. Ltd; and a Mr Suzuki, the manager of the fuel and energy department of Showa Oil Co. Ltd.

The brief was headed—

"Re: Steaming Coal freight from Rylance Collieries, Goodna."

The meeting was held on 3 July 1980 at 2.45 p.m.

Dr Edwards: What was that?

Mr R. J. GIBBS: This is a briefing for the Treasury Department. The document is here; so the Treasurer can have a look at it afterwards.

Dr Edwards: Are you saying the meeting was with me?

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I am not saying the meeting was with the Treasurer at all. I am saying that it was certainly with officers of his department. If he did not know about it, he would want to explain to this House why he did not know about it. If this meeting took place, we want to know why——

Dr EDWARDS: I rise to a point of order. I advise the honourable member—and unfortunately he does not understand—that these matters are discussed at officer level repeatedly.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I rise to point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! I am already taking a point of order. I will take only one point of order at a time.

Dr EDWARDS: The honourable member's insinuation is that I ought to know about every meeting that takes place at officer level. As he should know, negotiations take place almost continuously at officer level throughout the Government service. It is when those negotiations reach a stage at which the Minister should be involved that they are referred to the Minister.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to accept the word of the Treasurer about the working of the Treasury Department.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: If he is offended, I accept it.

I will read from this document—

"Previous

"On 1st August, 1979 Railways and Treasury were requested to provide an indicative rail freight for the transport of .5 million tonnes per annum of steaming coal from the Rylance Collieries to the Port of Brisbane, Fisherman Islands.

"At a meeting in early December 1979 Mr. O. Preuss, Mr. Hayaski and Mr. Suzuki of Showa Oil Co. Ltd. requested Treasury to provide indicative freight rates for .35 and .75 million tonnes per annum in addition to the previous request. Railway provided information on capital and operating costs on 29.2.80.

"By letter of 27th May, 1980 indicative rail freights were provided for .35, .5 and .75 million tonnes per annum.

"Capital costs included the provision of appropriate numbers of locomotives and rollingstock, the construction of a spur line and upgrading of the line to the Port.

"No provision was made for railway facilities at the Port itself.

"Profit level was half of that existing Norwich Park level of $5.38 with a proviso that, apart from normal escalation provision would be made to adjust profit levels in the steaming coal price increases."

He then puts on the bottom as a note—

"This is the first time that we have done this and should attract interest from the Japanese, however it was felt that some caveat was necessary because of the uncertainty of future movements in steaming coal prices. We will need to work out how it will apply and include it in all steaming coal quotes."

He makes a number of other observations in that document, and on the second page, under the heading "Background", he says—

"The project is already meeting with resistance from local residents who are opposing an expansion of the mine."

That is understandable. Why would they not oppose an expansion of the mine? He went on to say—

"A land sale to Rylance Collieries from the Queensland Housing Commission received adverse Press publicity recently. Coal would have to be hauled through residential areas for a significant portion of the journey."

As the Deputy Premier and Treasurer knows, people at Redbank Plains bought allotments and built their homes without any knowledge that mining was to take place in the area. They had absolutely no knowledge of it. The electorate that I represent borders directly on the Redbank Plains area, and already there is a problem——

Dr Edwards interjected.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I am not taking the honourable gentleman's interjections. He can sit back and cop it.

Already there is a problem with coal trucks using the main roads of my electorate day and night. In spite of representations to various Ministers, and in spite of a discussion that took place with the former Minister for Transport (Mr Tomkins) last year, nothing has yet been done to curb the activities of those coal trucks and allow the people of the area to have a good night's sleep. Although they are working round the clock, in effect Mr Tomkins said, "Stiff cheese". He indicated that, because the contracts were for exports overseas, the trucks were allowed to operate round the clock.

If this mining site is allowed to be developed with the assistance of the Treasurer and other members of the Government parties, that is exactly what will happen to the people of Redbank Plains, and the people of my electorate will have to put up with this on a greatly escalated scale.

Under heading 4, "Strategy", he says—

"We should listen."

They have not listened to date. He then says—

"No doubt a big concern will be the level of the freight rate and the escalation provision based on steaming coal price changes.

"There appears to be significant problems particularly at the port end to be solved, so commitment is likely to be some time off."

The lulu is at the bottom, where he says—

"This is an opportunity to get first-hand information on plans of Japanese industry in relation to the conversion from oil to coal."

If ever there was an indication, not only to the members of this Assembly but also to the people of Queensland, that the Government is a mining Government that is concerned only with aspects of mining and overseas development of Queensland's resources, particularly Japanese development——

Dr Edwards: The lease has not been granted yet.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: The lease has not been granted. But if the lease is not to be granted, why all this documentation, why all this work? I have not brought other documents with me, but I can show the honourable gentleman documents that got down to the nitty gritty of deciding on freight rates for the coal haulage, the working hours, and virtually everything else.

Dr Edwards interjected.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I will not take the interjection. I am running out of time and I have more information to put before the House.

First, I shall read to honourable members a letter of 12 November 1980 from Mr Hielscher of the Treasury Department to Mr Broadfoot, the manager of Rylance Collieries and Brickworks Pty. Ltd. It says—

"Dear Mr Broadfoot,

Reference is made to my letter of 27th May, 1980 and subsequent discussions concerning the capital requirements for railway facilities and indicative freight rates which would apply to the haulage of steaming coal from Goodna to the Port of Brisbane, Fisherman Islands."

It seems to me that every time the Deputy Premier and Treasurer interjects, he puts his foot in it with the correspondence that comes up following his interjection. A little earlier he interjected that the mining lease had not been granted at this stage. Yet here is a letter from Mr Hielscher, the Under Treasurer, to Mr Broadfoot, the manager of Rylance Collieries, discussing freight rates that would apply to the haulage of steaming coal from Goodna to the port of Brisbane, Fisherman Islands.

The letter continues in these terms—

"As agreed consideration has been given to your request to adjust these arrangements so that the freight rate of $5.34 per tonne in 1st August, 1979 terms, which would apply at a .75 million tonnes per annum level, would also apply at lower tonnage levels until the level of .75 million tonnes per annum was reached.

"Enclosed is a paper setting out the arrangements which could apply to the haulage of the coal to achieve a constant freight rate of $5.34 per annum during the build-up years."

I do not intend to table this document or to discuss it today, but I will certainly hold on to it to use at a later date in this House.

I have already presented what I believe to be a clear indictment of involvement and collusion in untruths that have been told by people sitting on the opposite side of the House.

I have here a letter dated 9 July 1980 sent by the Treasurer (Dr Edwards) to the Hon. Max Hooper MLA, Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism. It reads—

"A very real problem is developing with respect to the export shipment of coal from the Moreton field.

"In particular I have before me now the case of Rylance Collieries and Brickworks Pty Ltd which in conjunction with Showa Oil Company Ltd. of Japan is desirous of shipping coal forthwith to Japan."

I have already produced documentation showing that the Treasurer's Department and the Department of Railways have been taking part in discussions with the Showa Oil Company Ltd. of Japan to mine coal at Redbank Plains.

The Treasurer wrote—

". . . I have before me now the case of Rylance Collieries and Brickworks Pty. Ltd., which in conjunction with Showa Oil Company Ltd. of Japan is desirous of shipping oil forthwith to Japan."

The letter continues—

"We are working on rail extensions, rolling stock, rail upgrading, freight rates and so on and we find that the real inhibition in the whole exercise is the absence of port facilities.

"At present the company is using the Maynegrain Pty. Ltd. Pinkenba No. 2 wharf but this apparently is proving quite inadequate and is no basis for development of this trade.

"I personally believe that the development of the Moreton field for export would have . . ."

Dr Edwards: The Moreton field.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: The Treasurer wrote of the Moreton field and, in his correspondence, he named the Showa Oil Company. There is only one area that the Showa Oil Company has shown interest in on the Moreton field, and that is at Redbank Plains.

Dr Edwards interjected.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: If that is not true, I ask the Treasurer to put something before this Parliament to prove that I am incorrect. I challenge the Treasurer to do that. At the first opportunity on Tuesday morning I ask him to stand up, under privilege, and give

a personal explanation to the House to prove that I am wrong. I will be waiting for him to do that with bated breath.

Dr Edwards interjected.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: The Treasurer may say what he likes. I have the floor this afternoon. He can sit there and cop it.

The Treasurer's letter continues—

> ". . . a very beneficial effect on the Ipswich and South East Queensland economy and must be encouraged.
>
> "The immediate short-term export capacity for Rylance is at present said to be: . . ."

Certain tonnages are there set out in the letter, and it continues—

> "In addition to Rylance we have the Aberdare Colliery and others that would welcome an adequate port facility for the export of coal."

I have nothing against other coal mines in Ipswich increasing their tonnage, because coal mining is an accepted industry in Ipswich. However, I will say that it is time some people in Ipswich realised the myth that the Treasurer and his party consistently push in the media, namely, that Ipswich is a mining town. That is totally wrong. The Treasurer is as aware as I am of the employment opportunities provided by the mine. They are certainly not great. Other industries collectively employ more people. Some day I would like the Treasurer to tell me what money is forthcoming for Ipswich from the coal-mining projects.

If the concern of people in the industry is so high, perhaps the Treasurer might explain on Tuesday morning why even the Miners Union made it very clear that it is not prepared to participate in the mining at Redbank Plains.

The facts and figures I have put before Parliament show clearly and concisely that the Treasurer, regrettably, has not been totally honest with the people when discussing this issue.

Dr EDWARDS: Again I take exception to the honourable member's suggestion that I have not been entirely honest. I find it offensive. The honourable member knows full well that he is not telling the full story about this incident. I regret that he has made such an insinuation. I ask that he withdraw that statement.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! The Treasurer asks for a withdrawal.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I withdraw, but I don't just know——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The withdrawal will be made without qualification.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I am withdrawing without qualification, but I just don't know what one has to do apart from putting this type of damning evidence before this Parliament to show the involvement of people——

Mr Moore: Tell the truth.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: The honourable member would not know how to spell it.

I just don't know what else one has to do apart from putting this damning evidence before Parliament, but still people on the other side of the Chamber want to jump up and claim no knowledge or involvement.

I am calling today on my counterpart the Minister for Mines and Energy, Mr I. J. Gibbs —I make it quite clear he is not a relative of mine—to stop approval of the application to mine at Redbank Plains. It is within his power to do so. Quite frankly, I think it is an abused power. It is high time that the Government stopped pandering totally to the mining companies. That is what it has done for the past 20 years. As I said, it has been a mining Government. Surely it is time for a bit of local decision-making and involvement before approval of mining sites.

Surely it is time that it was not a Minister of the Crown who had the right to say yea or nay to the development of a mining site. I believe, as other people in the community believe, that that decision should be made by the mining warden. I have reservations about even the mining warden because a mining warden is usually the local magistrate and, in many instances, I question the total integrity of the appointment of magistrates under the present system of justice in Queensland. A tribunal should be appointed by the Parliament—by the peoples' representatives in this Parliament—to make the decision on whether mining companies should be granted leases. It is time for an overhaul of the Mining Act.

The people at Redbank Plains have done an excellent job. Those connected with PUMA have had great problems in raising sufficient finance to fight Rylance in the courts over its right to mine the area. They have been able to raise that money only with the support and backing of people living in the local area who are concerned about the likelihood of the development going ahead. After going to court and after the case had proceeded for a number of days or weeks Rylance withdrew from the case.

The people from the local organisation have to meet the court costs which could amount to many thousands of dollars, while the company gets off scot-free. It can come back to the court and recommence proceedings next week, totally afresh and ready to go, but the local organisation has no right of appeal or anything else for the moneys it has had to outlay. The mining warden should have a discretion—and it should be written into the Act—to award costs. Any fair-minded person could only say that the mining warden should award costs against Rylance.

This afternoon I have shown very clearly to members of this House, members of the

public and members of the media who will, I hope, take detailed notes of what has been said——

Mrs Nelson interjected.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: The honourable member is only a new member and, quite frankly, not a very impressive one at that.

I hope that the members of the media take note of what I have said. Once the matter is exposed as it should be it will be the Achilles' heel of the Liberal Party. It has certainly proved to be a fairly sensitive issue for Dr Edwards. It is a long time since I have seen the Deputy Premier and Treasurer jumping up and down and taking points of order as he has done this afternoon.

In the long run, certainly at future elections, it will be the people in the areas affected, the people of my electorate generally and the people of Redbank Plains in particular, who will show very clearly to this Government that they reject the way it handles mining issues, and that they reject out of hand any attempt by Rylance Collieries, any Japanese companies, or this Government to mine any section of the area in which they have built their homes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! Before I call the honourable member for Cooroora, I wish to bring to the attention of the House the fact that I intend to accept the document shown to me by the honourable member for Wolston. I now ask the House whether it is prepared to have the document incorporated in "Hansard".

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Whereupon the honourable member for Wolston laid on the table the following document—

"F.

"BILL OF MORTGAGE

"Rylance Collieries & Brickworks Pty Limited of P.O. Box 142 Booval (hereinafter called "the Mortgagor") being registered as proprietor of an estate in fee-simple subject however to such encumbrances liens and interests as are notified by memorandum endorsed thereon in all the piece of land described as follows:—

DG of C.T.	Number	Volume	Folio	County	Parish, Town or City	Parcels	Area A.	R.	P.
C.T.	452281	2324	21	Stanley	Bundamba ..	Portion 170 to the depth of 70 feet from the surface only	144	..	37
C.T.	398050	2081	40	Stanley	Bundamba ..	Subdivision 3 of Portion 172 to the depth of 30 feet from the surface only	104	3	5
C.T.	..	4622	188	Stanley	Goodna	Portion 287 to the depth of 100 feet from the surface only	209	..	..
C.T.	..	4908	114	Stanley	Goodna	Subdivision 2 of Portions 391 and 389 on Registered Plan 47420 to the depth of 30·48 metres from the surface only	61	·15	ha

in consideration of the sum of FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY EIGHT THOUSAND DOLLARS ($558 000.00)

"THE QUEENSLAND HOUSING COMMISSION (hereinafter called the "Mortgagee") the indebtedness of which sum the Mortgagor doth hereby acknowledge and which said sum together with any moneys hereafter advanced by the Mortgagee to the Mortgagor shall be called the "principal sum" the Mortgagor doth hereby covenant and agree with the Mortgagee as follows:—

"1. That the Mortgagor will without any notice whatsoever from the Mortgagee pay to the Mortgagee the sum of FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY EIGHT THOUSAND DOLLARS ($558 000.00) within a period of TEN (10) YEARS from the date of possession and the first of such payments shall be paid by the Mortgagor on the date THREE (3) YEARS hence from the date of possession by the Mortgagor, such amount to be paid by equal quarterly instalments during that period of SEVEN (7) YEARS following the period of THREE (3) YEARS herein mentioned.

"1 (a). INTEREST on the said sum of FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY EIGHT THOUSAND DOLLARS ($558 000.00) shall be payable by the Mortgagor to the Mortgagee at the rate of 9·7% and shall be payable quarterly from the date of possession and shall be calculated upon the amount of monies outstanding at the quarterly period when such interest is due and owing.

"1 (b). The date of possession herein shall be the first day of August, 1979."

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I wish to point out to all members that there is a requirement in this House that the Speaker be shown any document that any member wishes to have incorporated in "Hansard", and from now on I am not prepared to accept any document for inclusion from either side of the House unless those requirements are met. If Mr Speaker wishes to change the requirements then I am prepared to go along with that, but while that requirement remains I am not prepared to accept any document from either side of the House.

Mr SIMPSON (Cooroora) (3.1 p.m.): I think that is a fair decision, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is a procedure that has been followed now for some time.

It is with pleasure that I support the motion thanking the Governor for his Opening Speech. What we are doing now, in effect, is outlining the tremendous future for this State under this continuing coalition Government.

Those who query whether we are doing what is the best for the advancement and prosperity of the people of Queensland are best answered by the performance of the various parties at election-time when it is open to anyone to contest any of our 82 electorates.

When party members are defeated or a party does not have the numbers to govern we often hear excuses being offered. The typical excuse is that they cannot win because of the gerrymander. When a party is defeated one often hears the question asked, "What excuse do we use?"

Mr Elliott: When you get beaten you have to find some excuse.

Mr SIMPSON: That is right, and the gerrymander is the one that is bandied around after every election when this coalition is returned.

It is the people who have the final say. The people decide who will be their representatives. Defeated candidates cry "Gerrymander!", yet they have all had an equal opportunity. All parties have the opportunity to stand a candidate in every electorate. Where then is the gerrymander? We need to look at the definition of "gerrymander". It means broadly the rigging of boundaries so that a Government can remain in office. Our divisional electoral system was developed by the Labor Party many years ago. It lost government to the present coalition on its boundaries, so it cannot allege a gerrymander on those divisions. Everyone knows full well that the electoral commissioners regularly carry out redistributions within divisions, so there can be no gerrymander, and there is equal opportunity for anyone from any party.

To try to take away the rights of people in a democracy we hear it suggested that there should be equal representation, with the same numbers in each electorate. If each elector did not have the same access to his member it would mean unequal representation, and people in some parts of the State would be deprived of the equal representation to which they are entitled in a democracy.

The Westminster system is based on the philosophy of the people governing themselves. All the people cannot come to one Chamber of Parliament to make the rules, so they send along their representatives. In that way people who cannot come to Parliament need to be equally represented in the Parliament. Therefore it is of paramount importance to give them fewer constituents to allow for their lack of access to their representative.

The Queensland electorate of Gregory is as large as Victoria. Other electorates are so small that their representative can ride around them on a push-bike in an hour. When constituents go to the shop or to work they walk past the office of their elected representative. But that is not so in very many parts of northern and western Queensland. In those areas the people have to correspond with their representative, which is not as satisfactory as having a personal interview. It can take up to a fortnight for them to get a reply. Probably 75 per cent of the people in those electorates have to make a maximum rate trunk-line call to speak to their elected representative. In those areas the use of the telephone is very expensive.

It takes people in many parts of northern and western Queensland several days to travel to see their elected representative or for him to visit them in their home. So we have the two extremes. In some electorates it takes a few minutes to walk or to ride a push-bike to the office of the elected representative. In those electorates constituents can telephone their elected representative by making a 10c local call from the home or a public telephone booth. They have a daily mail service. In other electorates it takes people several days to travel to see their elected representative.

The Westminster system in Britain has evolved in such a way that the electorates are weighted by varying the numbers to compensate for the unequal representation in remote areas and in areas where communications are difficult. The electorates are weighted 4½ to 1 in Britain, which one would think would not have too many remote areas or areas where communications are difficult. Of course some islands off the coast could perhaps be cut off for days. It is in such areas that we see that weighting.

