

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 4 AUGUST 1982

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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 Bundaberg Harbour Board for the year ended 30 June 1981.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamations under—

Marine Parks Act 1982

State Transport Act 1938-1981

Orders in Council under—

State Transport Act 1938-1981

Queensland International Tourist Centre Agreement Act 1978

Public Service Act 1922-1978

State Development and Public Works Organization Act 1971-1981 and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act 1923-1979

State Development and Public Works Organization Act 1971-1981

Police Act 1937-1980

Regulations under—

Public Service Act 1922-1978

Police Complaints Tribunal Act 1982

Reports—

Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission for the year ended 30 June 1981

Second Interim report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Drug Trafficking.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Delegations of Authority: Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police; and Minister for Employment and Labour Relations

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (11.3 a.m.): I desire to inform the House that on 22 July 1982 the Deputy Governor, for and on behalf of His Excellency the Governor, by virtue of the provisions of the Officials in Parliament Act 1896-1975, authorised and empowered—

(a) The Honourable William Angus Manson Gunn, MLA, Minister for Education, to perform and exercise all or any of the duties, powers and authorities imposed or conferred upon the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police by any Act, rule, practice or ordinance

(i) in his capacity as Minister for Local Government (other than in respect of matters relating to racecourses and racing and betting); and

(ii) in his capacity as Minister for Main Roads;

(b) The Honourable Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, MLA, Premier, to perform and exercise all or any of the duties, powers and authorities imposed or conferred upon the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police by any Act, rule, practice or ordinance

(i) in his capacity as Minister for Police; and

(ii) in respect of matters relating to racecourses and racing and betting on and from 25 July 1982, and until the return to duty of the Honourable Russell James Hinze, MLA.

I also desire to inform the House that on 29 July 1982 His Excellency the Governor, by virtue of the provisions of the Officials in Parliament Act 1896-1975, authorised and empowered the Honourable Terence Anthony White, BA, PhC, MLA, Minister for Welfare

Services, to perform and exercise all or any of the duties, powers and authorities imposed or conferred upon the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations by any Act, rule, practice or ordinance on and from 4 August 1982 and until the return to Queensland of the Honourable Sir William Knox, MLA.

I lay upon the table of the House copies of the Queensland Government Gazettes of 24 and 31 July 1982 containing the relevant notifications.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the Queensland Government Gazettes on the table.

Annual Report of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation for the Year Ended
30 June 1981

Hon. J. A. ELLIOTT (Cunningham—Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts) (11.5 a.m.): The House will recall that on 23 March 1982 I tabled the annual report of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation for the year ended 30 June 1981, such report having included in it on the last page a statement of income and expenditure for the financial year 1980-81.

On my motion the House ordered that the report be printed, and it was subsequently circulated in the normal manner to the customary recipients—MLAs, Government departments, the Press, libraries, etc.—as a parliamentary paper.

It is regrettable that the financial statement referred to and the Auditor-General's certificate as appended thereto in the report contained some minor inaccuracies. Although such inaccuracies are of no great significance, it is necessary that I seek leave of the House to withdraw the report and present a substitute report containing a completely correct financial statement with the appropriate certificate as given by the Auditor-General appended to that substitute statement.

I have consulted with the Auditor-General in this matter and he has signified that the financial statement and Auditor-General's certificate included in the substitute report are correct in all respects.

As I have said, it is regrettable that these inaccuracies existed. However, because of the need for such statement to be completely accurate it is necessary for the House to approve the remedial action required to meet the situation.

I therefore seek leave to move a motion without notice.

(Leave granted.)

REPORT OF QUEENSLAND TOURIST AND TRAVEL CORPORATION

Withdrawal of Report and Rescission of Resolution for Printing

Hon. J. A. ELLIOTT (Cunningham—Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts): I move—

“That the report of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation for the year ended 30 June 1981 be withdrawn and the resolution of the House to print it be rescinded.”

Motion agreed to.