There is weighting of 5 to 1 in America. In that nation the same importance is given to equal representation, not equal numbers. In Canada there is a weighting of 9 to 1. That country has remote areas similar to those in Australia. It has difficult terrain and some difficulty with communications. That is the way this matter has been handled in the majority of democracies.

Some people say that the way to compensate for the difficulty with communications is to pay the representative more money so that he can afford to travel by air. For example, he could cut a two-day car journey to a four-hour plane flight. However, there is still the matter of four hours. So we are still looking at a time factor. I am sure all present would concede that no matter how much a person is paid, time cannot be bought. If some

think it can, millions of people on this earth are waiting for the secret; they would then buy eternal life. But it is just not possible to do that.

There is another way to evaluate whether the weighting of electorates is out of kilter. I point out that after the last redistribution in Queensland the weighting was 2½ to 1. I have quoted 4½ to 1 in Great Britain, 5 to 1 in America, 9 to 1 in Canada and 7 to 1 in Western Australia, which has a Liberal-led Government. If we get out of kilter and weight electorates too heavily, we will find that those who believe in democracy and who want equal representation will move to those weighted electorates so that they will have better representation. I suggest that we do not see people moving from near city areas to the weighted electorates so that they can gain the extra representation that they claim other people have. In fact, lower electorate numbers are some compensation for the disadvantages of living in remote areas.

The election showed us that the gerrymander is a myth. In the Federal sphere the electorates have moved towards more equal numbers, thereby depriving people outside the capital cities of this country of equal representation. That has been a sad and sorry day for democracy. There are those who would have that happen even in Queensland.

Other excuses are given that weighting is not the way to represent the people. Those excuses are based on the percentages of electors who vote for the various parties in Queensland. Those people argue that if more people vote for Labor than the National or the Liberal Parties, then Labor should be the Government in this Parliament. On that basis, if one party received some 40 per cent of the vote in an electorate in this State, that minority vote would return no member of a particular party. So we are not looking at the hypothetical percentage of the total number of voters; we are looking at the system under the Constitution of this State, a system upheld by the Governor who, in his Opening Speech, acknowledged its future prosperity and advancement.

The Constitution states that one representative shall be returned from each electorate. It does not say that there shall be proportional or percentage representation. It does not say that the party that has the highest percentage of the vote shall form the Government. It says that the person who gains the majority in an electorate shall represent it. That is the best system that has been found.

Others have suggested that we use the Hare-Clarke system as used in Tasmania. Those who suggest that should speak to the people of Tasmania and find out how unsatisfied they are with their representation. The electors find that they cannot nail their representative on any issue. The representative always says that it was the fault of one of the others. In Tasmania there are five electorates, each of which returns seven representatives, and the proportional representation will elect, say, three Liberals, three Labor and perhaps an Independent or a member of the National Party.

As a result, each of the parties is represented in an electorate. When something goes wrong, no-one owns it; no-one takes responsibility for it. Of course, when something goes right, they all want to say, "Yes, of course it was my representation that achieved that." That is what happens in a multiple-candidate electorate. So in the Hare-Clarke system there is no satisfaction in being represented, because a person does not know who represents him.

Following the election, those two myths were raised by those who felt they should have done better. But the people did not see fit to return them, so in Queensland there has been formed this Government of the National and Liberal Parties, which will continue to develop the State.

My electorate reflects that development. The building boom and prosperity in my electorate continue. In fact, it can be an embarrassment as people flock in from other States to take advantage of lower taxes and no death duties or gift duties, which still apply in New South Wales under a Labor Government.

Mr Davis: Why did you have to mention that?

Mr SIMPSON: I thought the member might react to it.

Mr Davis: There you are: you are trying to be political.

Mr SIMPSON: That would have to be the reaction from a Labor member. I am sure he is in favour of capital gains tax and death duty.

Many people flock from other States to my electorate to take advantage not only of our climate but also of our stable and forthright Government and lower taxes. Obviously, this influx brings problems. This State has been confronted with a record number of students in its schools. That is certainly so in my electorate. The Government is continually building new schools and continually adding new class-rooms.

Mr Davis: What happened to that silly sailing boat you were talking about?

Mr SIMPSON: It is interesting that the member for Brisbane Central should mention that. This person is still waiting for a well-to-do sponsor who would like to put his name up on the sails. The catamaran, which was from Cooroy, is now down at Noosa. He is after the world sailing record, but the sails are not up on it yet. We are still waiting. One of these days, we hope, he will succeed.

The extension of services to our schools and the provision of new schools continue to be problems for the Government. I

thank the Minister for Works and Housing, the Minister for Education and the Minister for Lands and Forestry, who all helped in making it possible to announce the latest new primary school to be established in my electorate at Sunshine Beach. At the last minute the Noosa Shire Council acceded to requests I had been making for over two years to alter the shape of the land. The council owned the land, which had a narrow frontage and was on a blind corner. It was not the most suitable site. Although it retains the same area, it has been reshaped, providing a far safer set-down point for students and more suitable areas for buildings and playing fields.

However, the lateness of that decision by the council jeopardised the completion of the building for the 1982 school year. I thank the Minister for Works and Housing and his architects, who have worked so hard to have the documents ready for the project to go to tender next month. That is important, because this winter the enrolment at the Tewantin school will pass 1,000. The demountables needed to cope with the additional enrolment until the Sunshine Beach school opens are causing overcrowding in the grounds. The school will open at the right time, because the primary school at Tewantin will not lose its Class I classification and all the priviliges and special facilities for the benefit of the students that go with that classification.

Development also puts a great strain on the services provided by local authorities, and I should like to draw attention to that in the House. I had hoped the Treasurer would be here to hear what I have to say. Shires that previously were under Treasury funding and were not on the public funding register for loans are now experiencing difficulties as a result of development. Let me give honourable members an example. In two years, the value of building development in the Noosa Shire has increased from $8m to $64m. That is a tremendous increase, and the local authority is having difficulty in providing water and sewerage facilities to meet that development.

Although the developers are contributing towards the cost, loan funds are required to enable the council to construct sewerage treatment works and expand the capacity of the dam for water storage. Present ratepayers should not be burdened with the whole of that commitment; it should be spread out into the future.

Development also sees a spin-off in the fire services in the area. Insurers are now contributing in excess of $1m—that is on my calculation which, it is interesting to note, many others have quoted—but only a fraction of that is coming back into the area to be used in the provision of adequate fire services in the Noosa Shire. The new fire station must be completed to provide adequate accommodation for the equipment and personnel. I compliment the one fire officer and the auxiliary firemen on the wonderful job that they have done up to date. There have been no major problems, and I hope that there will not be.

Special consideration should be given to shires that are confronted with tremendous increases in development. It is no good the Government simply saying, "That is your problem." In fact, the Government has acted as guarantor for borrowings to help promote tourist development in the Noosa area, and I commend it for providing that encouragement. In my opinion, it is better to encourage Queensland development than overseas development of the tourist industry in Queensland.

Noosa—in fact, the whole of the Sunshine Coast—has a great deal going for it because it has so many features that are attractive to holiday-makers and tourists, particularly international tourists.

Mr Davis: That is why you are investing in the Gold Coast.

Mr SIMPSON: I would not do that, and I have not done so. The development that turns tourists on has a holiday-island atmosphere. Holiday-makers do not want another high-rise concrete jungle. I am sure that honourable members have heard the joke, "Have you seen the latest buildings going up in Brisbane? It is getting to be like the Gold Coast." That is not the sort of atmosphere people want. They want to know that they are in a holiday area, so that they can enjoy their holiday to the full. The beaches, lakes, rivers, mountains and forests are all part of the attractions that lead people to the Sunshine Coast. They are looking for an atmosphere of leisure, not an atmosphere of high-pressure business.

As much as anything, I am sure that that is what interested Freddie Laker when he said that there are thousands of Gold Coasts throughout the world but very few destinations like the Sunshine Coast to present to the tourists of the world to bring them satisfaction. We need balanced development to cater for tourists and those who retire to the area and also for our children who are seeking employment in this area.

Unemployment is high but we hope that the development of Crown industrial estates will help to provide employment. A record number of people have found employment on the Sunshine Coast; employment has never been at such a high level. I hope that trend continues.

Part of the unemployment is caused by poor transportation.

Mr Davis: Can you tell us whom you intend to vote for tonight—Mr Sheil or Mrs Bjelke-Petersen.

Mr SIMPSON: The honourable member will have to be here tonight to find out.

Transportation for young people without driving licences is a problem, as it is also for those who are old enough to drive but do not have a vehicle. Young people have the right to gain experience on a lower rate of pay so that they may become gainfully employed. That is essential to their well-being, so that they do not become disheartened by being knocked back. Competition for jobs is running at a high level. Part of that competition comes about because of the number of women in the work-force and the number of imported products rather than locally manufactured goods that we buy and use.

I am sure it will not be long before Queensland has a problem in getting sufficient trained technicians, artisans and tradesmen to carry out the services needed to develop the State and provide the advancement and prosperity to which the Governor referred.

The rapid development and tremendous influx of people to the Sunshine Coast is causing wear and tear on our roads, which need to be continually upgraded and rebuilt. I hope that the Minister for Main Roads will keep in mind that many Sunshine Coast roads are deteriorating. In particular, the Yandina-Coolum Road, which was fully sealed, has a stretch that has reverted to gravel. People who are not used to driving on gravel think it is the end of the world. It is not quite as bad as that, but when drivers try to hug a narrow strip of tar, or weave round potholes, they cause accidents. They fail to remember that the prime objective is to avoid accidents. Many roads on the Sunshine Coast need upgrading, but I must commend the Minister in charge of main roads for what has been done.

Mr Davis: You do not have to take your full time.

Mr SIMPSON: I realise that, but I still have a deal to get through.

The Doonan Road is becoming very dangerous because of increased traffic. It is the quickest route to the Noosa end of the Sunshine Coast. It is to be upgraded over three years at a cost of $1.5m. Certain work has been commenced to widen the pavement on its future alignment. It is where there is to be a new alignment that the roads will be upgraded over the next three years.

There are difficulties in finding sufficient funds. Unfortunately, the local Main Roads Department considers that if a decision is made to upgrade one road, funds will be taken from work on another road which has already been given approval, so that the money will go round. That upsets the locals and, of course, we cannot stand broken promises.

Mr Burns: Miller, the National Party bloke from Wide Bay, said that you don't have to keep your promises.

Mr SIMPSON: All people should keep their promises; otherwise they are not worth their salt.

Mr Burns: Then you wouldn't support Malcolm Fraser.

Mr SIMPSON: The honourable member is implying that Malcolm Fraser does not keep his promises.

Mr Burns: You know he doesn't.

Mr SIMPSON: I am not sure that he does, but I do know that an interesting point is the loss of revenue to this State because of the proposal to tax miners' homes. It is estimated to be $42m. The Federal Government should make up the loss to this State. We all know what that amount of money would mean in terms of roads and particularly schools. If Queensland is the most prosperous State in Australia, that fact should be reflected in our having the best teacher/pupil ratios and everything of the best quality in our schools. I would like to think that people flock to Queensland for that reason as much as for our not having death duties.

Mr Burns: You know that we haven't the best teacher/pupil ratios and that we still have composite classes, while Utah is taking the money home.

Mr SIMPSON: Well, getting back to the $42m, I would like to see it come our way from the Federal Government. It has an obligation to pay it. The Federal Treasury knew that that agreement had been made but it will not honour it.

Mr Burns: When the people are out in the streets attacking the unions, you ought to be out there saying that. That strike was not caused by the unions; it was caused by the Federal Liberals.

Mr SIMPSON: The strike was caused——

Mr Burns: By Howard and Fraser.

Mr SIMPSON: By Howard—that is right. The Federal Government should make up that loss in revenue.

Many roads in my area are being progressively upgraded, but many more, particularly on the Sunshine Coast, need upgrading. I will continue to make recommendations along those lines in the interests of the people I represent.

Many people have come to live on the Sunshine Coast. They love to live near the sea, but they do not understand anything about beaches. They do not realise that the steady erosion of our foreshores is a natural phenomenon. The sea is slowly wearing away the land. In addition, there is a fractional increase in the height of the tides and that adds to the erosion.

If the primary dunes are in any way inhibited in their flexibility and movement in receding with that erosion, there are difficulties. If roads or houses are built

on the primary dunes and the sea erodes to that point, the roads and houses will fall into the sea. Then everybody says, "Let's put our tax money into saving those houses."

It would be great if we had the money to shift all of the houses that are close to the sea, because we would not then have them slipping suddenly into the sea. But we always leave it until too late, when the cost of rectification by methods such as rock walls and groynes is immense. Rock walls are a last line of defence, but all they really do is remove sand, as the added velocity of the water receding from the rocks strips the sand in front of them and the beach cannot be retained.

A sand beach is the only satisfactory means of dissipating waves, but this works only with an inclined beach. If a beach is subject to erosion, the sea begins to move inland. If we say that we cannot allow the sea past a certain point, we have to find other methods of trapping sufficient sand to make an artificial beach, possibly by building many groynes, which would be very expensive.

The natural south-easterly winds and wave action continually take sand from New South Wales right up our coast to the northern end of Fraser Island. People need to understand that this is a natural phenomenon and not something that comes and goes. They must also be made to realise that the tremendous cost of providing a solution, such as building groynes or pumping sand to make artificial beaches, must be borne by everybody. In my opinion, the cost should be borne at State level, at Federal level, and some of it by local benefited areas.

Mr Burns: Some by the developers.

Mr SIMPSON: That is right: the honourable member for Lytton would know that the work that has been done at Noosa Heads has been very satisfactory in its prime purpose of saving the ill-fated canal development at the mouth of the river.

Mr Burns: Noosa Sound.

Mr SIMPSON: Yes.

Mr Burns: But the public had to pay to save that development which the developer made a quid out of.

Mr SIMPSON: Indirectly the Government could have made more out of it, but it had to bear the added cost of over $400,000. But at least we now have a kilometre of beach that we would not otherwise have had.

Mr Burns: It is a better beach than in front of Hastings Street.

Mr SIMPSON: Yes, but it poses a problem to the local lifesavers who find that they now have to look after all that beach. The only way they can do it is with a vehicle and they cannot drive a vehicle through the waves at the section where the rock wall is exposed. They have had to split their forces and place a group further up the beach with a walkie-talkie in case of problems.

I have already referred to tourism and the need to allow Freddie Laker to bring tourists to our beaches, national parks and other national attractions.

The other important industry in my electorate is agriculture. Still the greatest source of revenue, and a most important industry, is sugar. But the mill requires sufficient throughput to keep it viable and that requires co-operation from the local authorities. I am pleased to say that we now receive that co-operation following an inquiry that I requested to be made by the Department of Primary Industries to see whether sufficient land suitable for growing cane was available within a reasonable distance of the mill. Contrary to the assertion of the Moreton Region Growth Strategy Investigation that there were only 500 acres suitable for cane growing in the area, it was found, of course, that there were many, many times that number. We are not short of cane land and the probable loss of buildings in cane-growing areas will now be minimal.

The pineapple growers in my area have a problem. This is now the fourth consecutive year in which they have not been able to increase their production. We have seen the importation of some pineapple products, and I cannot understand why such importation should be allowed when the industry is on its knees. I believe that the Industries Assistance Commission should immediately take steps to prevent the importation of such products.

It is good to see that at last the dairy farmers—the have-nots of primary industry who produce such a high-quality product—are at last starting to receive a decent return. We should ensure that they continue to receive an equitable share of the return from their product, because only while their operations are profitable will we reach the ideal situation of using two-thirds of the production for whole milk, the balance being used for manufacturing milk products and retained as a back-up for drought times. No longer can we expect people in our community to produce for less than cost of production.

The ginger industry is booming. The market cannot be satisfied. There is a problem in finding sufficient growers who are properly set up. It is an expensive industry in which to get established. People should not enter the industry lightly. It requires great expertise and an adequate supply of water, and there is a very high labour content in the picking season. It provides many jobs, especially at this time of the year. A quality product is the key to success in this industry right throughout the world.

I am worried about the police situation on the North Coast. Although the North Coast has two-thirds of the population and twice the area of the Gold Coast, it has only half the number of police that are on the Gold Coast. For years I have been

pressing for the upgrading of the facilities for police on the Sunshine Coast. They have probably the worst facilities of any public servants in the State. When we consider how important their job is, and if we are going to keep that thin blue line between us and the criminals, I think that their facilities need to be improved.

(Time expired.)

Mr McLEAN (Bulimba) (3.41 p.m.): I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the electors of Bulimba to offer loyalty to the Crown. I am proud and honoured to be the representative of the Australian Labor Party chosen to follow Jack Houston as the member for Bulimba in this Parliament. I would like to sincerely thank all the people who supported me and placed enough faith in my ability to do this job for Bulimba.

I would also like to thank all the people who worked so very hard through the campaign. To mention a few—my campaign director, Alderman Pat Beckett, and the campaign committee; Barry Richardson, who worked full time for a number of weeks; Jim Fitzgerald and the finance committee; the Bulimba EEC; the four senior branches, Bulimba, Horthorne, Galloways Hill and Seven Hills; the two Young Labor branches, Bulimba and Hawthorne; and, of course, all the supporters who helped in so many other ways.

I must also thank the trade union movement for its tremendous support, both physically and financially, and, in particular, my own union, the Waterside Workers Federation. I would like to mention also the members of the maritime group of unions, the Seamen's Union, the Ship Painters and Dockers Union, the Marine Stewards Union, the Electrical Trades Union, and many other unions. Having the backing and support of all these people certainly made my campaign so much easier.

Last, but not least, I would like to express my appreciation to Jack Houston for his enormous assistance not only through the campaign but over the many years that we have been personal friends. I convey, on behalf of his many friends and supporters throughout the electorate, many thanks to Jack for the long and devoted representation he has given to the residents of Bulimba over so many years. It is a sad fact that in the 23 years Jack was in State politics he was always a member of the Opposition. It is most certainly a shame that a man with his ability never had the chance to put some of his ideals into practice in Government. I wish Jack and his wife, Joan, a long, happy and healthy retirement and every success in any venture he may enter in the future.

I would like to speak today on a number of things that affect the Bulimba electorate and Queenslanders in general. The Bulimba electorate is probably one of the oldest in Queensland. It was constituted under the Electoral Districts Act of 1872. The name of the electorate has not changed since that time, but of course the boundaries have. The Bulimba electorate, when first created, had 685 electors on the role and covered an area of 282 square miles. The principal township of Bulimba was situated 4 miles from the city of Brisbane. Bulimba occupied a position advantageous in several aspects, possessing important gardens and sugar mills. Communication at that time was by weekly mail coach and transport by horse and dray. Very many people still living in the area have family trees extending back to those pioneer days.