PAPER

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

Report of Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation for the year ended 30 June 1981.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Media Reports on “Melbidir” Trip to Torres Strait Area

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (11.13 a.m.): Recently there has been considerable criticism levelled at me and it is my intention to correct, at least for the record, the great mass of untruths, half-truths, innuendo and speculation over my visit in the “Melbidir” to Torres Strait last month.

As Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs, I chose to make another of my regular visits to various Torres Strait islands, and invited the Honourable Vic. Sullivan, MLA, a former Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs, to accompany me, along with members of my parliamentary committee. Unfortunately, because of prior commitments, only four were able to accept and, of the four acceptors, two subsequently were unable to participate. In their place, I invited four prominent citizens—three from Brisbane and one from Roma.

It should be clearly understood that provisioning of the islands is the responsibility of the Island Industries Board, which has three other vessels to service them. The "Melbidir" is a departmental unit for administrative duty and acts only in a supportive role to the board's vessels.

Therefore, let me make it perfectly clear that the trip by the "Melbidir" from start to finish was a normal, routine administrative trip to the islands. Any suggestion that the boat was "taken over" by me and my party for the purpose of a fishing trip is a complete figment of imagination and a slur on me, officers of my department, and the captain of the "Melbidir"

At no time did I make any secret of the trip; it was just another in a series of several that I have made in the company of various people in order to maintain close liaison with the Islanders. I have used these trips to discuss matters of common interest with the elected councillors and their people, to explain the Government's new legislation, and to encourage them to give us their views and ideas for the future so that they can take a greater part in managing their own affairs. The itinerary for the trip was to all intents and purposes a public document, and it was, in fact, the ABC's public affairs program "Nationwide" which first mentioned the trip, followed a couple of days later by a "Courier-Mail" story headlined "Cruise with a catch to it?" The item also queried the presence of Mr Sullivan on the trip.

When that story appeared on 9 July, almost four clear days before the "Melbidir's" sailing time, I was in North Queensland and Mr Sullivan was in Melbourne. However, through our respective Press secretaries, we were able to inform "The Courier-Mail" about the purpose of the trip, namely, to consult with the people about their conditions and proposed services legislation covering Aborigines and Islanders which is being developed in consultation with the people concerned for presentation to Parliament. Far more importantly, to my way of thinking, both Mr Sullivan and I made absolutely no secret of the fact that we would probably do some fishing in our leisure-time. We pointed out that there are no drive-in movies on the islands—nor is there TV—and that our itinerary included a full week-end in the strait. What else would one do for leisure? Mr Sullivan went further and declared that it would be insulting people's intelligence to say we would not be fishing.

So, on Saturday, 10 July, "The Courier-Mail" published a further story under the heading "Nothing 'fishy' about Cruise!" That same day, Saturday, 10 July, while on an official engagement at Tully, I spoke on the telephone to "The Sunday Mail's" Ric Allen and told him that the TAB Chairman, Sir Edward Lyons, and certain private citizens were also going on the trip but would be meeting their own air fares and accommodation at Cairns. Despite all this, the big guns of Queensland Newspapers remained firmly trained on the "Melbidir". Regardless of the strongest statements by me and Mr Sullivan, our inspection, liaison, and fact-finding trip was now unfairly and permanently saddled with the tagline "fishing trip".

Throughout the ensuing week the media, spearheaded by "The Courier-Mail", mounted a vicious campaign of character assassination against me, Mr Sullivan and, to a lesser extent, Sir Edward Lyons. Almost gleefully it published calls for my sacking and Mr Sullivan's removal from the deputy leadership of the parliamentary National Party, and reported that the party itself was planning to sack Sir Edward as one of its trustees.

Naturally enough, this sort of sensational, hysterical journalism prompted the stirrers in the north to get on the bandwagon, and over the radio we heard absurd stories about how my "commandeering" of the "Melbidir" for a "fishing trip" had deprived some islands of badly needed stores, and Senator Keeffe claiming that neither I nor the Government had any rapport with Aborigines or Islanders. What rot! The crew of the "Melbidir" put ashore thousands and thousands of kilos of fuel and supplies to the islands on the trip, and those that were not serviced on this particular run got their supplies from an alternative vessel, which is quite normal and routine. As for Senator Keeffe's allegations about lack of rapport—I will stand on my track record of almost two years in this portfolio.