The Bulimba electorate is still bounded by the Brisbane River on one side, but of course the area has been reduced while the population is much larger, with over 16 000 electors on the roll in comparison with the 685 on that first roll. The electorate takes in all or part of the suburbs of Bulimba, Hawthorne, Balmoral, Morningside, Galloways Hill, Norman Park, Cannon Hill, Seven Hills and Camp Hill. It would be classed as a near-city electorate and, of course, it suffers some of the associated problems of that situation.

In parts of this electorate we have large development in units and flats, as well as small and large industry, and some very pleasant residential areas. There are bus, train and ferry services to the city from different parts of the electorate and there is also the convenience of being only a matter of a few miles from the centre of the city. In the future the area will continue to progress and a close watch must be kept so that there is no detrimental change to the quality of life the people in the area now enjoy. There is no doubt that progress and development must continue, but it is vital that this benefit the community as a whole and not simply a small section of developers and investors.

The needs of people, such as the provision of recreation areas, sports facilities, parks and gardens, plus general community amenities, are all too often overlooked. The electorate has a very large percentage of aged people and the many needs and essential requirements of the aged are obvious. I have seen many cases of hardship and sadness that I believe could have been avoided if government at all levels accepted its responsibilities to do more in this field. I feel that so much more could be done to ease some of the problems in the areas of housing, sickness, transport, nursing care, adequate home care, reasonable subsidies to organisations such as Meals on Wheels, and all the many other social problems that exist. The many organisations that work in this field do a tremendous job but the age-old problem of insufficient finance faces them all.

In the area of housing it is good to see the Government working in the right direction with the construction of pensioner unit blocks. But, of course, we realise this does not go nearly far enough when we look at the waiting list for these units.

Another area I would like to see this Government enter is the setting up of low-cost hostel-type accommodation on the basis of providing for aged pensioners, students or disadvantaged members of our community. Such accommodation could provide a reasonable standard of living in a community life-style rather than the position in which so many people find themselves, living in a lonely room and sometimes not having enough money to eat and provide adequately for themselves.

Some time ago I was actively involved in a public action group formed following public meetings called to fight against the closure of the Bulimba hostel, which operated on a low-rent basis, provided a room and three meals a day and a community life-style for basically the people I have just mentioned. Because of the age of the buildings, the fire danger and some financial problems, it appeared that the hostel would have to close. At the time there were over 200 residents there.

Social workers were sent in to make arrangements to shift many of the residents to all parts of Brisbane. Some of the residents had lived at the hostel for well over 20 years and up to 30 years and had formed friendships and a unique life-style. To me, this seemed a sad occurrence as it meant that some of the old people would not possibly have been able to adapt to the changes. I was told that two old people, after being told they had to shift, had already committed suicide.

Eventually, after a long and involved struggle against Government red tape at Federal, State and local levels, a solution was found. The Queensland Trades and Labor Council purchased the land and buildings on the basis that the hostel would be gradually rebuilt. The project has been under the management of Clem Jones and full congratulations must go to him and the Trades and Labor Council for their very humane venture into this field. With both Federal and State Government assistance, this project has now reached the stage where the first block of brick units is near completion and will open shortly. The kitchen has been fully remodelled and the project will be one that, when finished, will be a credit to all of the people who have played a role in it since the beginning. I mention this case as an example of an area in which I believe the State Government can play a major role in providing some relief to this obvious shortcoming in our society.

The pressures and pace of modern-day society have created more social problems than we experienced in the past. With growing unemployment and an ever-increasing number of people being forced to live below the poverty line, these problems will certainly become much worse. I repeat that voluntary and charitable organisations do a tremendous job. Enough cannot be said for their dedication and sincerity, but they certainly need much more Government help. There is a desperate need for this type of humane assistance.

I pass on to another area—the provision of crisis centres for aged and handicapped persons. This is another field in which the Government does not fully accept the responsibility and obligation it has to provide a safe, happy and, as far as is possible, worry-free retirement for our aged population. Such centres should be set up in all districts as meeting places for the various aged and charitable organisations. They could play a role in giving after-hours security to the aged by telephone or personal contact when problems arose at night or during the week-end, such as sickness, death or the breakdown of essential household utilities. A centre of this type could be used as a co-ordinating point to list the aged, handicapped and disadvantaged people of the district, and it could establish a regular telephone contact so that a watch was kept on them and help could be given immediately it was required.

I am a member of a committee in Bulimba that was set up following two public meetings called by a Mrs Shield, a very dedicated and hard-working voluntary worker in this field. Mrs Shield has long been trying to establish the type of centre that I have just described. At last she has been able to obtain enough support to get the scheme off the ground. The committee has the task of raising sufficient funds to purchase an old house or other suitable building that could be converted into a meeting place and provide the facilities and services I have outlined. The Government should set up centres of this type in all districts. A social worker could run each centre, assisted by the appropriate voluntary organisations in the district. With the help of the charitable organisations and pensioner groups, this is a practical suggestion, and one that is well within the finances of our State Budget. So much more could be done and should be done to make the retirement years of our aged and handicapped more secure and enjoyable.

I now wish to discuss a matter of concern to students, particularly those attending the Balmoral High School. The announcement that the Balmoral High School would at long last get a library came as a pleasant surprise. I sincerely hope that this time it's for real. The Balmoral High School has been begging this Government for a library for 10 years or more. The people of Bulimba and other districts surrounding the high school have regularly and justifiably put to me the suggestion that if people live in a Labor electorate their children do not get the same consideration or benefits as those who live in a Liberal or National Party area.

The circumstances surrounding this library building corroborate such a suggestion. It is the responsibility and obligation of every Government to provide an education system free of political interference or favour, and to provide an education to all sections of our

community—an education that will give all students the opportunity to progress to the full extent of their ability.

As far back as 1974 the school was told by the Minister for Education that it was high on the priority list and there was hope for its early construction. Time went by and the school was then informed that it was not included among the schools to have a Commonwealth-financed library from the funds available during the 1974-75 financial year, but that Balmoral High School would be high on the priorities for subsequent years. Further letters followed, and on 29 September 1974 the Minister for Education wrote saying—

> "In view of the fact that the school has utilised all available room to have the library functions, indications are that there is a strong likelihood that a Commonwealth library for the Balmoral High School will be included in the building program for the 1975-76 financial year."

Letters followed—but no library.

Then on 13 July 1976 a letter was received from the Minister for Education saying—

> "A full library block for Balmoral High School has been included on the 1976-77 capital works program. $50,000 has been set aside out of Schools Commission funds to enable this work to be programmed and got under way in the six-months period from January to June 1977."

At last it looked as if the library would be built, but in May 1977 the following letter was received from the Minister for Works and Housing—

> "I regret that my department is not in a position to undertake the contruction of this building during the current financial year. The new library block at Balmoral High School has however been listed for consideration in the 1977-78 financial year in the light of funds available for these buildings. In the circumstances, I am unable to give any indications at this stage to when the actual construction work will commence."

So after all those years it was back to square 1. The school was no closer to getting a library than when it was first requested.

Further correspondence continued, and on 30 June 1976 an article appeared in the local newspaper headed "School's battle is won". It said:—

> "The Federal member for Griffith, Don Cameron, announced late last week that at long last Balmoral State High School is to get a new Commonwealth Library Building."

Mr Cameron went on to say that few things have given him greater delight than being able to make the announcement. He said that he expected work on the library to begin in the middle of the following year, which meant it could be completed by Christmas 1977 or early 1978.

He went on to say—

> "The reason I derive such pleasure in making this announcement is that quite a number of students in attendance at Balmoral High are from less affluent families. Students from less wealthy homes need such education facilities as a good library to ensure them proper development more so than other sections of the community."

Once again, it seemed that at last the library was to be built. But on 5 December 1977 the Minister for Works and Housing wrote—

> "As mentioned in my letter on 4th August, 1977, the necessary documents have been prepared to enable consideration to be given to the proposal later in the current financial year having regard for the availability of funds."

Once again it was back to the drawing board, and the library was as far off as ever.

Then, on 10 April 1978, the Minister for Works and Housing wrote saying—

> "This project has been included in the draft works programme for the 1978/79 financial year. As soon as the extent of funds which will be available for projects of this nature is known, further consideration will be given to the commencement of this work."

So it is very pleasing to have heard the announcement by the Minister for Works and Housing in March 1981 that, at long last, the project is to go ahead. But please forgive the people of the area if they seem hesitant to believe it until the building is finished.

I regard the whole affair as a disgraceful one. The Government must hang its head in shame at the obvious bias that it has shown over so many years towards the students at that high school. Since I have been elected as member for Bulimba, I have tried in vain to obtain figures to enable me to make a comparison between expenditure in National-Liberal Party areas and expenditure in Labor areas. In every avenue I have explored I have run into a brick wall. It is quite apparent to me that the Government has something to hide.

I should like to speak about the Brisbane River and its effect on the people of Bulimba. The boundary of the electorate runs along the river from Cairncross Dock, downstream, to Norman Creek, upstream, which is a considerable river frontage. Along that distance, there are only two small riverfront parks—at Bulimba Point and the site of the Hawthorne ferry. The park at Bulimba Point has toilets and barbeque facilities, and it is a very nice family picnic spot. At the park at Hawthorne, people can sit by the river under shady trees and enjoy the peaceful surroundings. However, plans must be made to extend the riverfront recreational areas along the river. With high-rise units and other development in much of the area, the need for people to be able to escape from

their units, flats or houses and enjoy the relaxing atmosphere of riverside parkland is becoming more evident.

I should like to see future planning allow for the movement of some, or all, of the industries that now occupy the prime areas along most of the river frontage that I have mentioned. These industries should be moved to appropriate down-river sites where they would be side by side with other industries, instead of being in the middle of residential areas.

While on the subject of the Brisbane River, I wish to raise another matter that affects the people of my electorate. I refer to the dormant situation of its use as an alternative major transport corridor for the people of Brisbane. It seems to me to be inexcusable that once again, in 1981, someone has to get up in this Chamber and urge that some improvement be made to the transport system on the Brisbane River. I refer particularly to up-down river ferry service extensions. I am aware that plans for an up-down river service have been made. However, to date we have only heard words and have not seen any results. In 1977, during the State election campaign, I remember very clearly that the Liberal Party candidate for Bulimba promised that if the coalition parties were returned to Government the immediate implementation of an up-down river service would follow. That was over three years ago.

The Brisbane River winds in a very beautiful way through many heavily populated suburbs, providing a natural, untapped route for an efficient, convenient transport system.

The public transport system in Brisbane leaves a lot to be desired compared with what is available in other cities in Australia. It is nothing short of amazing to me that no such obvious improvement was implemented many years ago. I see so many practical and environmental advantages in such a service. We have a natural super highway from so many suburbs right into the heart of the city.

It would be an impossible task to build a highway to the city to cover the distance and the suburbs that the river does. That route would permit enormous cost savings compared with the road-works necessary to do a similar job. No reclamation of land or houses would be necessary; there would be no road maintenance, no "Stop" signs, no traffic jams; there would be fewer chances of smashes and injury; there would be less pollution and probably many other advantages.

I have been informed that a service from Hamilton to the city calling at Bulimba, Bulimba Point, New Farm, Hawthorne, Norman Park and East Brisbane would take 30 to 35 minutes. That time is comparable with today's car or bus trip. It could become more competitive in future as the roads become more and more congested.

One of the major problems that will be faced in the Bulimba electorate in the near future is the big increase in the number of heavy transports that the major roads to and from the city will carry with the development of the new port complex at Fisherman Islands and the associated industries that will be set up. No major road improvements to carry this extra load have been undertaken between Morningside and East Brisbane.

Obviously this section will become a headache with traffic congestion. The eventual building of the Gateway Bridge will probably ease some of the congestion in the area but its completion is four or five years away. The Fisherman Islands complex will be in full production long before then.

A fast, efficient ferry service would take a large number of vehicles off the roads at peak periods, and even at other times during the day when shoppers realised the benefits of river travel. What better way is there to start or finish a working day or shopping trip than to have a relaxing 30 or so minutes on a fast, comfortable river ferry, with cool breezes and fresh air? Compare that with a crowded stop-start car or bus trip over the same distance, with traffic bumper to bumper and car occupants breathing exhaust fumes. In our climate most of the travelling by motor vehicle is in hot, humid conditions. How easy this argument would be to sell in any publicity campaign undertaken in the initial stages of the service.

I realise the problems with the present regulations covering boat speeds on the river. They must be looked at in a realistic manner. To make this service practicable they would have to increase the speed limit to a more sensible level but still maintaining safety standards.

There would be problems in providing carparks at the pick-up points and terminals. We would need adequate, safe parking, with well-lit surrounding areas for the safety of women and children at night, together with toilet facilities and modern, covered waiting areas with adequate seating. Bus routes could be changed in some areas to provide a connecting service to surrounding suburbs. A survey would have to be carried out to allow the planning of a co-ordinated system to provide maximum availability to all.

The Commonwealth Games will be held next year, and our city will be on show. It seems unbelievable that, in a city such as ours, with so much sunshine and beautiful weather, the virtually untapped tourist potential of our river has not been exploited to the fullest. I believe that we have plenty to show, and I see our river as an added attraction for tourists.

The beautification of river banks and surrounds that has been carried out to date is certainly a credit to the Brisbane City Council. My congratulations go to all the people responsible. I hope that continuation of the work is given high priority because there is still a long way to go before the

Brisbane River realises its potential to become a major attraction in our capital city.

The Bulimba electorate, like so many others, is suffering a very high percentage of unemployment. The general pattern of very high unemployment throughout Queensland and Australia is added to in our area by the desperate position of the meat industry, the failure of the Cairncross Dock to be able to attract the necessary shipping to allow it to be worked at full capacity and many large firms having mass sackings. All of these areas are labour intensive and have a very big effect on employment in the Bulimba and surrounding districts.

In our nearby districts alone, in the meat industry we have seen the complete closure of Borthwicks meatworks, which put many hundreds of workers out of a job; Brisbane abattoir working a very reduced quota, with many more out of work and with many of those fortunate enough to be employed working only a three-day week. In the case of Borthwicks, there are rumours about when it will reopen but, to my knowledge, no date has been announced. There is no indication when or if the Brisbane abattoir will pick up.

Let me deal with the case of a meatworker. He does not know from one week to the next whether he will be employed, how long he will be employed, whether he will be on the dole, whether he should look for a job away from the meat industry or whether he should wait in the hope that the industry will pick up. While this is going on, he watches his family living below the poverty line or sees any savings he might have accumulated fast disappearing. This is the life-style that most meatworkers are going through.

If ever there was a need for a Government investigation into an industry, the meat industry must fill that need. It appears quite obvious that the giant meat companies have manipulated this industry, with no opposition from Federal or State Governments, to their advantage and most certainly against the worker, to a stage where very serious industrial problems are looming. If any member of this Parliament thinks that workers will take the type of treatment that is given to meatworkers at the present time, he has a rude awakening coming.

I can safely say that unless someone does something immediately in the defence of the jobs of meatworkers, or at least provides adequate safeguards and securities for meatworkers, the meat industry can only face long and expensive set-backs. The present situation is inexcusable. I have been informed that up to 8 000 out of a total of 12 500 meatworkers in Queensland are out of work. Many of them have been out of work since before Christmas 1980. The meat union—the AMIEU—has called for an authority to be set up to stabilise this industry and any sane-thinking person must support the suggestion.

Government assistance is desperately needed in regard to the Cairncross Dock. There has been a long and constant plea from workers in the ship-repairing industry for the Government to fund a project to widen and lengthen the dock. The dockyard is fast becoming non-competitive because of its size. The largest ship that can berth in the dock is one of 85 000 tonnes. It is common to see ships of 150 000 tonnes along our coast and this will probably become more common as time goes on. The number of vessels docked at Cairncross in 1979-80 was the lowest since 1961. The aggregate gross tonnage docked was the lowest since 1965. A situation is developing where Australian shipping lines have bulk carriers either in the planning stage or under construction which will be too large for the Australian dry docks. In addition, indications are that the number of large crude-oil tankers for the overseas trade will increase in the coming years.

It is very interesting to note that industrial disputes at this dockyard have shown a dramatic improvement. The workers in this area have bent over backwards to attempt to get the industry back on its feet under extreme circumstances. We have a positive solution to a serious employment situation proposed by not only the workers in the industry but also the Port of Brisbane Authority. That authority's report for 1979-80 clearly indicates that the Cairncross dockyard will not be able to handle the large number of vessels that are being built and that will be built and running in the future, and that the dockyard should be modified accordingly for it to become a viable proposition.

If the Government is honest in its claims that it is concerned about unemployment in our State, here is a golden opportunity for it to take a major step in the right direction. I have been informed that it would cost some $15m to do the work that is necessary. I feel that it would be a small price to pay for the security of some 700 jobs and an industry that might prove to be essential in the future. Ship repair work has been lost from Brisbane to Singapore, Korea, West Germany, Japan, Spain and Portugal. The work in this dockyard, and the enormous amount of associated work that goes to auxiliary and supply industries with this type of operation, would flow through and have far-reaching effects.

We have many unemployed young people, and this is another subject about which I feel very strongly. Unless positive action is taken by Governments in the area of job creation and protection for young people, we will see the situation where many young boys and girls could go through what should be their working lives without ever finding a job. That sounds like a very startling statement, but it is more than a possibility

if the present trend is allowed to continue, with the willy-nilly implementation of computerisation and technological changes. We see industry after industry installing computers with no regard for the effects on the work-force in that industry. We see tradesmen being imported while thousands of young people are begging for apprenticeships.

Employment and job creation will be the crucial issue in the 1980s. Unemployment is a personal tragedy which could shatter the family fabric of our society, and the sooner Governments realise this, the better. We see the situation developing where this Government and their blood brothers in Canberra do not appear to have any answer to or, for that matter, a great deal of concern about, the very serious effects of technological change. We see technology being applied in an ad hoc fashion in a growing number of industries with little or no care or thought for protecting the interests of the work-force traditionally engaged in that industry. The implementation of these changes on just about every occasion is based solely on the motivation of added profits.

The process of technological change is not a phenomenon of the 20th Century. We have had progress since mankind began and it is certain to continue. But what is alarming is the rate at which this change will occur in the future. For the community to benefit, Governments must investigate any technological change and legislate to provide the social machinery to ensure that only technology of advantage to the people can be introduced in a way which improves the quality of life instead of detracts from it.