Mr Speaker, the aspect which I find so distressing of the metropolitan media's treatment of this particular trip is its reluctance to make any use whatsoever of the material issued from day one of the trip through to our return to Thursday Island on 17 July. Here was a day-by-day catalogue of our activities at Bamaga, on Yorke Island, on Yam Island, on Stephen Island and on Mabuiag Island. My statements covered legislation and developmental changes, comments on the future life-styles and standards of Aboriginal and Islander people, the increase of tourism on Cape York Peninsula and the protection of Aboriginal relics, the development of organised cultural tourism and the role of the Bamaga Residential College and its courses. I issued statements dealing with a desire to see the Islanders obtain fishing rights, the role of the Yorke Island freezer plant as a regional headquarters of the island fishing industry and a promise to try to expedite finality of the treaty between Australia and Papua New Guinea on the use of border waters. I spoke about the desirability of consolidating the fishing industry so that people would not have to leave the islands and go to the mainland in search of work. I spoke of land tenure and the safeguards of the concept of deeds of grant in trust. I reminded the Islanders of the unswerving support they had received from our Premier and this Government when Mr Whitlam promised half the Torres Strait Islands to Papua New Guinea in the 1970s, and I reassured them of our continuing support for their traditional life-styles.

How much of all this appeared in the city Press or in radio or TV bulletins? Precious little, if any—and why? Of course, it would have spoilt the "fishing trip" angle! However, thanks to ABC radio—our only link with the mainland for a week—we were able to hear my statements in news bulletins from time to time and realise that our efforts had not all been in vain.

Little did we realise that while all this was going on the media were gearing up for an all-out assault. Despite the fact that Mr Sullivan and I had told the media we would, if possible, do some fishing, they just had to see us at it—but at what a price! Having flown from Brisbane to Thursday Island, a two-man team from "The Courier-Mail" chartered a helicopter to locate the "Melbidir" off Mabuiag Island. It was six o'clock on Friday afternoon when they eventually hovered low enough over an Islander's privately owned dinghy to get a shot of us with lines over the side.

Mr Moore: Note the time—6 o'clock, not the middle of the day.

Mr TOMKINS: Yes, I remind honourable members that it was 6 o'clock on a Friday afternoon, after hours of tramping over hot tropical hillsides, a time when most blokes have gone to the pub, are heading off to the beach for the week-end, or generally relaxing in a hundred different ways.

And what a song and dance was made of it! Saturday's headlines screamed, "These Government fact-finding missions are sheer hard work" and "How we found them" Good God, the crayfishing fleet was at anchor in the harbour and the crews were ashore relaxing after the day's work! How long had we been lost? Not at all.

It was this performance by the news team that led me to release my mini-Watergate statement the following morning, and here and now I express thanks to "The Sunday Mail" for publishing it in full. To the best of my knowledge, that was the first time in a week that metropolitan readers would have had any official information of what we had actually been doing.

Back at Thursday Island on Saturday afternoon, the media were at it again with cameras and microphones at the ready as we pulled into the jetty. By lunch-time on Sunday there were no fewer than ten newsmen on Thursday Island, and I can tell honourable members that we did not shirk any of them. And why should we? We had nothing to hide.

But, Mr Speaker and honourable members, just think of the cost of the exercise to the media. Return air fares, Brisbane-Thursday Island-Brisbane for at least 10 men at around \$750 a head, a couple of hours charter fee on a helicopter—which, incidentally, is about \$400 an hour, accommodation on Thursday Island, incidentals and drinks. What a hell of a price to pay to get a few pictures of what we told them was going to happen anyway! And within a week of this wild extravagance by the media "The Courier-Mail" increased its price by a massive 25 per cent. It was almost prophetic that I said in my Saturday Press statement that somebody should mention these things at the next shareholders' meeting. Heaven only knows what the ordinary man in the street thinks about it all.