Of all technology, probably the greatest effect on employment will come from the computer. There is very little labour required to manufacture computers and they require a minimum of service. The first commercial computer was built in 1946. It filled a room 40 ft. x 20 ft. and required massive air-conditioning equipment. Now, some 30-odd years later, circuits with up to 100 000 components can be etched on a single slice of silicon no larger than a postage stamp. A computer as capable as the one built in 1946 could now fit into an attache case.

By the mid-1980s, the miniaturisation of computers will have advanced even further and costs will come down, with the result that the number of computers in use will multiply. Of course, the mushrooming of the computer will have a disastrous consequence for labour requirements. At the present time, the full effect is not being realised by the public at large because in so many industries natural wastage, not sackings, is concealing the drop in labour requirements.

A frightening aspect of this whole question is the fact that in many cases powerful overseas multinational companies could be forcing experimentation with sometimes unnecessary technology on our economy.

Australia is the second most foreign-owned and controlled economy in the advanced capitalist world. For instance, 85 per cent of Queensland's mining production is under foreign control. These giant multinational companies are the same ones that have shown world wide that they have no loyalty to any country and most certainly have no concern for the living standards of workers. I am of the firm belief that the multinational and transnational companies, with their greed and total disregard for the economies of the countries that they exploit, will lead to the eventual downfall of the capitalist system.

An interesting example I recently read is typical and explains the situation well. It is about a very large factory in Manila, called Gelmont Industries and owned in New York by one of these multinationals. This factory makes gloves, among other things, but I will use the gloves as an example. The girls who work there are paid 92c a day. They are on a quota of 108 pairs of gloves a day per worker. These gloves are sold in America for $4 a pair. One day's work for one girl is worth $432 in the United States, and that is more than 430 times her daily earnings. This company is making huge profits by exploiting this dirt-cheap Asian labour while the workers in that country cannot make ends meet.

Let us look at the grasp that the multinationals have on our way of life. We rise in the morning and we shower, shave, eat breakfast, drive to work, fill the family car with petrol, buy tyres, and shop at the local supermarket for cereals, soups, canned goods, soap powder, toothpaste and many more items. It is quite likely that every item that I have mentioned is the product of a multinational company with its central boardroom many thousands of miles away.

It is quite obvious that multinationals can quite easily, and probably do, determine what products we buy and how much we pay for them. If allowed, they would determine what amount of computerisation or automation they will apply to our industries, with little or no feeling for the long-term effects on our living standards or for the disruption that they cause the work-force or, for that matter, the economy of the country, with the added drain on our social services and welfare.

The whole question of technological change is a very serious and complex one and I do not claim that the Australian Labor Party has the complete answer, but I do claim that we have very positive policies in that area. These policies are planned with due regard to the effects of technological change, so the results of any implementation must add to the quality of life for all people in our community, and not detract from it. These policies are built around building mechanism that will have as its role the monitoring, planning and control over the introduction of any change by major employers of labour.

I repeat that unemployment is the most pressing problem that we face in the 1980s, and unless the subject that I have just spoken on, technological change, is made into a

major priority by this Government, the young boys and girls of our country face very grim prospects of employment in the future.

Mr KATTER (Flinders) (4.17 p.m.): I apologise to the member for Bulimba; I did not know that it was his maiden speech. However, whilst I have often agreed with what members of the Opposition have said about multinational companies, I feel very strongly that in areas such as mining, where markets are extremely difficult to obtain and so very costly to secure—a small man cannot possibly secure overseas markets without the help of some outside body, and from my own experience I have not found the Governments in Australia particularly helpful in that regard—it is a great advantage to have a farm-in arrangement with some foreign buyer of the commodity concerned. I would certainly support any Government that allows the involvement of a person who is part of a purchasing market.

I rise today to speak once again on the matter of the cost-of-living differences for people living in country areas and those living in the big cities of Australia. Yesterday I did not have time to explain the profound effect that these cost-of-living differences have upon people living in the outback or in the small towns of Australia.

I will start by giving the expenditure pattern of the average Australian who receives an average wage or salary. It has been estimated that about 60 per cent of his income goes on food, about 25 per cent on housing and about 10 per cent on a car. Firstly, let me state that the food statistics are compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Figures are given for small towns in north and mid-west Queensland. I shall use the towns of Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek and Cloncurry as examples. The Bureau of Statistics has found a figure of 114 per cent for the cost of food items in those towns. In other words, the bureau claims that grocery and food items in those towns are 14 per cent dearer than they are in Brisbane.

Another study has been done by Dr Sohn of the James Cook University. That study discloses that in fact the figure was not 114 per cent but 119 per cent; in other words, the increase is 19 per cent. That is a fairly large discrepancy of some 5 per cent.

It is rather curious to find how that big discrepancy occurred. I checked on the difference between the two statistics and found that the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in a very casual and cavalier manner, sends questionnaires to the food stores and asks them to fill them out. No responsible group in Australia could possibly regard those statistics as accurate because, fairly naturally, each of the supermarkets and grocery stores in answering the questionnaires wants to put as kind a construction as possible upon its pricing structure, and therefore has a very heavy bias towards low prices when filling out those forms. Dr Sohn conducted his own study and it is consequently a far more accurate guide to the differences in the cost of living.

The second important factor that flows from Dr Sohn's study is that it was taken in 1975, a time at which there had been no increase in rail freights in Queensland for nearly 8½ years. So the 1975 figure was artificially low and it was further compounded by the fact that cattle were selling at a very low price. In fact, in Julia Creek 1 100 head of fair to poor quality cows sold for $1 a head. The cost of beef at that time was very low, but we all know that beef forms a very large part of the Consumer Price Index. Dr Sohn's study, when done in 1975, created an artificially low figure.

If we take into account the increase in rail freight over the last five years since 1975, we find an increase of 215 per cent. In that period the Consumer Price Index moved only about 92 per cent. As rail freight is 6 per cent of the cost of all food items in country areas, if we update Dr Sohn's figure we arrive at 27 per cent. That means that the cost of the same articles in a country town is 27 per cent higher than in Brisbane.

These are objective statistics, with no "guesstimates" or notional figures put in by me or anyone else. They are objective, cold, hard statistics. A housewife in Julia Creek, Winton or Cloncurry must pay 27 per cent more than her counterpart in Brisbane or any of the other major cities and population centres of Australia.

Let me now turn to housing, the statistics of which, I might add, are not so easy to acquire. I rang the Department of Works and the Housing Commission and asked the cost of construction of a standard model house in, for example, Cloncurry or Julia Creek, and also the cost of construction of a similar house in Brisbane. I was quoted a figure but it could not be used for comparative purposes. This in itself was very interesting because in Brisbane only brick veneer, tiled houses are built whereas in country centres fibro and galvanised iron will suffice.

I brought to the attention of the House, and I will do it again, the protest association —I see my colleague the Minister for Lands and Forestry smiling over there—called the Humpy Horror Houses Prevention Association, which is having a protest meeting at The Gap because houses are being built there out of fibrolite and galvanised iron. My colleagues from Winton and Longreach and I have never known any other type of home. That is the only type of home we had seen in our entire lives until we travelled to places such as Brisbane. It was interesting to note that the Housing Commission does not have for country areas a product similar to the ones it has for city areas. The city area has to have better homes than the country area.

The difference was quite interesting. The three most recent houses built in Clonclurry cost $29,954. The cost in Brisbane was

$24,285. However, when we allow for tiling —if a house in Brisbane was built with a galvanised iron roof it would cost $23,600 —and compare those two figures, we arrive at a difference of 26 per cent. In other words, the person who buys a house in Hughenden or Cloncurry pays 26 per cent more for his house than he would if the same house were built here in Brisbane.

Mr Casey: Are you sure you haven't got yesterday's speech there?

Mr KATTER: No. I am moving along from yesterday. I will probably irritate a lot of members by constantly repeating those figures throughout the next three years.

Mr Casey: You should sheet home the blame to the correct Government—this Government; your Government.

Mr KATTER: If it is my Government, let me say that I am doing everything within my power to change the system.

I move on to a second figure on housing —and I would like to strengthen my case on housing. I rang Logan Units, the suppliers of a lot of houses in North Queensland, and particularly country North Queensland, at the present moment. Their kit model price is $9,990. The cost of freighting that kit to Richmond is $2,000—a price escalation of 20 per cent.

However, the more interesting comparison is with cement, which I am sure everyone in this House would agree is a very basic commodity. The cost of freighting a tonne of cement from Townsville to Richmond is $63.60, which includes the sales tax that is charged on freight; yet the cost of a tonne of cement is only $62.47. In other words, the cost of rail freight to Richmond is $1 more than the cost of a tonne of cement itself. The price difference of such a basic commodity as cement is over 100 per cent—in fact, to be accurate, 103 per cent.

Mr Yewdale: It's your Government.

Mr KATTER: I am coming to some of the solutions that are at hand. My Government held rail freights static for eight and a-half years, which was a fairly notable achievement. In its last three or four years in office, the Labor Party raised rail freights by some 200 to 300 per cent. If I were on the Opposition benches, I would not be particularly proud of that achievement in rail freights.

For housing costs, we had one figure of 27 per cent and another of 24 per cent, which gives an average figure of about 26 per cent. For food items it is 27 per cent more, and for housing items 25 per cent more.

Unfortunately, one thing that I cannot quantify is the cost difference on vehicles. Suffice it to say that a person living in a country town simply must buy a vehicle from his local dealer. If he does not, he cannot get the vehicle serviced or repaired. His warranty is of no use whatsoever to him. Thus there is tremendous pressure upon him to buy that vehicle from his local dealer. Fairly typically, in these small towns there is either no dealer or only one; so there is no competition. Naturally enough, when there is no competition the buyer tends to get a bad deal on such things as trade-ins.

I do not want to be seen as condemning our small-town businessmen. Heaven only knows, my family has been in that category for the last 60 or 70 years. There is, of course, a reason why they must make extra money. They are facing a huge cost-of-living difference with respect to housing and food of some 26 per cent. Obviously, therefore, they must have a higher mark-up than their counterparts in Brisbane.

Unionists in these areas are in a similar position. They receive in their pay packets what is really a pittance—at least it is some form of assistance—by way of zone allowance and district allowance.

Getting back to the price of motor vehicles—my first contention is that, there being no competition, there is a vast difference in prices. My second contention, and probably the more important of the two, is that roads are in an appalling condition.

Discussions were held in Brisbane recently about flood damage to roads in the North. Unfortunately, a submission was put in by the shire engineers from Johnstone Shire, Cairns City Council, Ayr Shire, and Townsville City Council, in which they said, "95 per cent of local authority roads in North Queensland are now sealed." I looked across at a couple of my colleagues from country areas in North Queensland and we all burst out laughing. We suggested that perhaps they had got it backwards—that 5 per cent were sealed and 95 per cent were unsealed.

Hughenden is an interesting example. It has five major roads leading away from it—I will not go into detail about those roads—and there may be five or 10 miles of bitumen on only two of those roads. Of course, the Flinders Highway is entirely sealed for 80 or 90 miles on each side of Hughenden.

I remind my colleagues on my right that there was no bitumen on the Flinders Highway while they were in Government, so I could hardly expect them to hold their heads up with any pride on this issue. But I do not hold my head up with any degree of pride about what the Government of which I am a member has achieved. Although we have taken a giant step forward, there are many more steps forward still to be taken before people living in country areas have anything like the conditions that are enjoyed by their coastal counterparts in North Queensland, where the shire engineers could come forward and say that 95 per cent of

the roads in the shires are bitumen sealed. In most western towns in my electorate, most of the roads are without bitumen.

I was endeavouring to make a point in relation to the cost of cars. One has to drive on dirt roads, and extremely bad dirt roads. Most of them are impassable at present. I make passing mention of the fact that many of the shearers in my area—they form a large percentage of the workforce in Hughenden and Richmond—cannot work, and probably will not be able to work, for another week or even two weeks, because the roads are in such an appalling condition that they are not trafficable by ordinary vehicles.

At the moment, because of the state of the roads, people cannot even earn their daily bread. What happens to the shearers? What happens to the stockmen? What happens to the graziers? What happens to the other people who live in country Queensland? Most of the council workers live outside town and, consequently, have to commute to work over vast lengths of dirt road. What happens to their cars?

I do not like using myself as an example, but in this case I will. Both my brother, who lives in Brisbane, and I, had Volkswagens—the little Volkswagen bug. After about seven years, I had gone through four vehicles and he still had his original vehicle, and his vehicle was in far better condition than my fourth vehicle, simply because cars will not stand up to the constant smashing and bashing that they get when roads are unsealed, in most cases ungravelled, in many cases ungraded, and have no camber.

The point I am making is that, even if there were no price difference, our vehicles last only half or one-third as long as the vehicles owned by people who live in the big cities of Australia and who drive over well-paved bitumen roads.

In food there is a 27 per cent cost differential; in housing, 25 per cent; in the case of vehicles, I would venture to suggest that the figure is very similar. However, even these figures do not tell the full story. When the tax zone-allowance committee was visiting Hughenden, I took figures for five different commodities that are used both in Brisbane and in western areas.

It is obvious that there is a vast difference in the cost of housing. It is sometimes said, "Yes, but land is so cheap in country areas." Land in country areas is cheap compared with city land because city purchasers pay either the council or the developer for the development costs of the land. In Townsville most blocks come onto the market through developers. Included in their price is the cost of a sealed road to the centre of the city, kerb-to-kerb bitumen, kerbing, channelling, drainage, a library, suburban transport, a huge civic centre, etc. All those items are included in the development costs of city land.

In western towns people do not get drainage, and in some instances they do not even get sewerage or a constant water supply. They do not get kerb-to-kerb bitumen and, in most instances, do not have sealed roads in front of their land. They do not get guttering or kerbing. The costs of those items are not included in the price of a block of land in country areas.

Petrol is an identical article whether it is bought in Julia Creek or Brisbane. When the zone allowance team came to Hughenden the price of petrol in Brisbane was 30.9c a litre. At the time, in most western towns, the cost was 42c a litre. That represents a difference of almost 50 per cent for petrol. The cost of a unit of electricity in all of North Queensland, not just the western towns, is 2.78c a unit while in Brisbane it costs 3.61c a unit—again a difference of nearly 50 per cent. What could be a more basic commodity than potatoes which, in 1978 cost $9 a bag, with freight of $3.60—a difference of over 40 per cent. Those figures are a little old because I have not updated them.

Mr Warburton interjected.

Mr KATTER: I do not know. The potato costs were taken as at 1978. The other figures are updated, but that one was not.

Mr Warburton: You said that the electricity charges in North Queensland were lower than those in Brisbane. Perhaps you put them back to front.

Mr KATTER: I have the letter written to me by the Electricity Commission. I meant to say that the cost in North Queensland was 3.61c a unit and 2.78c in Brisbane.

Mr Hansen interjected.

Mr KATTER: I do not know the price of matches. The prices I quoted for a group of miscellaneous items favoured Brisbane by 40 per cent to 55 per cent. We are looking at a differential of 45 per cent for housing, 27 per cent for food and 46 per cent for a list of miscellaneous items. Those are some of the factors relating to the cost of living difference.

I make the point very forcefully to the House that the profound importance of these figures is that tax is levied on income. If a person receives $9,935 a year, which is the average minimum wage rate in Australia—and I venture to submit it is a typical income for 70 to 80 per cent of western wage-earners—he pays virtually the same tax as a person living in Brisbane because the zone allowances are so old and outdated. But the purchasing power of the real income, or the value of the money, is what can be bought with it. It is not $9,935. If a person had $9,935 in his pocket in Julia Creek, in terms of Brisbane purchasing power, it would be 25 per cent to 30 per cent less. A Julia Creek employee would virtually receive $6,000, in terms of Brisbane purchasing power. That is the position of a person on the average minimum wage rate in that town.

Let me deal further with the example of an income of $9,935 for an average Australian family. After paying taxation of $996, allowing for a zone B allowance, the net income would be $8,939. That would be for a man with a wife and two children. If 30 per cent is taken out of that, on my quick calculation he is left with $6,000 in terms of Brisbane purchasing power.

It is interesting to consider the dole payment for a man with a wife and two children. If a country person wants to give up work and come to Brisbane to live on the dole, he would receive $6,500. It is sad to reflect upon the fact that a person on such a wage in those areas would be far better off financially by throwing in his job and coming to Brisbane to live on the dole. Those figures show why we are short of labour in those areas.

There are people who are foolish and silly enough to want to live in towns such as Cloncurry, Richmond and Julia Creek, but others are far worse off than them. They have my greatest sympathy. I have done an enormous amount of work to help them. They live on the very frontiers in towns such as Croydon, Normanton, Burketown and Karumba, where there is no water supply. The people living in Burketown have to travel over 200 miles of dirt road to get their food.

Incredible hardships are placed upon these people by those cost-of-living figures, which can be understood only by a person who is out there trying to make ends meet. It is only the hard-working, average employee or housewife trying to feed a family who can fully appreciate the fundamental cruelty of the Australian taxing system. That is the point that I am making most strongly today. Tax is charged on money income and not upon real income. Tax is charged on how much a person gets in his pocket; it does not take into account the actual purchasing power of the money. All I am asking is that the tax be levied on purchasing power, which is a realistic rather than a simplistic attitude.

I would be doing a grave injustice if I concluded my speech there, because I must mention certain other matters. One is the cost of doing things in the country that cost nothing to do in the city. In four of the towns that I am talking about the people can view ABC television. In the towns in the Gulf country there is virtually no television. A person living in those four towns who has had to watch the ABC continuously realises how much the ABC suffers by comparison with the other channels. I want to be fair to the ABC. It caters for a more specialised and highly educated viewing audience. But unfortunately those people are not highly educated. One of the reasons is that many people in those towns could not afford higher education.

I remember picking up a hitch-hiker near Julia Creek. After a while he said, "You have had an education?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Do you know, I got 82 per cent in the Scholarship." I said, "You'd have won a scholarship and been able to go to high school?" He said, "No. My mother was working as a domestic in a hotel. I did win a scholarship of £500 for two years to do Junior, but it was not enough and my mother could not afford to pay the rest." If there had been a Junior high school in the area, he would have been able to qualify himself for a cushy job in the city.

Unfortunately, people of my age and above did not have that advantage. We have had to put up with what the English did to the Irish for nearly two centuries, and that was to deprive them of education. That is what has been done to country Queensland for the last 150 years. I am pleased to see the Minister for Education in the House, and I will direct these remarks to him through you, Mr Deputy Speaker. For a short period children in Grades 11 and 12 received equality of education through the remote area allowances, but unfortunately as incomes have increased most parents who apply for remote area scholarships for their children are unable to receive it because they cannot pass the means test. So once again we are back in the Stone Age and are depriving the sons and daughters of people in western areas of an education.

The 13 000 people who live in the Gulf towns—the North-western Statistical Division as it is called—between Pentland and Normanton through Croydon (excluding, of course, Mt Isa because it is a big city and has a lot of the advantages of a big city) produce some $180m in export earnings. They do not compete on some Australian market with a great big tariff wall to protect them. They have no protection, they have to compete against the rest of the world. They have to put up with droughts, fires and floods, and yet they still compete successfully against the rest of the world.

Some people say that Canadians have to put up with extremely low temperatures and have to hand-feed their cattle for three or four months of the year, but the people in the north-west have to face a protein drought for much the same period and they have to hand-feed their cattle or they will die. As I said, those 13 000 people are able to produce an income of some $180m selling on the world market, and I very much doubt whether there would be groups of people anywhere in the world who could come even close to measuring up to that figure. It is a truly remarkable figure, and they are truly remarkable people.

In the main, they have no television and no cinema. In most of the smaller towns there is no football; there are no TAFE colleges, no universities, no educational institutions of any type and no apprenticeships. With one exception they have no secondary schools to take them through to grade 12, and although there are a lot of people who have deeply-held religious beliefs, there are no clergymen in most of those

centres. Most of them have no bookshops or libraries, and there is very little social life. Until recently most of them had no gambling facilities, but if somebody tried to set up a small SP operation in the local hotel he was hit with a horrific fine.

I would do these people a grave injustice if I did not mention one more thing of which they are deprived, and that is banking. One of the reasons why people cannot build a decent house in any of those country areas is that they cannot raise the money. The vast difference between the achievements of the mid-west of America and the lamentable lack of achievement in the mid-west of North Queensland is that the Queenslanders cannot get finance. In those areas people cannot borrow money for any project whatever, because banks simply will not lend. People must raise three-quarters of the amount they require, and in many cases nearly 90 per cent. Even for what would be regarded as a fairly watertight sort of money-making operation such as a sheep or cattle station people have to rake up 50 per cent of the amount required and, in many cases, up to 75 per cent. This applies to any sort of developmental work whatever.

Many members have heard me say before that the area I represent is almost identical to the State of Colorado in the mid-west of the United States. Until 1875 the populations and everything else about those areas were identical. Now Colorado has a population of some 3.5m and we have a population of some 13 000. That is an achievement in one country and a lack of achievement in the other. Why is that? The only difference was that there was a river going through one country and they dammed it again and again and again. They were able to get money from their State Government and their Federal Government to undertake those water development tasks.

We have never received a cent. The money that is being provided in North Queensland at the moment is being used to dam the Burdekin River at its mouth. All of Inland Queensland will be deprived of water for the next century, or the next two centuries—and probably for ever. That will be an absolutely catastrophic and stupid undertaking, yet it is one that is being carried out without the slightest criticism. We have just charged forward into what I would describe as an incredible blunder.

I get back to finance and banking. The housing co-operatives will not lend money for housing in those country areas. The banks demand a prospective borrower to put up between 75 per cent and 90 per cent of the value of the house. Most of us would agree that very few houses will be built with that sort of situation prevailing. In America there were small locally-owned banks, and that is where the money was obtained to build decent homes in the areas where the people wanted to live and where the children wanted to stay. That is the reason why we have not been able to keep our children in those areas.

The final point I want to make is that there are no accountants, solicitors, medical specialists, eye specialists, or speech therapists in any of those towns. Consequently, just to go to see a medical specialist is very expensive. One can imagine the cost of driving from, say, Richmond to Townsville to see a medical specialist. Recently a railway guard came to see me. Orthodontist work had to be done on one of his children. The child had to go from Hughenden to Townsville every week for this treatment. The cost to him in one year was between $1,500 and $2,000. That is a cost that a person living in a coastal city simply does not have to bear. I have not included these extra costs in the figures that I have already given.

Of the 100 000 people who live in Inland Queensland and in the Gulf country of this State—and I exclude places like Mt Isa—probably some 75 000 of them receive less than the level of the dole or unemployment benefit in this State, and also less than what is federally defined as the poverty level. I see this committee of review on taxation zone allowances as the Lone Ranger for people in country areas. The only possible assistance that we can get at this time can come from that committee. I would ask it, in all sincerity, to do something to help the people in those areas of Australia.

Mr SMITH (Townsville West) (4.54 p.m.): I congratulate Mr Speaker on his re-election to that high office in the Parliament of Queensland. Although I cannot speak from personal experience on the conduct of the previous Parliament, I nevertheless look forward to the improvements which may be brought about under his direction during the life of this Parliament.

I also take this opportunity to express my loyalty and that of my constituents to Her Majesty the Queen.

I express my appreciation to the people of Townsville West for the confidence they have placed in me by electing me to this Parliament as their representative.

It is also appropriate that, in my opening remarks, I express my appreciation for the efforts of the many loyal Australian Labor Party supporters in the electorate of Townsville West. Although it is not possible or appropriate to name each and every one of those people who worked so tirelessly, it would be a serious omission if I let this occasion pass without noting the efforts of Mr Arthur Trower, Mr Stan Newman, Mr Norm Bowrey and my campaign director Mr Neil Stewart. I am also especially appreciative of the efforts of the Labor women of the electorate who worked so tirelessly and for so long to ensure the return of a representative of the Australian Labor Party to the seat of Townsville West.

The electorate of Townsville West is the smallest in area of any electorate outside Brisbane. The original Townsville West electorate was established from the 1971 redistribution at which the seat of Townsville North was eliminated, and much of this area incorporated into the seat of Townsville West. Honourable members will recall that the seat of Townsville North and its successor, Townsville West, was held by the late Mayor of Townsville, Alderman Percy Tucker, from 1960 for some 15 years.

In the 1974 election, Mr Tucker was opposed by a representative from the Liberal Party, two National Party candidates, one of whom was Mr Max Hooper, and Dr Dorney from the DLP. It will probably surprise many newer members of the Parliament that in that election Mr Hooper polled only 1 652 primary votes from the total of 12 428 valid votes cast. That 1 600 votes represented, as a primary vote, only 13 per cent and may well be a record for the minimum percentage of votes cast to have a member elected to a seat in this house. Nevertheless, Mr Hooper, after attracting the second preference votes of the DLP and subsequently the second preference votes of his co-candidate Mr Newell, was able to pull slightly in front of the Liberal Party candidate and attract his second preference votes to finish up with a total vote of a few hundred over Mr Tucker. That was how, for the first time and after 15 years, the seat was lost by the Australian Labor Party and became for a short period a Government seat.

The claim is often made in this House, including this afternoon, that electoral boundaries are rigged in favour of the Government parties. I am unable to speak with first-hand knowledge on what the position may be throughout the State, but I can say with certainty that the boundary changes that were effected to the Townsville West electorate as a result of the 1977 redistribution gave every indication that there had been a conscious effort to convert what had been traditionally a Labor seat to a safe seat for the Government parties.

One may well ask how this was accomplished. It was rather simple. In the 1974 election, the Australian Labor Party was able to attract less than 20 per cent of the first preference votes at the Vincent State School, the heart of the Army residential area. At that time there was some resentment amongst serving soldiers of the regular forces that the withdrawal of Australia from Vietnam, as brought about by the Whitlam Federal Government, had in some way reduced their opportunities in their role as professional soldiers.

When the new boundaries for the 1977 election were drawn, they were, remarkably, I think most Members will agree, drawn in such a way as to take in that area which had recorded less than a 20 per cent vote for my party. Those boundaries were drawn in such a way that, as well as taking in the service community, they took in, of the new areas of the Cranbrook and Heatley suburbs, those sections which appeared to be inhabited by people in the higher socio-economic group.

By the time the residents from Vincent came to cast their votes in the 1977 election, those feelings had largely dissipated and soldiers and their families were more concerned with the issues of the day as they affected their living standards in North Queensland. In this regard, they were able to see that many of the problems that affected them were not the responsibility of the Federal Government, but were in fact the responsibility of the State Government. Although I was not elected in 1977, well over 40 per cent of the service community who voted at the Vincent State School voted in favour of the Australian Labor Party. Had the election been held on the original boundaries, I would have won the seat. The result of course, came as a considerable shock to the Government parties, as they expected they would achieve the large majority they had received in 1974 when that particular area had been part of the electorate of Townsville. I believe there must have been some considerable dismay in Government circles when the final figures were in; Mr Hooper had been able to retain the seat with the narrowest margin of 241 votes.

There was every indication that Mr Hooper, being something of a realist, recognised it was beyond reasonable expectation that he would be returned at the 1980 election. Honourable members may recall that, in an attempt to prop up the seat for the Government, he was appointed as a Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism. He was then reported as saying that the ministry might well be wasted on him. It was, Mr Deputy Speaker, a very accurate assessment of what the future was to hold.

A large part of Townsville West is residential, although within the electorate are contained the four large regional shopping complexes which serve Townsville, and a considerable number of light engineering workshops. Heavy industry and other major generators of employment are located outside the electorate, so it will be necessary for me to refer, when I speak of the problems of the residents of Townsville West, to Townsville as a whole and indeed to look at the overall problems of North Queensland. Undoubtedly when I present the problems of Townsville and of North Queensland, I will be talking largely about the lack of decentralisation of industry and services. I will be talking about the soft underbelly of the Government's performance in Queensland.

In the final days before the 1980 election, the National Party saw fit to stage a policy launch in Townsville at which the Minister gave forth on all the wonderful things the National Party was going to do for the North. Foremost of the developments projected was the "rabbit out of the hat" proposal for the

development of the resort at Florence Bay. Now, when it comes to political promises, the electors of North Queensland and in my own seat of Townsville West are a canny lot. They were able to see that the Twin Bay proposal was in many ways ill considered. Certainly the proposal had not been developed to a stage where it was ready for presentation. It was seen to be what it really was—an election gimmick; something brought forward at the eleventh hour in a rescue bid to stem the declining fortunes of the National Party, which had suffered very considerably from the mishandling of the Fish Board controversy.

The people of Townsville West were able to see that this gala political performance was nothing more than a smoke-screen. It was in fact political camouflage—camouflage to conceal the total disinterest of the Government in real decentralisation initiatives. For many years Townsville has looked forward to another major industrial development. The people of Townsville had every reason to believe that, when the aluminium smelter proposed for Gladstone could not be proceeded with, then Townsville would be the logical choice. Very clearly, Cabinet directed the developer away from Townsville. Why did it do so?

Why did it steer that development away from one of the largest cities in Queensland, where the community at large would have welcomed such a development and where the existing infrastructure could have accommodated that development? Cabinet Ministers dumped Townsville because they had, in a large part, been caught. They had expected that the aluminium development would occur at Gladstone, but at the same time they had been promising Townsville great things because they had a Minister as a local member. When the crunch came, they were unable to deliver the goods. They were obliged to tell the developer that the Government was not prepared to bring forward its proposals to build the Burdekin Dam; nor was it prepared to strengthen the necessary electrical circuits north of Nebo to supply the power that would have been needed by an aluminium smelter. In these circumstances, it advised that developer that the site should be in Bundaberg.

I do not begrudge the people of Bundaberg that development—it is in fact my home town—but I am concerned, greatly concerned, that Townsville has been allowed to wither on the vine. It must, in fact, have been very galling for Mr Hooper as a Minister resident in the Townsville area not to be able to influence that decision. There was a great expectation by the people for him to deliver the goods in terms of the claims that had been attached to the importance of his Cabinet position. It must have caused Max Hooper considerable discomfort to sit there with his Cabinet colleagues and to realise he could do nothing about the decision. The only sop he could offer the people in Townsville was a tourist development in a place where it would, most assuredly, not be welcomed by the majority of citizens.

The Government of this State has always brushed aside urgings for decentralisation and its catchcry has been "We are already the most decentralised State", which, unfortunately, is not correct. The figures will prove that Tasmania is the most decentralised.

Queensland had the opportunity between 1972 and 1975 to do much in terms of decentralisation. It was in a position to avail itself of the assistance which was then being provided by the Whitlam Government —the assistance of which New South Wales and Victoria made good use. But Queensland did not, for purely political reasons.

Unlike New South Wales and Victoria, Queensland has no department concerned with decentralisation. In Victoria, the department is called the Department of State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism and has a Minister. In New South Wales, the department also has a separate Minister and is called simply the Department of Decentralisation.

In Queensland, the word "decentralisation" does not appear under the heading "Ministerial responsibilities" for any of the State Cabinet portfolios listed in the Queensland Government Directory of 1980. The nearest such responsibilities come to decentralisation is State Planning and Development, a responsibility of the Premier. The Act concerned is the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act. The department that would most logically have decentralisation included amongst its responsibilities is the State Department of Commercial and Industrial Development, which is under a different Minister.

Although there are such provisions in Acts in Victoria and New South Wales, my research has not revealed any Act of the Queensland Government to cause the location of industry in country areas or the relocation of industry from the capital city to country areas. There are incentives to industry which, in some cases, favour country locations. However, most of these incentives are equally applicable in Brisbane and the surrounding areas, so cannot, by definition, be regarded as incentives to decentralise.

The Queensland Government does not make loans to decentralise industries. Instead, it provides Crown industrial estates. Although most of the industrial estates are, of course, located in provincial cities, there are also industrial estates in Brisbane. The conditions for leasing such estates are the same in Brisbane and in provincial areas. Since the price of industrial land in Brisbane tends to be higher than it is in the provincial cities, the significance of Crown industrial estates available on attractive terms is that it is more helpful to an industry locating in Brisbane than it is to an industry locating

in a provincial city. Thus the Crown industrial estates are in no way related to the encouragement of decentralised industry.

If one counts Brisbane and the Moreton region together, that region is growing many times faster than all other parts of the State. To illustrate this point, let us look at house completions. When I speak of the Moreton region, I include the Brisbane metropolitan area, Gold Coast, Albert, Landsborough and Maroochydore. The figures available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the Moreton region had 73 per cent of the State's new houses in 1977-78, 78 per cent in 1978-79 and 78 per cent again in 1979-80.

I would like to highlight some of the decentralisation initiatives which are offered to industry by the Governments of Victoria or New South Wales, or sometimes by both, that are not available from the Queensland Government—

Direct loans to manufacturing and processing companies, with more favourable conditions than would normally be available from commercial sources.

Additional loans to municipal councils.

Direct loans to tourist industry companies, with more favourable conditions than normally.

Employment grants.

Removal expenses for staff leaving the capital city.

Subsidies for consulting fees, feasibility studies, and local labour-training grants.

Now, in contrast to Queensland, after these industries are established, there is continuance of assistance provided by way of 100 per cent pay-roll tax rebates for both New South Wales and Victoria and a 100 per cent land tax rebate in Victoria.

North Queensland's development progress has been brought to a halt by two major factors which are the sole responsibility of the Queensland Government. Firstly, the electricity power supply to industry is very fragile. For example, the links are so fragile that at times computers controlling the production of "The Townsville Daily Bulletin" are dropped off line by voltage irregularities, which causes chaos subsequently in the production schedule of that organisation.

Worse than that, it is just not practicable for any industry requiring more than 100 MW to establish itself in North Queensland at the present time. The existing capacity of the lines would be hard pressed to meet the normal developmental requirements of the existing industries.

The other major factor, of course, is water. While agreement for the construction of the Burdekin Dam has been announced, no timetable has been set. Construction of roads and the preparatory work has slowed down. In fact, I understand that the contractor working on a section of the road project was obliged to fund the continuation of that work from his own resources last year, rather than allow the work that was already completed run to ruin because of the lack of Government finance.

The provision for a pipeline to Townsville from the Burdekin Dam, when it is finally built, has not even been mentioned. And after all, Townsville is the major urban and industrial location in the region. Will it be left to the local government to foot the bill for that?

The people of North Queensland are looking for employment opportunities for themselves and for their sons and daughters, both at the present time and in the coming years. They find it impossible to rationalise their situation while they wait with an inadequate power supply, inadequate long-term water supply and something of a crisis with respect to the water supply in the immediate future.

I refer now to the Government's lack of commitment to the funding of Stage II of the Ross River Dam. The Townsville City Council is faced with the prospect of having to find $17m on 1980 prices to pay for the rerouting of roads, telephone services and electricity reticulation to bring Stage II of the dam into use.

Once this is done, it will provide relief for only a comparatively short time. It seems clear that well before the year 2000, water will have to be brought from the Burdekin at a present cost for the pipeline of $14m, even if no new major industry is established. Again, the Townsville City Council has been given notice by the Government that no part of that funding will be met by the State.

In the Governor's Opening Speech we heard how significant progress has been made towards bringing the Burdekin Dam scheme to fruition. I am afraid I cannot accept that statement when the Government talks about having spent only $4m. It is an insignificant sum. Prior to the Federal and State elections there was an indication of activity—that something was about to happen. The Government made a great show of saying that funds would be made available from its own resources, regardless of what contribution the Federal Government might make. On the expectation of further Government funding, two private contractors accepted work believing that there would be an on-going commitment. At the same time, work was also carried out by day labour by the Dalrymple Shire Council.

There is now a situation where those three sections of the road that were originally tendered for have been completed, or are all but completed. The announced $338,000 to be made available to the Dalrymple Shire Council for further work will in fact cover only another four kilometres of road. The other two contractors appear to have no prospect of getting further work until after the middle of the year.

Though the campsites are worth approximately $100,000 each, it appears that the

private contractors will have no choice but to remove them until much later in the year. It is obvious that when these organisations retender for the job, those costs will have to be recovered in the normal commercial process. It is a situation where nobody seems to want to know. The Minister for Northern Development (Mr Bird), seems unsure, and the Water Resources Minister (Mr Tomkins), has not given any clear commitment on what the timetable for expenditure will be. The people of North Queensland expect that now that there is a clear-cut agreement with the Federal Government on how the dam and associated reticulation is to be funded. Work ought to be proceeding, and at a much more rapid rate.

The establishment of a further committee to advise the commission on the water resources for the development of the Burdekin River project was greeted by considerable cynicism by northern residents. It seems just about anything will serve as a ploy to delay the construction of the dam. Unless there is very rapid progress in this particular project, Townsville will be like a dying man, hung by the ankles, the life-blood slowly dripping away. As I outlined before, with the stalling of the construction of the roads, the anticipated date of calling tenders for the construction in 1983 seems fairly unrealistic—but rather typical of the Government's sorry part in this scheme.