On returning to Brisbane on the night of 19 July, we once again faced a barrage of TV cameras and media reporters, but it seemed that our explanations were not wanted or heeded. Two days later, the "Telegraph" editorial was still talking of Mr Sullivan and me as "hosting a week-long jaunt through the Torres Strait Islands on a Government vessel, at public expense and at no little inconvenience to the Islanders whom the vessel is supposed to serve". These allegations had clearly been answered days before, but that did not worry the "Telegraph".

As for the amount of fishing we did—I tell honourable members that the total time spent fishing was no more than eight hours out of the six days we were aboard the "Melbidir", and all outside normal working hours—if there is any such thing for a Minister of the Crown. Most of the fish was eaten at normal meals on the vessel by all on board.

In terms of cost, I have already said that each of the privately invited people met return air fares and overnight accommodation at Cairns on the night of 11 July. They were guests while on board the "Melbidir" and at the hostel on Thursday Island, as is normal practice.

I take this opportunity to thank Mr Sullivan for accompanying me on the trip, and for the contribution he made to the official engagements at each place we visited. I thank him also for the interest he showed in progress that has been made in many aspects of island life, and particularly his concern for the fishing industry. I say the same for other members of the party who were able and willing to participate in the activities of the trip.

In conclusion, may I say that in the 15 years I have been a member of this House, I cannot recall any honourable Minister or member being subjected to the same unwarranted media viciousness and malevolence as that levelled against me and Mr Sullivan, particularly by "The Courier-Mail". It was quite obviously concocted by elements which find a ready ally in this section of the media. Honourable members will recall that late last year Mr Sullivan gave vent to his feelings about certain media people in a ministerial statement, and I now heartily endorse every word he said: I simply add this thought: trial by the media has no place in our way of life.

Let me say that in regard to this voyage of the "Melbidir" or any other: my conscience is clear. Nothing occurred for which I or any member of my party owes any apology to anyone. I did my job as I believe it should be done, as I always have: in the best interests of the people, of this great State of ours, and of Australia. So that honourable members will be able to see that the suggestions made by the Press are incorrect, I table the report on the trip.

Whereupon the honourable gentlemen laid the report on the table.

DEATHS OF HON. SIR SEYMOUR DOUGLAS TOOTH, MRS E. V. JORDAN
AND MR A. DOHRING

Motion of Condolence

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (11.25 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Honourable Sir Seymour Douglas Tooth, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland and Minister of the Crown, Mrs Ellen Violet Jordan, AM, and Alfred Dohring, Esquire, former members of the Parliament of Queensland.

2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the families of the deceased former members the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss they have sustained."

Sir Douglas was born in 1904 in Barcaldine and educated in the Queensland State school system and at the University of Queensland. In his youth, it seemed likely that he would join the Anglican ministry, and he maintained a close affinity with the Anglican Church throughout his life.

Sir Douglas became a teacher, entering the profession through the pupil-teacher scheme—a form of apprenticeship. Former pupils remember his 40 years' service as the work of a thorough and dedicated man. During that period, Sir Douglas was widely involved with the Teachers Union, holding various branch positions.

Entering Parliament in 1957 as Liberal member for Kelvin Grove, Sir Douglas became one of the group of politicians who laid down a policy of State development that is still continuing and bearing fruit. As a new member in the Thirty-fifth Parliament, he was one of the members on the Government committee set up to investigate youth problems, out of which came pace-setting changes in the maternal-training and the kindergarten systems.

In 1964, Sir Douglas became Health Minister and continued his interest in the well-being of Queensland's burgeoning population through planning the expansion of surgical services from Cairns to Brisbane and inland. Block 7 at the Royal Brisbane Hospital is a tribute to his belief that services to the community in the health area were a paramount need. It was recognised that, while holding a metropolitan seat, he was a man of far-reaching vision, concerned with rural needs and particularly the Channel Country scheme in northern and central Queensland. He often spoke of these matters.

Sir Douglas continued his advocacy of the need for a dual base to the Queensland economy. He realised that, in addition to a rural base, a firmer foundation could be built on our developing secondary industries. He constantly proclaimed these views during his term as Health Minister until his retirement from Parliament in 1974.