On examining the Government's concept of decentralisation, it is very interesting to read that the three major generating stations will have capacity in excess of 3 500 MW with two other developments to provide a further 2 000 MW.

Collinsville Power Station has been allowed to run down, letting North Queensland depend perilously on the single circuit link to the South. People of North Queensland at this stage would be very pleased to have the Collinsville Power Station brought up to its original maximum generating strength of a mere 180 MW to provide some reinforcement of the supply available to that part of the State.

With the closure of the Townsville Power Station, Townsville is probably unique as a major centre along the coast in that there is no emergency standby. Cairns at least has the back-up of the small hydro stations, Mackay has a gas turbine station, but Townsville has nothing. In the event of a cyclone, where it might be essential to get emergency power reticulated throughout the district, Townsville could be in the worst situation of any major centre along the coast.

Further glaring examples of the lack of consideration for the people of North Queensland can be seen. The harbour in Townsville, a fine port, is almost totally dependent on its own ability to raise capital, and to service those borrowings, for its expansion and development. But again we see the example of the Brisbane port being redeveloped when it may have been far more desirable to spend that money on the provincial cities and thus provide some assistance in the process of decentralisation and international trade. The people of North Queensland are justifiably incensed when they see their principal rural exports, apart from sugar, of meat and wool having to be railed to Brisbane for export.

The final insult is the Federal Government's insistence that sales tax be paid on freight charges. Of all the taxes and charges levied by both Federal and State Governments, this is the most insidious, the most blatant discrimination against people living outside the south-east corner of the State. The Government is hypocritical when it proposes flat rate taxation and more generous zone allowances but will do nothing to remove a tax which discourages decentralisation. This tax not only increases the cost of living, but also has caused the closure of warehouses and has directly reduced employment opportunities.

Naturally, as could be expected, some resellers seek to avoid and in fact avoid paying the charges by buying direct from Brisbane and being invoiced at the Brisbane price. By this means the freight charges are not taken into account. It seems to me to be a gross injustice that some honest firms have had to close down their wholesale warehouses in Townsville, or in some instances their North Queensland offices and operations because of the competitive disadvantage of having to include in the Townsville wholesale price tax on freight.

A recent area conference of the Liberal Party in Townsville, in recognising the problem, called on the business community to break the law and refuse to pay the tax. I would suggest to the Minister for Northern Development that if he wants to be taken seriously he should argue forcefully in the Cabinet to have the tax removed forthwith.

Unemployment in Townsville, directly attributable to stagnation in the absence of major new developmental projects, has reached an alarming level. For example, in November, before the school-leavers came onto the job market, there were 65 young people for every job vacancy. People of all age groups from the rural areas come to Townsville seeking employment and so exacerbate the situation. If the Government intends to take any real initiatives in the decentralisation area, that action should occur in Townsville where the greatest need exists.

Technical and further education has been of much greater importance in the community in recent years and there is increasing pressure on those institutions to meet the requirements of an ever-expanding public demand for their services. Unfortunately, developments which should have occurred in Townsville some years ago did not take place and those responsible for the administration of the college now have a very formidable task confronting them. The acquisition of the old Pimlico university campus was very well

received in Townsville and the community looked forward to the very rapid development of the college's services in the new location.

At the present time, all but the six basic trade groups are required to travel to Brisbane for their block-training. It had been indicated that $6m in funding for the School of Technology, to be located at Pimlico, would be committed over the triennium 1982-1984 to provide, amongst other courses, some of the trade-training which is presently offered only in Brisbane. It seems ridiculous that a city the size of Townsville, which boasts a college of technical and further education servicing a community of 160 000 people, probably the largest in the State, does not provide basic apprenticeship training for such trades as bricklaying, painting and decorating, panel beating, diesel and heavy earth moving machinery, plastering and tiling, wood machinists, and instrument fitting.

A very disturbing suggestion has been discussed in Townsville over the last few weeks to the effect that the $6m that was to be forthcoming for the 1982-1984 triennium for the school of technology has been cut by 50 per cent to $3m. I hope that the Minister is in a position to refute that statement, but if there is not a clear response forthcoming over the next few days I will most certainly question him on the matter at a later date.

Recently, the Federal Government has played its part in providing some impetus to the tourist industry in North Queensland with the establishment of the international airport—a marvellous decentralisation initiative. The very least the Queensland Government can do is to ensure that the funding provided for the school of technology is not in any way cut back and a department of catering is established at the earliest possible opportunity.

The TAFE college is certainly doing a remarkable job in the Townsville area, but it is inhibited in many ways. For instance, at the present time, the college is not provided with an official library. Surely this is an essential facility for any college. There is no librarian. By comparison, the college of advanced education, which would not have half the students of the TAFE college would have a staff of at least 12 looking after its library. Again, I would hope that there would be a clear indication of intent of when a library will be established and qualified library staff employed.

The Townsville College of Technical and Further Education has been doing a remarkably good job in the area of pre-vocational training. At the present time it has 70 places, 14 of which are funded from Commonwealth sources. The college is forever looking for ways to expand its role in the school-to-work transition program which must be seen as an essential role in the present climate of unemployment among young people, and, I repeat, with 65 young people competing for each job vacancy in the Townsville area.

On 16 February this year the Commonwealth announced grants totalling $22.2m for the 1981 school-to-work transition program. Of that sum, approximately $3m was allocated to Queensland; $1.9 in the TAFE area and $1.1m in the secondary school area. In this essential TAFE school-to-work program Townsville has not been well looked after. As a matter of fact, it appears to have been overlooked. I suspect the measley sum has been allocated as an afterthought in an attempt to cover up a departmental blunder. I seriously suggest that Townsville was omitted when the allocations were worked out and then, rather than the department's having to re-allocate the funds which may have already been announced to the various colleges throughout the State, a measley $28,000 was provided as an afterthought. To give weight to that statement, I will cite some of the figures:

Mt. Gravatt ..	$130,000
Rockhampton ..	$92,000
South Brisbane ..	$127,000
Toowoomba ..	$150,000
Cairns	$78,000
Eagle Farm	$41,000
Ipswich	$43,000
College of Catering at Coorparoo ..	$76,000
Gold Coast	$164,000
Townsville, a measley	$28,000

By any standard, Townsville should have received $150,000 to $160,000, similar to the amount received by the Gold Coast and Toowoomba. As further evidence, compare the $92,000 and $78,000 received by Rockhampton and Cairns respectively.

I noted with some amusement, again in the Governor's Opening Speech, that—

> ". . . the Government Tourist and Travel Corporation is employing sophisticated marketing techniques to attract more tourists to the State."

I can only hope that the tourist corporation is more sophisticated in this area than it has been in dealings with the people in North Queensland in respect to the proposed island resort development. I mentioned earlier that the proposed tourist resort of Twin Bay at Magnetic Island seemed to be something of a "rabbit out of the hat" proposal.

Few topics have generated as much interest in the media as statements on the subject by the then Minister, Mr Hooper, and by his successor, Mr Elliott, particularly more recently, when it was reported that Cabinet had decided to approve the $100m project. That approval has sparked new interest and new opposition, because prior to that announcement many people, as was to be expected in North Queensland, had decided that it may in fact have been something that would go away once the elections were over.

Prior to raising this matter in the House today, I have not made any public statements of opposition to this proposed development, believing that I did not have sufficient information to take a firm stand on this very

important topic. Regardless of what the merits or demerits of the project are, I would point out to the present Minister that he is certainly batting on a sticky wicket because of the way in which the project was introduced, particularly without consultation with the Townsville City Council.

I would ask him to take heed that most people are not in fact opposed to development on Magnetic Island. They recognise that there has to be development if a tourist industry in North Queensland is to be maintained, even though they might basically want to leave Magnetic Island as it is. Nevertheless, they bow to the reality that there will be changes—changes that must be accommodated. The heavy-handed approach has upset many people and has raised opposition to a very high pitch. I would also ask the Minister to take note that on 27 February Mr Graham Jenkinson, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, pointed out that the chamber would stand behind the city council on this matter, and noted that the council did not have a record of opposing development.

Another matter which has put a bad odour about the whole development proposal is an internal report from a study undertaken by the National Parks and Wildlife Service last year, which proposed that the area should be acquired for nature conservation. The report was commissioned after the Townsville City Council considered using the bay as a camping ground. The council later abandoned this plan. Only a week after this decision, the Government announced its plan for the $100m project. The National Parks and Wildlife Service report was not made public before the election when the State Government's plan for the bay was announced.

I suggest that the development of tourism in North Queensland is something which is going to need the wholehearted co-operation of the community at large. Already there are many people within the community who do not see any value in tourism for themselves. They see that whilst some sections of the community may benefit, others will suffer a net loss brought about by the reduced accessibility to certain areas and shortages which will, in turn, bring about higher prices, particularly for holiday-type accommodation.

It seems to me that anything that is done in the tourist area has to enjoy wholehearted public co-operation. As I have said before, it seems remarkable that the tourist organisation is prepared to bulldoze its way ahead, regardless of the opposition being mounted on all sides. There is a strong feeling that the Tourist and Travel Corporation is very heavily politicised. Its chairman appears to look for political mileage for the Government.

It has increasingly been said—not by Labor supporters but principally by Liberal supporters who have a great interest in this area—that nothing will happen in tourism development unless it suits the objectives of the National Party. The heavy-handed action, particularly by its chairman, seems to be typical of the actions of Government Ministers to which we have become so accustomed, although on this occasion I excuse Mr Elliott.

Townsville needs the resort and it needs the casino if the drive for tourism is to be sustained. Unless those developments are forthcoming, the international airport could well prove to be a white elephant. If the Queensland Government allows that to happen, Queensland could expect little sympathy from the Federal Government the next time it calls for assistance with a major tourist project. From the latest Press reports the commission is now holding the gun at Townsville's head by publicly announcing it might abandon Townsville and go to Proserpine. That action can be likened to that of a spoilt child who takes home his bat and ball if the game is not totally to his liking.

There are suitable sites in Townsville, other than Florence Bay, and the city council, the Townsville Tourist Organisation, and the Development Bureau will work positively to provide the maximum assistance to find an acceptable alternative. Mr Elliott did not dream up the present scheme; he inherited it. I am sure it would be profitable for him to again visit Townsville and sit down and talk to all interested parties.

Fishermen from Townsville will also be watching the progress of new legislation to control the fishing industry with great interest. The fishing industry, of course, has been in a state of crisis for some years, but the problem was certainly brought to a head during 1980. I suggest that included in the legislation should be provision for the control of the movement of trawlers along Queensland's east coast. This should reduce the problems of overcrowding of the fishing grounds. Considerations should also be given to a zoning control. For example, more than 100 trawlers are presently operating from Townsville. There are just too many boats to work a limited fishing ground offshore.

The Government was certainly at fault in its control of the number of fishing boats approved for construction. The sheer number that are now in the industry will ensure that the operations of most of them will remain uneconomic. It may well be that the Government may have to consider a buy-back arrangement to reduce the number of boats engaged in the industry to bring about some measure of stability. Insufficient attention has been given to the overall problems of the fishing industry. Unfortunately many fishermen do not grasp the full economic significance of proposals brought before them.

At the present time the fishing fleet in Townsville is being moved from Ross Creek to the Ross River. The harbour board is to construct a commercial fishermen's trawler complex, which includes a wharf to cost over $300,000. The whole complex will cost around $1m. Whether they use the

harbour board wharf or not, the fishermen will be obliged to contribute to a $150,000 annual repayment for the use of this facility for the next 20 years. The State Government has at this point refused to contribute towards any of the costs of the complex. However, the Government appears to be prepared to spend $200,000 on a separate wharf for the fishermen as part of its proposed $3m outlay for the industry. There can be no doubt that the construction, at this stage, of a separate wharf will cause under-utilization of the harbour board facility. In terms of economic benefit it would be far more sensible for the Government to allocate that $200,000 set aside for a separate wharf as a subsidy to the harbour board and to apply to the Commonwealth for a matching grant. I feel certain that the fishermen pushing the construction of their own wharf do not fully realise the magnitude of the harbour board charges if no Government subsidy is forthcoming.

I was interested to see that the Government has allocated $31m to hospital buildings in the next financial year. Just prior to the election, a promise was made to the people of Townsville that a further wing would be added to the Vincent Nursing Home. I am sure the people of Townsville would greet with relief a statement from the Minister confirming that election promise, and detailing the expenditure available during this forthcoming financial year. Until recently, owing to a lack of staff, only 32 of the 40 beds available were in use. The solution to this problem by the Health Department was to provide one additional nurse and to tell the nursing superintendent to fill all beds. The Vincent Nursing Home is an excellent facility, and I would like to see an expansion of not one but two wings. Ultimately I would like to see more development of that facility on the site. Day after day I am confronted with the tragedy of old people needing nursing home attention and seeing the relatives of these unfortunate people scurrying and competing for the few places that are available in the institutions in Townsville.

I am not a subscriber to the "cargo cult" theory. I recognise that funds available to the Government have to be allocated over a large number of projects, but I am concerned to see that people who are least able to defend themselves are given the maximum protection. I certainly believe that facilities for the aged must have a very high priority. I recognise that even if the Government were to double or even triple its commitment to nursing homes it will be an area that will require an ever-increasing expenditure.

(Time expired.)

Debate, on motion of Mr Wharton, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 5.35 p.m.

At 7.15 p.m.,

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. S. J. Muller, Fassifern) took the chair.

VACANCY IN SENATE OF COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

NOMINATIONS OF FLORENCE ISABEL BJELKE-PETERSEN, WILLIAM GEORGE ROBERTSON AND ERIC CHARLES POWNE, VICE GLENISTER SHEIL

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have to announce that this meeting has been summoned for 7.30 p.m. today under the provisions of Standing Order No. 331 for the purpose of the election of a senator. There being a quorum present, the meeting is now constituted. I assume that honourable members will agree that the provisions of the Standing Rules and Orders of this Parliament shall apply to this meeting. I now call for nominations, and I point out that every nomination must be accompanied by a declaration by the nominee of qualification and consent to be nominated and to act if elected.

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier): I nominate Florence Isabel Bjelke-Petersen, housewife, of "Bethany", Kingaroy, for election to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant through the resignation of Senator Glen Sheil. I produce Mrs Bjelke-Petersen's declaration of qualification and consent.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman produced Mrs Bjelke-Petersen's declaration of qualification and consent.

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing): I nominate Mr William George Robertson, farmer, "Birrahlee", Ridgelands, for election to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant through the resignation of Senator Glenister Sheil. I produce Mr Robertson's declaration of qualification and consent.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman produced Mr Robertson's declaration of qualification and consent.

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Commerce and Industry): I nominate Mr Eric Charles Powne, service station proprietor, Main Street, Bollon, for election to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant through the resignation of Senator Glenister Sheil. I produce Mr Powne's declaration of qualification and consent.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman produced Mr Powne's declaration of qualification and consent.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member for Wolston is desirous of being present for the vote tonight, I suggest that he contain his thoughts for the moment.

As there are no further nominations, I call on the Premier.

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (7.34 p.m.): I move—

> "That Mrs Florence Isabel Bjelke-Petersen be elected to hold the place in the Senate of the Parliament of the Commonwealth rendered vacant through the resignation of Senator Glenister Sheil."

The facts and the reasons for electing Florence Isabel Bjelke-Petersen are that she has become a senator-elect in a completely orthodox way. She was properly nominated for consideration by the National Party as a candidate for the Senate. The party's central council selected her as one of three for the National Party's Senate ticket, and during the party's annual conference she was elected, again by the central council, to the number one position on the National Party ticket. Florence was elected last October by the people of Queensland to take a position in the Senate as a National Party Senator from 1 July 1981.

A casual vacancy arose in the Senate as a consequence of the resignation of Dr Glenister Sheil to contest the by-election for the House of Representatives seat of McPherson.

The constitutional requirement is that a casual vacancy in the Senate be filled by a member of the same political party as that to which the person whose action created the casual vacancy belongs. The people of Queensland indicated clearly last October that Florence was their choice to be a National Party senator. It follows, therefore, as a matter of course, that the logical progression of events should be that Florence is put forward as the first nomination from the National Party to fill the casual vacancy that exists in the Senate at this time.

I should like to mention, as a matter of coincidence, that a women—Jean Margaret Hearn—was recently appointed by the Parliament of Tasmania, in accordance with constitutional requirements to fill a casual Senate vacancy caused by the resignation of former ALP Senator Wriedt, to sit in the House of Representatives as a member for Tasmania.

Quite unexpectedly the State was confronted by a casual Senate vacancy created when Senator Glen Sheil resigned to contest the McPherson by-election. I was completely unaware that Dr Glen Sheil was going to resign and was very surprised when I heard the announcement of his resignation. I played no part in his selection to contest the McPherson by-election. That was in the hands of others. As requested, my wife and I did support him fully during the campaign.

Initially, I was informed that Dr Sheil was not interested in returning to Canberra. The management committee of our party was also advised to that effect. It was then decided that three names be submitted to the Parliament, namely William George Robertson of Rockhampton, Eric Charles (Bunny) Powne of Bollon, and my wife, Florence.

The two men mentioned are excellent men. I know them well and hold them in high regard. However, management recommended that as Florence had been elected by the people of this State to take her place in the Senate as from 1 July next, she was the logical one whose name should be submitted to Parliament for the replacement. I have a letter here from management indicating just that decision.

In my 33 years in politics there have not been too many occasions when there has been so much publicity on an issue such as this. Much has been said that Dr Glen Sheil now desires to be re-elected. The main reason has been made quite plain—that is, if he is not re-elected he will stand to lose a considerable sum of money.

Be that as it may, Mr Speaker, I do not believe that a Parliament such as this should be used as an avenue to enable a former member of Parliament, whoever he may be, to be returned so that he can collect additional superannuation. That, to me, is completely unthinkable and unacceptable.

There has been a lot of talk in the media about sums of money, as if Florence had suddenly acquired a fortune. Six years have to go by, and as my wife said, we live one day at a time. No-one has a guarantee in this life of how long he may live, and six years is certainly a very long time. There could be double dissolutions when the Democrats gain control after the middle of this year. All sorts of things could happen.

What we have to remember is that it is not Florence who is to blame in relation to this question of superannuation. It is the system that has been set up by Canberra. It was an Act of Parliament in 1978 that was rushed through the Senate by Senator Missen, and through the House of Representatives by John Howard, in some 11 minutes, so that certain members who did not qualify as the Act stood could qualify, as they have, by spending only part of a term as a member. That, of course, is history.

As far as Dr Sheil and his desire to return to the Senate is concerned, I am surprised that he did not give consideration to the fact that he could lose part of his superannuation by resigning too early. It is quite clear from public statements made by leaders in this House that he would not gather the support of their parties to achieve his intention.

Mr CASEY (Mackay—Leader of the Opposition) (7.40 p.m.): This Parliament has witnessed some amazing scenes but perhaps none more amazing than those associated in recent years with Senate replacements.

None had greater ramifications than those which occurred in this Parliament on 27 August 1975 and again a week later on 3 September 1975 in what subsequently became known as the Field affair. On that occasion the Premier, who is still the incumbent in that office, led his cohorts in the National Party and slaves in the Liberal Party into a situation——

A Government Member interjected.

Mr CASEY: I will refer to him as Lord Mountbatten if he likes, as the photo is such a good likeness.

As I said, the Premier led them into a situation of complete defiance of the intent of the Australian Constitution and the accepted practice throughout Australia in relation to Senate replacements.

Now, almost six years later, despite a referendum since that time which has clarified the issue and despite the amendments to the Australian Constitution which resulted from that referendum, the same Premier, the same National Party and the same enslaved Liberal Party, acting as a coalition Government, intend, judging by what we read in the Press, to defy both the intent of the Constitution and the convention of accepted practice which has now been written into legislation, although perhaps it is still unfair, by the way in which the filling of the Senate vacancy is being carried out in this Parliament.

A Government Member: There is no difference.

Mr CASEY: There is a very big and very essential difference, and I want to make that absolutely clear this evening.

I want to make one thing patently clear at the outset. If a senator from the Labor Party dies, resigns or for any other reason has to be replaced during the time of his office, the Australian Labor Party will submit one name only to this Parliament as its nominee.

Mr Lane: From the new guard or the old guard?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr CASEY: That nominee will be——

Mr Lane: You would really be on the spot if you had to do that today.

Mr CASEY: It is quite obvious, Mr Speaker——

Mr Lane interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The meeting will come to order. I warn the Minister for Transport under Standing Order 123A.

Mr CASEY: They can put a ministerial saddle on them, Mr Speaker, but they are still the same old brumbies. They still engage in loud misbehaviour and that, coming from a new Minister, certainly sets a bad example to the new members of this Parliament.

As I said, if a Labor senator has to be replaced, the Australian Labor Party will submit only one name to this Parliament as its nominee, and that nominee will be the choice of the proper authority of the Australian Labor Party in this State. That nomination will be submitted in the light of the Constitutional requirements of Australia and in the spirit and intent of the Constitution.

Incidentally, that method was the one that was found to be satisfactory by the very same Premier in 1971 in the replacement of Senator Dame Annabelle Rankin. Of course, that was before an ethical opportunism seemed to monopolise his thinking in 1975 in the Colston affair and the Field affair and now apparently perhaps greed monopolises it in the same way in 1981.

From time to time in this Parliament in support of principles that to us are precious, but not so to many others, we must participate in short-term decisions which some of us find objectionable and thoroughly distasteful. For the Australian Labor Party Opposition, tonight is such an occasion.

Personally, I see little, indeed no, difference between the indecent, and now obvious, careless greed of the National Party's last senator (Dr Sheil) and the impatient husband-and-wife greed of its next one. Tonight it is very difficult for any Labor member to support any of the National Party candidates because of the way in which this whole affair has developed.

I want to make it quite clear, because of some reports by the Premier and others through the media, that never at any time did I or any other member of the Labor Party say that we would oppose Dr Sheil or any other candidate of the National Party. We said quite clearly that we would follow the Constitution.

Unfortunately, as appeared in the media the other day, the person chosen by the National Party organisation has not been nominated by any member of the National Party or any of their Liberal Party cohorts here this evening. Constitutionally it is the right of the National Party to nominate the replacement senator, and the Labor Party strongly upholds the right of that political party to do so. Unfortunately, the unprincipled National Party has not given any clear indication, and I am talking about the party organisation as well as the parliamentary wing, either through the media or through the Parliament as to what is its choice. Now this entire episode has degenerated into a selfish and undignified National Party scramble for superannuation prize-money which neither of the main competitors deserves or has really earned.

From the moment this casual vacancy became a State Parliament responsibility, Labor's aim has always been, as I said earlier, to observe the spirit and intent of the 1977 amendment to the Australian Constitution. That amendment, which was passed not only

by the Australian people but in particular by the people of Queensland, was designed to outlaw any repeats of the despicable Patrick Field affair.

The spirit of that referendum amendment was that a casual Senate vacancy in a State should be filled not only by a nominee of the same political party but by the proper choice of that political party.

That is the basic constitutional ethic that Labor seeks to preserve tonight at this meeting: the basic constitutional right that the National Party Premier and his National Party parliamentary wing seek again to defy as they did in 1975.

The pretence by the Premier that he is presenting a panel for parliamentary choice is phoney.

Sir William Knox: Why don't you table the correspondence?

Mr CASEY: If the Minister for Labour Relations wants correspondence tabled, he should look back to the correspondence of this same Premier to the Minister's party in 1971. That correspondence quite clearly asks the Liberal Party to submit a name—a single name—to this Parliament. Consequently the Labor Party has the same right and responsibility as the Liberal Party and the National Party, and that is to follow the Australian Constitution and the intent of the Australian people and not to make a sham of occasions such as this. The occasion has been such a sham that within minutes of being selected two of the three original nominees in the National Party panel that has been presented here tonight, if one could call it a panel, publicly expressed hopes that they would lose to the Premier's wife. That is how much of a sham it is. As in 1975 the Premier is determined to use his parliamentary numbers to cheapen the Australian Constitution and mock this Parliament and the Australian Senate. He plans to create new Australian political infamy by becoming the leader of the first parliamentary political party to recommend and elect a casual senator who is apparently, according to recent statements by Sir Robert Sparkes, not the choice of his own political administrative wing.

Tragically the organisational and administrative wing of that party will not stand up for itself and act responsibly. Sure, I did send a telegram to Sir Robert Sparkes. It was published in the media today. That answers the earlier query of the Minister for Labour Relations. Of course, once more there has been no reply forthcoming, and no clear indication from the political organisation that it wanted to follow in any respect the intent of the Australian Constitution. So consequently and tragically for all parliamentarians this Senate selection has become blurred by the superannuation prize-money that has been mentioned—possibly $150,000—to which one of the nominees will be entitled without ever contesting another election. It is a sad situation that members of this Parliament must in some way degrade themselves and their institution to uphold the principles of our own Australian Constitution.

The unprincipled greed of the Premier, his wife, Senator Sheil and their National Party —and unfortunately some of the parliamentary Liberals—exceeds the imagination of the best constitutional brains of the Australian nation. Even when they amended the Senate section of the Constitution to prohibit the Field affair, they did not foresee that unquenchable greed could still make a mockery of the Constitution.

If the National Party had wanted to stay clean in this affair as far as the superannuation question is concerned, it would not have nominated either of the two candidates who are possible winners in the superannuation stakes. If a Queensland worker dared to attempt such industrial extortion on even a fraction of the scale proposed in this whole affair, he perhaps would be gaoled for years for embezzlement.

The Premier's attitude over 10 years towards Senate casual vacancies has been contemptuous of the desired intent of the Constitution, and it is again on this occasion. As I said earlier, in 1971 he asked the Liberal Party to put forward a single nomination on Senator Dame Annabelle Rankin's retirement, and it did so. Senator Bonner was the man who was nominated. By 1975, when the vacancy occurred through the death of Labor's Senator Milliner, the same Premier demanded a panel from the Labor Party so that his anti-Labor numbers in this Parliament could make their choice of a Labor senator to fill a Labor vacancy. That is what the Constitution is now all about. In 1975 that stunt, because of its ramifications, sickened most Australians and the Field scandal turned out to be a fiasco, especially when the Premier deserted the man in the aftermath.

Now in exactly the same manner Dr Sheil has been used, following the sudden death of the late Eric Robinson, in an mischievous endeavour to take McPherson from the Liberal Party, and just as quickly in the aftermath he has been dropped and deserted. Unfortunately the good doctor, or perhaps I should say the foolish doctor, did not even bother to properly check his own rights and entitlements. Unfortunately for Dr Sheil the casual vacancy caused by his own deliberate resignation—and I support the Premier in that regard, I think he is a man of sound mind and he must know what he is doing—has created a pot of superannuation gold at the end of the Senate rainbow. That is what the people of Queensland are looking at in this episode.

Unfortunately, what has been forgotten here tonight is the assurance by the Premier in writing in 1971 to stand by the single choice of the Queensland Division of the Liberal Party. We have not received any indication here from any member of the National Party of a recommendation from the National Party in this State or the

Federal Division of the National Country Party. I suppose that we coin phrases for these affairs. In the future this affair will possibly be known as "Joh, Flo and the dough" affair, and to hell with Bob Sparkes, Doug Anthony, Glen Sheil, the National Party, parliamentary democracy or decency.

Labor believes that the argument here tonight is not the merits or demerits of the federal parliamentary superannuation system. That debate is the responsibility of other parliamentary people at some other time in some other place. The argument here tonight is the need in Queensland for an undertaking through Parliament of constitutional consistency so that the provisions concerning a casual Senate vacancy previously observed through convention but written into the Constitution itself in 1977 will be defended meticulously in the future against unscrupulous people and parties, such as the National Party. The Premier mentioned the recent replacement of the Tasmanian senator. Certainly there was a replacement in that State, but she was the single Australian Labor Party nominee for that position. The wishes of the Labor Party were followed, as was the intent of the Constitution.

I have always believed that a leader of a political party should set the example for the carrying out of his party's wishes. Unfortunately on this occasion the National Party organisation itself has acted like Pontius Pilate. It has tried to appear in the eyes of its federal authority that it was doing the right thing, but it knew full well that perhaps the Premier's greed would get the better of him. Yesterday I gave Sir Robert Sparkes the opportunity to indicate to this Parliament his party's right of choice; the right which his party gave to the Liberals in 1971, and in previous years in this State. The way in which he has let the Premier ride roughshod over his party will also be recorded in the history of tonight's debate.

This whole episode should have been one of simplicity. I believe the replacement of Senator Knight from the ACT will be one of simplicity. This episode should have been quietly, reasonably and sensibly determined by the National Party. That party, which is sectional in nature and greedy by habit, has allowed sectional greed to prevail once more.

It does not really matter how the Labor Party votes in this debate tonight; it cannot change the situation. It cannot change the sectional greed of the Queensland National Party. Only the people of Queensland can do that, and they will do it at a future State election. This affair this evening will help to open the shutters and let in the light for many Queenslanders so that they can see where their future voting intentions lie.

Mrs KYBURZ (Salisbury) (7.55 p.m.): In speaking to this motion one must begin by saying that it would be seen as churlish to make a comment about personalities on this issue. I am quite pleased that the National Party has been able to get its act together and now agree on the Senate nominations.

However, I believe it is a pity that we did not have the opportunity to question the candidates, to test their general knowledge or otherwise, because I believe that it is extremely important that in filling a casual Senate vacancy——

Mr Hinze: Did the electors of Salisbury do that to you before you got in here?

Mrs KYBURZ: Obviously the Minister's electors did not get an opportunity, because he would be the first one not here.

I do not believe that the National Party Senate team in the last election had such overwhelming support when one considers that it received only 29.5 per cent of the vote. I also believe that its campaign was based on fraudulent misrepresentation around the flat tax proposal.

Mr Katter: Something like your statements on the abortion debate.

Mrs KYBURZ: If you want to say——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will not permit this cross-fire in the Chamber.

Mrs KYBURZ: Mr Speaker, thank you for your protection. I feel that if the honourable member wishes to make statements like that, he should look to the statements that he has made about Aboriginal poverty. I really feel quite worried about him.

It is a sad fact in Queensland politics that if any person, a member or otherwise, were to criticise any of the nominations on this night, he would be viciously attacked and denigrated in a most personal way, with the help of parts of the Government Press machine. That that sort of thing occurs in this State I find quite worrying.

I know people will grumble and groan and say it just does not happen. Unfortunately we know that it happens in this State. I believe that we all have an obligation to support the National Party's nomination because if there was a Liberal Senate vacancy we would expect everybody to support whomever the Liberal Party put up.

Mr Hooper: The National Party nominated three. Who is its official nominee?

Mrs KYBRUZ: I think it is clear that the three of them are. They have all been nominated.

An Opposition Member: You are joking.

Mrs KYBURZ: I heard three people nominated so I assume that members have to vote for one of them.

This week I read in the newspapers that the Federal National Country Party had resolved that Senator Sheil, if one now calls him that, should be returned to Canberra. However, the management committee decided that it would not place Senator

Sheil in its panel of three, so until tonight I was not sure what was to happen. I believe the dilemma existed until the last minute. If that meeting of the National Party management committee was unconstitutional, as somebody in the parliamentary party tried to state, then perhaps a public statement should not have been made.

The Senate is a house of review, and it is extremely important that we view the role of senators as an important one, because I believe that now more than ever in a troubled world they have a very important part to play. I can only congratulate anyone who is going to the Senate, from whichever party he or she comes.

I repeat that the role of senators is extremely important. With the new Reagan administration in America, we now have the worry of politics of the extreme Right, which are just as worrying as politics of the extreme Left. Quite frankly, if America does decide to go boots and all into El Salvador, we will see Vietnam repeated in Central America—and that would be extremely sad.

It behoves the Australian Government to urge caution in its attitude to the American political scene. That is, as I said, a very important part for the Senate to play. Senators who are on the foreign affairs committee are able to travel around the world and see precisely what is the strategic situation of Australia's allies.

I must say that I am delighted to be supporting a panel which contains the name of a woman.

Mr Hinze interjected.

Mrs KYBURZ: I would nominate a woman in preference to the Minister for Local Government any time. I believe that a woman's place is everywhere. I believe that a woman is capable of filling any position at all.

Mr Yewdale: You'll win an Academy Award for this.

Mrs KYBURZ: If the truth hurts—tough cheddar!

I firmly believe that Mrs Bjelke-Petersen is more than capable of filling this position. I think she will surprise a lot of people. I believe that she will fill the role more than adequately. Quite honestly, we hear so little about some of the senators in Canberra. I am sure that we have all already heard more from Mrs Bjelke-Petersen than we have heard from some of the others. I am quite pleased about that.

I would like to see the Federal Parliament give more consideration to the taxation changes being considered vis-a-vis the role of women. I say no more about that here because obviously when one is being hooted and howled at by men who consider no more than their own place in the world, this is no place to talk about the role of women. However, as I have already said, I am particularly pleased to be supporting a panel that contains the name of a woman.

Mr GYGAR (Stafford) (8.3 p.m.): I support the Premier's nomination.

Mr Hooper: Who is it?

Mr GYGAR: If the honourable member for Archerfield wishes to display that he has taken no interest in the proceedings so far——

Mr Hooper: There are three nominees.

Mr GYGAR: For the benefit of the honourable member for Archerfield, in his ignorance, I point out that the Premier has nominated Mrs Florence Bjelke-Petersen, who I believe is the only correct person a member of this House should vote for to fill the vacancy. The requirements have been met more than adequately.

Firstly, under the Constitution we are required to vote for a person of the same political party as the one being replaced. As far as I am concerned, in this House the Premier speaks for the National Party and he has nominated a person. All things being equal, in all propriety he is entitled to expect the support of this House. Secondly, a panel has been presented. That is what the Parliament asked for on the previous occasion that I participated in this exercise, and that is what the Parliament has here.

The Leader of the Opposition has said that he will not present a panel if it falls to the Labor Party to make such a nomination. I will tell the Leader of the Opposition now that if he does not present a panel I will do the same next time as I did last time: vote against any nominee put forward until they are willing to recognise that this Parliament, not the back room of any political party, is supreme. We will not accept any situation in which we have foisted upon us any person the party might want to dredge up—a person who could not possibly achieve election in his own right.

The Minister raised the question of the activities of the Leader of the Opposition. I have always found him rather unfathomable, particularly the rather tortuous bend in his feeble mind.

We have our panel; the Constitution is complied with. I am delighted to see Mrs Bjelke-Petersen's name on the panel, as she is entitled to our support. We hear a lot in this Chamber about democracy. Everybody is in favour of democracy when it suits him. Now those who have made these proclamations of democracy have their chance to show whether they believe in it. Mrs Bjelke-Petersen went to the people only a short time ago. From a choice of Mrs Bjelke-Petersen, Senator Sheil and Mr Maunsell, the people of Queensland said that, if they were to have a National Party senator, they wanted Mrs Bjelke-Petersen. They are entitled to have their wishes fulfilled.

Some people might not like Mrs Bjelke-Petersen. Let us see how they perform now. Are they democrats in theory and in name when it suits them, or do they really believe that the people of this State have the right to elect whomever they please? They have elected Mrs Bjelke-Petersen. She is a nominee of the National Party. The panel has been prepared. She is entitled to our support, and she will certainly have mine.

Mr HARTWIG: Mr Speaker!

Mr LANE: Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Transport.

Mr HARTWIG: Mr Speaker——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Callide to resume his seat immediately.

Mr HARTWIG: Well, you can do what you like, but——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member under Standing Order 123A.

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (8.7 p.m.): The selection tonight of an appointee to the Senate vacancy should be a formality, not the subject of a debate that appears to be in danger of degenerating into, at worst, character assassination and, at best, an exercise in useless verbiage. Quite frankly, tonight is a night for us to be gracious. There are some people in this House who do not understand that. Let us keep to basics on this occasion.

First of all, the ALP will support the choice of a nominee from the political party that held the vacant seat. I am opposed to the constitutional amendment that resulted in the situation where parties have to certify to a candidate's membership for nomination to the Senate. There are few of us in this place who stood forward when that proposal was put before the Australian people in a referendum and advocated a "No" vote. It was from our own pockets, Mr Speaker.

Sir William Knox, Mr Doumany, Mr Moore and I, with a number of other people in this Chamber, did not wish to see the politicalisation of the House of Representatives or the Senate in Canberra, and we opposed the proposal on that occasion on the basis that members should be elected without having to prove membership of a political party. But the Australian people went to the polls then and decided that there had to be proof and certification that a like with like situation was created, that a senator who passed out of the Senate as a member of one party was replaced by a member of the same party.

I, for one, accept the judgment of the Australian people on that occasion, despite the fact that I went round the State advocating a "No" vote. That is what the Australian people decided, and we now have a situation in which parties have an opportunity of putting forward someone of the same political persuasion as the person who, for one reason or another, was displaced.