His connections with the Anglican Church extended to a practical commitment to the administration of St Marks at Clayfield and St Johns Cathedral in Ann Street. His love of the music at St Johns was well known to many members. Over the years, Sir Douglas worked toward the completion of the cathedral, mainly through his organisation of the Dinner Committee.

Sir Douglas was, during his 11 years as Health Minister, a valued member of the Government. In a private capacity, he was well known as a patron of various enterprises, particularly the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Sir Douglas will be best remembered as one with an unshakable belief in Queensland's future. Much of his life was spent in the promotion of this ideal, which those of us in this Chamber today are continuing.

Sir Douglas is survived by his wife and daughter. Members will regret the passing of Sir Douglas, an articulate and colourful debater on the floor of the House and a man who greatly contributed to the development of this State. On behalf of the Government and, I am sure, all members of this House, I extend condolences to the family of the late Sir Douglas Tooth.

Born in 1913, Mrs Jordan was the second woman to be elected to the Queensland Parliament, being the first woman Labor member. She held the seat of Ipswich West until 1974.

Mrs Jordan was educated in the district she represented. She attended the Brassall State School and the Ipswich Girls Grammar School.

Before her election to Parliament in 1966, she was an alderman of the Ipswich City Council, a position which she relinquished in 1967. Mrs Jordan had long maintained an interest in political activity. She was a national president of the Labor Women's Organisation and also held a wide range of local branch positions.

Her community activities were widespread. She was a patroness of the Ipswich Vice-Regal and Model Bank, and also patroness of the Ipswich Vigoro Association. One of her favourite pastimes was lawn bowls. She was vice-president of the North Ipswich Bowls Club.

The late Vi Jordan will be remembered as a lady who displayed a great sense of purpose and loyalty. She stood up for what she believed in, and based her beliefs on high principles. I am sure that those of us who were associated with her in this House will accept that statement freely.

In June 1976, Mrs Jordan was made a Member of the Order of Australia for her services to local government. She was an active community worker and will be sadly missed by all who knew her and worked with her.

On behalf of the Queensland Government and, I am sure, all honourable members of this House I extend heartfelt condolences to the family of the late member.

Mr Dohring was born in 1896 at Alpha, Queensland, the son of a grazing family. He was educated at the Alpha and other western State schools.

During his early life, he worked for 14 years on his parents' property at Camroo Downs, Augathella, and developed a good knowledge of the land. He was later overseer of Arno Station in the Lower Barcoo, and served as Crown land ranger at Roma from 1939 to 1953, when he was elected to State Parliament as the Labor Party member for Roma.

Mr Dohring served the ALP loyally until the major split in that party, when he joined the Queensland Labor Party as a strong supporter of the then Premier. His parliamentary career came to an end on 2 August 1957.

He again became a Crown land ranger for the Department of Agriculture and Stock, serving in this capacity from 1957 to 1965.

Mr Dohring died on 13 July this year at the Sandgate Freemason's Home, aged 86. Throughout his life, he was an honest, upright and gentle person who served his electorate well. I had the pleasure of being in the House with him, so I can vouch for the fact that he was a very fine man. He was a man of principle who loyally served his leader and the values he espoused.

On behalf of the Queensland Government, and, I am sure, all honourable members of this House, I extend heartfelt condolences to the family of the late member.

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (11.33 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the Premier to express sympathy to the relatives of the late Sir Douglas Tooth, Mrs Jordan and Mr Dohring.

I am very conscious of a close relationship with Sir Douglas Tooth and Mrs Jordan, so their loss is a personal one as well as a loss to the State of Queensland.

Sir Douglas Tooth was a former Minister for Health. He entered Parliament in 1957 and remained as a member for 17 years. For 10 of those years he was in charge of the difficult and demanding Health portfolio. He was a very competent Minister and was loyal to his department, as well as being a man of great compassion and concern. This aspect was not often recognised by the media or by the community.

He was a good administrator. He set a base for the continuation of the public hospitals system and developed a concept of community medicine programs in this State. He served also as the Minister in charge of children's services and prisons and played a large role in the redevelopment of those portfolios.