We have before this meeting tonight a perfectly valid nomination, probably the most valid nomination that one could have in such a situation, because the first nomination, made by the Premier, was of a person who has faced the Queensland people and tested herself in a broad vote. She is one who has tested her public popularity and acceptance as a person who should go to the Senate as a representative of this State. That person happens to be Mrs Bjelke-Petersen. She carries with her the majority support of Queenslanders. Her nomination is the most valid one ever to come before this Assembly. Her selection should go through without any nonsense politics from members on the other side of the House.

I draw your attention, Mr Speaker, to the unique position of the Opposition on this occasion. If Senator McAuliffe were to retire or fall under a bus in the next couple of months, I ask the Leader of the Opposition whom he would put forward as the ALP nominee. Would he go to Charlotte Street and ask them to submit a name to this Parliament, or would he go to Breakfast Creek and ask for a nomination? When he stood in this Assembly and put forward one name or another, what would his fellow members do? Which way would they go? I predict that they would be divided all over the Chamber. Half of them would back the old guard and the other half would back the new guard.

That is the position that the Leader of the Opposition would be in if he tried to put forward an ALP nominee in a situation similar to this. The Leader of the Opposition is in a unique position. If there is one thing he should do it is to sit there and remain silent tonight. But he has not enough nouse for that; he has not enough brains. We are perfectly used to the situation that the Leader of the Opposition finds himself in.

A Government Member: Would you say he was two-faced in that situation?

Mr LANE: He has been two-faced ever since he was expelled from the Labor Party several years ago. That is the position of the Leader of the Opposition in this Assembly. Whom would he put forward? Look at the Opposition back-benchers today to see who is here to support him in his Opposition to the Premier's nominee. Where is Tom Burns tonight? Is he having more trauma and staying out of the Chamber? He used to be a prominent front-bencher, and he is still the Opposition's leading spokesman. Is he here tonight to support the Leader of the Opposition? He has not even appeared in the Chamber. Where is the honourable member for Rockhampton tonight?

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr LANE: I see an honourable member sneaking back into the Chamber like Yogi Bear, but where is the very prominent member for Rockhampton? He is not here tonight. Why all this mystery? Obviously the Opposition ranks are split tonight. How can the Opposition have any credibility in arguing about the nomination made quite properly by the Premier tonight?

Every party in this Assembly has a legitimate right to stand on its beliefs on this occasion. The National Party submitted three names to the Premier, including that of the Senator-elect Mrs Bjelke-Petersen. There is no requirement under the Constitution or the laws governing this Parliament concerning the submission of a number of names. The Premier contrived to put forward three names to this Parliament. He did that to give people a choice. There is no constitutional obligation on him to do that, yet he did it. Honourable members opposite can vote for any of the other nominees. In fact, they can choose their own nominee. Mr Casey might like to nominate Nick Bos or Neil Kane from the old guard.

A Government Member: Or Arch Bevis?

Mr LANE: He is getting a bit old and tattered, but the ALP might like to nominate him.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr LANE: The honourable member for Brisbane Central would like to nominate Arch Bevis. He can do that, and the Leader of the Opposition can nominate Neil Kane. Who will the members of the new guard in the Opposition nominate? Will they nominate Peter Beattie or Denis Murphy, wig and all? Let the Opposition put forward its split proposition tonight before it dares to criticise what the Government is doing on this occasion.

It is ridiculous to expect a knowledgeable contribution from a person who would sit in the Senate for only three months. It surely follows that it would be good to have a continuing senator, a full-time senator, who would benefit from the extra experience.

There is nothing wrong with the Bjelke-Petersens despite the way the people opposite would like to besmirch them. It is quite a distinguished Queensland family. They have just as much right, liberty and standing as anybody else to be put forward for election as senators or to have their names put forward in this place.

Over the years I have had my differences with the Premier. They have been acknowledged in the Press on many occasions. I will probably have more. But the Premier has equal rights with some of the stooges in the Labor Party.

It is absolutely puerile to canvass superannuation benefits that might accrue to Mrs Bjelke-Petersen. A flaw in the Federal scheme is not of her making, and it is in Canberra that corrective action could be taken if someone wished to take it. The ALP does not want to do it. The Labor Caucus in Canberra had a meeting about the subject and said that it accepted things the way they are. The hypocrisy of the group who sit opposite us tonight has become self-evident once again.

Mr Hansen: How many voluntary confessions did you ever gather?

Mr LANE: That is the first time in three years and three months that the honourable member for Maryborough has dared to interject on me, and I am rather pleased that he did. He is such an inadequate member for the city of Maryborough that he is unknown in that city. I had the opportunity of visiting Maryborough recently. I referred to Brendan Hansen and the people said, "Brendan who?" That is what they said in Maryborough. He has never been heard of. In fact he called a public meeting in the Civic Centre the day that I was in Maryborough recently and 40 people attended. In fact, it was only half the entire Labor Party branch membership in that city who attended the meeting.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The meeting will come to order or a lot of members will not be here to cast their votes.

Mr Kruger: Put a ring in Lane's nose.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Murrumba under Standing Order 123A.

Mr LANE: I understand that the honourable member for Maryborough had to pay half of those people to go to his public meeting so he could tell them the usual lies and mischief that he engages in to try to cover up his own inadequacies. I was able to go round that city only a fortnight ago and tell them how inadequate he is in this Chamber. I do not know how he collected his salary in Canberra. I would not give him a feed on the end of a shovel.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr LANE: He has had his go and he did not do very well. He should sit there quietly.

Anyone who is returned to Parliament, whether it be the Lower House or the Upper House, must stand on his own feet. Anybody who has heard an address by the person nominated on this occasion will know that she is quite adequate for the occasion. She will be able to match up to the situation; there is no problem about that. Parliament is a great leveller. This is where we are all tested. We have an equal opportunity, one against the other. This is where we can all rise to our feet. The same applies in the Senate. I would be very surprised if Mrs Bjelke-Petersen is not better than some of the characters from Melbourne and Sydney

who so often work against Queensland. Anyway, that is another matter. We will see how history unfolds.

The Liberal Party had every right to field a Senate team and we did just that. We did not win the fifth seat and we should accept it. As I said earlier, we should be gracious about it. Our peers decided against us on the last occasion, and this in no way can be construed as an indictment of our position in running a candidate. We offered the people of Queensland a choice, and they made their choice. It will be a poor day for democracy if constraints can be imposed on the adoption of a choice of action by a party as part of a coalition. Every political party worth its salt is entitled to aspire to goals set out in platforms and policies, and the respect that it can stand up and be counted in a proper election.

The Liberal parliamentary party and organisation will never accept blame for the loss of a senatorial position in the last election. We gave the people a free choice. We stand by our right to seek the confidence of the people and to have them vest in us the major responsibility of leadership in Government and a stronger team in the Senate. This applies to every political party. So when in this debate we join practising traditions with political practice there should really be little room for difference. Inevitably at some time in the future there will be a casual Liberal Senate vacancy and, God forbid, there will be a Labor vacancy for one section or another of that party.

I would expect this meeting to observe tradition and make the selection with dignity and in justice. As I said, this is a time to be gracious in politics, and those who do not recognise it by instinct are political fools.

Mr HARTWIG (Callide) (8.21 p.m.): I would like to pass my opinion of the nominations submitted to this meeting by the management committee of the National Party. At the last State conference of the National Party of Queensland held at Surfers Paradise we sorted the sheep from the goats.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr HARTWIG: The name of Mrs Bjelke-Petersen was among those nominated to be candidates in the coming Senate election. The candidates were asked to make a speech and voting then took place. I want to record the fact that although a lot of people here tonight are supporting Mrs Florence Bjelke-Petersen, at that conference there were only two National Party members of Parliament who saw fit to support her. It was said later that Mrs Bjelke-Petersen won handsomely and was endorsed as a candidate for the Senate election, but I want to place on record that I was one of those who supported her that night at the Gold Coast.

Mr Hooper: Why didn't Joh put you in the Cabinet?

Mr HARTWIG: It apparently did me little good, because I did not make the Cabinet.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The meeting will come to order.

Mr HARTWIG: There are a lot of rabble-rousers over there, Mr Speaker, but as the Premier said that night at the Gold Coast, this is a serious matter. I ask again: How many National Party members of Parliament stood up as I did that night and supported Mrs Bjelke-Petersen? I repeat that it did me no good when it came to the selection of Ministers. I in no way hold the Premier responsible for the selection of Ministers; I lay the blame fairly and squarely on the State management committee who, subsequently, have tried to direct the Premier of this State to put forward another nominee in lieu of Mrs Bjelke-Petersen.

I for one will not cop that sort of treatment. I back the Premier to the hilt when he says that this is hypocritical and that it is something that must not be allowed to intrude into State politics. Surely we as the elected representatives in this coalition Government, and not any management committee, have the right to submit the names of the people we think are suitable to go to Canberra. I for one will not be directed by outside influences. Outside influences destroyed the Labor Party, and they also destroyed the Liberal Party. They will not destroy the National Party. The Premier had every right this evening to nominate those people he wishes to send to Canberra, and it is up to us to back him to the hilt.

I for one will not be dictated to by outside influences. As for one of the other nominations, the fellow named Robertson from Rockhampton—I would not feed him peanuts in goal because he was one of those responsible for keeping me out of Cabinet. I have been wanting to say that, and I say it here tonight. He spoke against me in the management committee; he spoke against me at every opportunity he had.

All I do is ask this Chamber to vote for one person, and she is a leading lady in Queensland, Mrs Florence Bjelke-Petersen. I believe that in her we have a lady who knows Queensland possibly better than anyone in this Chamber. She has travelled widely over this State. She has visited all the major centres and many outback centres. She has met country people and understands their problems. She has the knowledge that we want the person we send to Canberra to have. That is the theme that I used in my talk at the State conference on the Gold Coast, and the Premier thanked me for it.

As far as I am concerned, it is the Premier's wish that counts. Nobody takes away from the Premier the right to decide matters in this Parliament and in this Government. He is elected as leader and we, as the elected representatives, have every

right to support him. I will not be dictated to in any shape or form, and I have the courage to come here and say that.

All I say is: congratulations, Mr Premier, on resisting the other names; you stood firm. Tonight we will see Mrs Florence Bjelke-Petersen sent to Canberra.

Mr HARPER (Auburn) (8.27 p.m.): I rise to support the nomination of Mrs Florence Bjelke-Petersen because there is only one logical choice that this State can make in selecting its representative to send to Canberra. She is the person the people of this State elected to go to Canberra to serve for the next six-year term. Logically the nomination must be Mrs Bjelke-Petersen.

In saying that I support her I echo the voice of the National Party organisation because at its constitutional meeting it put forward the name of Mrs Bjelke-Petersen as its first choice, and it put forward the names of Mr Robertson and Mr Powne as its other choices.

I will not sit in this Chamber and hear the National Party organisation or the people who work for it denigrated. I heard my colleague the member for Callide denigrate men who have spent their own money and time in working for people such as him and in giving him their full support. I will not sit here and listen to these people or the National Party organisation being denigrated. As I said in the House this afternoon, that organisation does not dictate to its parliamentary representatives. It gives them the right which apparently the honourable member for Callide exercised at the conference on the Gold Coast.

Mr Hartwig interjected.

Mr HARPER: There was no need to perform an act.

The National Party organisation has never, and never will, tell its parliamentary representatives how to vote. All members have the right to put forward their views to the organisation, and the organisation makes representations. The nomination by the National Party organisation suggested to the parliamentary party was Mrs Bjelke-Petersen, Mr Robertson and Mr Powne. Quite rightly the parliamentary National Party elected to put forward Mrs Bjelke-Petersen, Mr Robertson and Mr Powne and the National Party organisation supports the Premier to a man.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (8.30 p.m.): It probably comes as something of a shock to remind ourselves that the events in which we are taking part tonight are somewhat historical.

Opposition Members: Hysterical.

Mr INNES: The words "dignity" and "grace" have also been used, and that probably comes as something of a shock to the people who are watching these proceedings.

One has to remind oneself that this is the first time that this Parliament has met to fill a casual vacancy under the most recent amendment to the Commonwealth Constitution. In itself it is a remarkable thing that the Constitution was amended by referendum, and that that referendum in fact introduced party politics for the first time into the Constitution. The realities are that the amendment clearly made it the prerogative of parties to take part in these proceedings. It leaves us to choose, and I assume that word would indicate normally the right to make a decision between one and others. While it uses the word "choose" it also says that if between the date of election or choice by this Parliament and the date of taking a seat that person is no longer a member of a party, then that appointment becomes void and another appointment has to take place.

In reality what it anticipates is the possibility of a party disendorsing or expelling a person in consequence of an unpopular decision by the Legislative Assembly. In that eventuality one wonders why the word "choose" is still available to the Legislative Assembly of each State. Perhaps it is because in their wisdom those who drew up these amendments in fact foresaw what happened to the Queensland Labor Party, that is the possibility of two alternatives and two choices between two people claiming to be the legitimate arm of a political party.

In the end result we are not talking about personalities; this is not a re-run of the last Senate election in Queensland. The situation of the Liberal Party, as I understand it, and the situation of the Labor Party as it should be, although it is carefully masked by the rhetorical comment and abuse of the Leader of the Opposition, is that the majority of the persons in this House accept the right of a party to nominate the person of its choice to fill a casual vacancy in the Senate. One would have thought that short of grave grounds on which a person should be impeached, it is the choice of the party, irrespective of whom that person is, who should fill a casual Senate vacancy.

The parliamentary National Party has made three nominations. It appears that there is some uncertainty as to the sex of the third nominee, who has been variously described as Mr or Mrs Powne. Some black marks have been drawn against the second person, but it is clear there is no doubt that the Premier as the principal representative of the National Party of this State has put forward the first choice of the National Party, and the first choice happens to be his wife. That makes this an even more historic occasion. The matter is not a re-run of the election or a consideration of the merits of any one of those candidates; it is a question of which is the choice of the National Party and what is our respect, not only for convention but also for the Constitution as amended. The Constitution says that the party is entitled to nominate the person it wants to fill its own casual Senate vacancy.

In this case the nomination is Mrs Bjelke-Petersen, and that is the one that we all say we support.

It is unfortunate that Mrs Bjelke-Petersen and others have had to watch the careful obfuscating—the hiding—of those issues by all the personal exchanges that have taken place tonight. One can only assume that it is with great relief that Mrs Bjelke-Petersen realises that she is going to Canberra, not staying in Queensland.

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police) (8.35 p.m.): I wish to make my contribution to the debate by saying that I support the nomination of the Honourable the Premier and the choice of Queensland in the selection of a senator to be sent to Canberra if for no other reason, I suppose, than this: I remind him that at one time she worked for the Main Roads Department. In those circumstances, I believe I have to rise in my place and make a contribution.

I believe that on this occasion we will, as one honourable member has already said, see history made. It will probably be a unique decision when the unanimous vote, as I predict, of this Parliament supports the nomination of the Honourable the Premier. I listened to the debate carefully and I understand that the Labor Party is honouring the decision of the Federal Parliament and is not putting forward a candidate.

I gather from the Liberal members who have spoken that they are adopting the same attitude. This is something we have to appreciate. Irrespective of our attitudes and thoughts about the Legislature as it stands in Canberra—Federal Parliament—and the mistakes made in the past, it has been decided that a nominee of the party concerned should be the one sent to Canberra from the State where the vacancy occurs. Here we find ourselves on this occasion with the Honourable the Premier putting forward a choice of names, and in doing so being consistent, because on a previous occasion he asked the Labor Party to put forward a number of names so that this Parliament had its choice. The member for Stafford made the point—and I reiterate it.

Mr Casey: What about in 1971 with the Liberals?

Mr HINZE: Previously, no.

Let us consider what has happened in the media over the last few weeks. The only contribution that I wish to make is to say that here is a person who has made herself available for candidature in the Senate—not of her own choosing; not of the party's choosing. The National Party did not wish to have separate Senate tickets. However, we eventually found ourselves in the position where the National Party had to put forward a Senate ticket. Mrs Bjelke-Petersen at her period in life—and heaven knows, I wouldn't know why—made herself available to stand for the party because she believed in Queensland and because she believed she had the things that were necessary to represent the National Party in the Federal Parliament. The people of Queensland in a very definite way indicated their choice by supporting her very strongly.

She has gone through all that. We now find that, with a vacancy occurring in the Senate, she is being supported in the Parliament this evening. Prior to this evening's meeting, the news media tried to introduce an argument about superannuation. This is something that has been the result of action by the Federal Parliament, acting in its wisdom or otherwise, to the effect that if a person serves three terms in that Parliament he or she qualifies for some superannuation benefits. Knowing Mrs Bjelke-Petersen and her interests, I do not think she had any consideration whatsoever for superannuation benefits.

As you know, Mr Speaker, I took a very active part in the by-election in the McPherson electorate. I was disturbed and concerned when I found that Senator Sheil indicated that he was again available for reselection after he stood for the McPherson seat. I do not believe that the man did not know what his superannuation benefits were. I will not accept that anybody in this Parliament or in the Federal Parliament does not know what the superannuation benefits are. When anybody tries to put that across Australians, it takes a little bit of swallowing. Let us consider that very carefully. Having said all those things, I say that the lady goes forward without a blemish from our point of view—from the party's point of view or the Parliament's point of view. I predict that on this occasion there will be a unanimous vote by all elected members of this Parliament—and they will not be just carrying out the wishes of party organisations.

People who have been elected to represent the various electorates in Queensland will vote unanimously for the person who, in their opinion, is best qualified to represent Queensland in the Senate. We can take it for granted that Mrs Bjelke-Petersen will not be in Canberra just putting her hand up. She will be looking after Queensland's interests. Isn't it about time?

You know, Mr Speaker, how hard I have worked to get money for roads in this State. I have waited a long time for a Federal member to say, "Well, why don't you give the Minister for Main Roads some assistance and give him the funds he is entitled to for road construction in Queensland?" If Mrs Bjelke-Petersen is elected, there will be a change. That is what I am looking forward to. This vote will make history. It will put the news media where they rightly belong. We are sending Mrs Bjelke-Petersen to Canberra.

Motion (Mr Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! As presiding officer, I have to inform members that the motion has been carried and that Mrs Florence Isabel Bjelke-Petersen has been elected to fill the vacancy in the Senate of the Parliament of the Commonwealth.

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (8.41 p.m.): I thank all honourable members sincerely for their remarks and their support.

I now move—

"That Mr Speaker inform His Excellency the Governor that Florence Isabel Bjelke-Petersen has been chosen to hold the place in the Senate of the Parliament of the Commonwealth rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator Glenister Sheil."

Motion agreed to.

The meeting concluded at 8.42 p.m.