Above all, Sir Douglas Tooth was a man of great integrity and great personal character, and he placed those qualities very high above every other matter. He was a great debater in the Parliament and his adherence to the procedures of this House and his respect for the Parliament highlighted his actions.

He was a great man for the Liberal Party and was a loyal and dedicated team man. Quite often he was intolerant, both privately and publicly, of those who departed from the unity of a team.

Sir Douglas was loyal and hard-working, and was a determined representative of the private enterprise system. After his retirement from Parliament, he was the first chairman of Brisbane Forest Park. He had great influence on the development of that concept of beautification on the outskirts of Brisbane.

His earlier life was overshadowed by his public life, but he was respected as a professional, highly regarded schoolteacher who not only taught his students well but influenced those in his care to be citizens of the highest levels.

As the Premier has said, Sir Douglas's commitment to his church was a major interest in his life. He thoroughly enjoyed the history of the Anglican Church and had a strong commitment to the standards and values of the church. His ambition to live to see the completion of St John's Cathedral has not been realised, but I hope that his efforts in that regard will be fulfilled as a tribute to his concern.

As a family man, Sir Douglas was, of course, a committed person. His wife was his constant supporter, yet he always maintained her privacy and her interests. Patsy Ann, his daughter, was his pride and he was so very proud of John, his son-in-law, and their family. He often spoke to me of their achievements with dignity and pride as a doting father and a proud and compassionate grandfather.

Doug Tooth was a great royalist, a remarkable scholar, a dedicated parliamentarian and a good friend. His public life stands as a tribute to his love for people and principles, and I express to Lady Tooth and to Dr John and Dr Patsy Ann Quayle and their two children my deepest sympathy at this time.

Vi Jordan was, of course, my political neighbour. She was formerly an alderman in the Ipswich City Council and later the member for Ipswich West from 1966 to 1974. Although we were opposite politically and lived in adjacent electorates, she disregarded this on many occasions to work with me and the late Evan Marginson to enhance the interests and progress of Ipswich and its citizens.

She was a dedicated worker for people, especially pensioners. She was a true supporter of the city of Ipswich and worked beside me with resolute determination to help flood victims in 1974 in a way which earned her great credit.

Vi was a good debater in this House, a keen representative and a most consistent attender to her responsibilities in the city of Ipswich. She rarely missed local functions, especially those associated with culture or sport, and she was a keen supporter of bowls and vigoro and of band music. She was conscientious and dedicated and fought hard for her people in the city that she loved.

In a world of politics where men have numerically outnumbered women, Vi Jordan more than held her own, not because she received sympathy but because she earned respect. She was very much admired since leaving Parliament, especially during her last illness, and her fortitude and happiness were truly indicative of her as a person. On the many occasions on which I visited her during her last illness, she expressed those views consistently.

Her passing has meant the loss of one of Ipswich's famous and respected daughters who gave her time and talents to help people. I extend to her son, Keith, his wife and family my deepest sympathy.

Mr Dohring was unknown to me as a member of this House and as a member of the community. However, from information available to me, he was a very respected member for the seat of Roma. He knew the rural people very well. He understood their requirements and needs and was a very outspoken representative in his quiet and brave way for them. He played a very big role in his party and represented his electorate very well. I join with the Premier in extending to his family my deepest sympathy.

Mr CASEY (Mackay—Leader of the Opposition) (11.39 a.m.): I join with the Premier and the Deputy Premier in this motion of condolence. Motions of this type usually relate to former members who are perhaps unknown to most of us. However, when it relates to contemporaries within the Parliament, it clearly brings home to us the stark realism of life. Hopefully, in the future somebody will be speaking in the same way about us.

Doug Tooth was a gentleman both inside and outside Parliament. He always conducted himself in a thoroughly gentlemanly manner, particularly when he occupied the Health portfolio and he opened, chaired or attended various conferences and assemblies. He had the utmost respect for other members of Parliament and for other persons' points of view. In Parliament, during question-time he would go to great lengths to ensure that he gave a reasoned answer to any question asked of him. In debates he conducted himself well and invariably researched his subjects thoroughly.

As the Deputy Premier said, Doug Tooth was well known in the education sphere. Perhaps more importantly, he played a vital role in the community as a whole. As well as being a Minister of the Crown and a member of Parliament, and having all the onerous duties that go with those positions, he played a significant role as a member of his church and of the Royal Society of St George. Even after his retirement from Parliament he attended functions throughout the State as a representative of that society. Because of his love for his church and that society he was steeped in the traditions of England. That was apparent from his conduct at all times. To some people that does not mean a great deal, but it meant everything to Doug Tooth.

Unfortunately, at the time of his death I was in Canberra attending my party's federal conference, so I was not able to be present at his funeral. If I had been here, I would certainly have attended.

Doug Tooth would always present a rational argument. Any member who approached him as Minister in charge of the Health portfolio and who was able to put forward a rational argument and have it accepted by him found that Doug Tooth would carry the fight for him and, in most instances, carry it successfully.

In recent years Doug Tooth did not enjoy good health. In his retirement, on many occasions he could be found in the Parliamentary Library, deeply absorbed in books, for which he had a great love and from which he gained his knowledge. That was indicative of his studious nature.

Doug Tooth will be sadly missed not only by his loved ones but also by his colleagues in this Parliament.

Vi Jordan also was a contemporary of many of us in this Chamber. She was a long-standing member of the Australian Labor Party. As a relatively young woman, having come from a great Labor family, she began to play a very active role in the affairs of the Labor Party. No doubt other Opposition members will comment on her role in that sphere.

Unfortunately, Vi got caught up in the big tide of change of 1974. At the election at that time she lost what was considered to be a reasonably safe Labor seat. That brought her relatively short parliamentary career to an end. Nevertheless, she will always be remembered in history as the first woman Labor member of this Parliament. I think she may have been the second woman ever to have graced the Parliament of Queensland. As the first woman Labor member, she contributed strongly to debates. She was not a mere addition to the Chamber; she was as efficient and capable in debate as any other honourable member. She was always willing to participate.

Those Labor members who were in caucus with Vi will recall the big crowded room that we had over in Parliament House. The room was occupied by 16 of us. Vi came into it as a woman entering what had been a male stronghold from the day on which the Queensland Parliament was established. She brought great dignity to that room. Daily she would have fresh flowers on her table, and from time to time she would pull into line a few of our fellows who uttered comments and expletives that they were not permitted to use in the Chamber.

She was a tireless worker both for her party and for the people of Ipswich. Within the Labor Party, she enjoyed the great distinction of becoming national president of the Labor Women's Organisation. For a lengthy period she was the driving force behind that organisation in Queensland.

Despite her dedication to the women's movement, she never believed that there were special women's issues. She believed that there were people's issues, and she fought for those issues in this Parliament. She did not want to become involved in special matters relating to women, which other people believed were trendy. She firmly believed that she should become involved in people's issues. To her, equality for women meant equal opportunity for all in a male-dominated society.

Vi was very fond of music and sport. She was also a very active churchwoman within her city. Prior to entering this Parliament, she graced the chambers of local government. Unfortunately, like Sir Douglas Tooth, after she left this Parliament she suffered from very poor health for a number of years.

I join in extending the sympathy of the Labor Party to her son, Keith, and to the other members of her family. Vi will always be remembered by me as being a lovely person. She was a great example to all of us.

I turn now to Alf Dohring, a former member for Roma. I met him only once in my younger days. However, on my travels throughout Queensland, particularly throughout Western Queensland, I learnt that he became something of a legend during his very short period as a parliamentarian. His great knowledge and experience of the West and his long period of service in the Lands Department fitted him well to be a representative of Western Queensland in this Parliament.

As I have said, Alf served in this Parliament for only a very short period. Unfortunately, he also was caught up in the political upheaval that swept Queensland some 25 years ago, and he lost his seat in the Parliament. It is also rather ironic that Alf's original selection as the Labor Party candidate for the area was surrounded by controversy. He certainly left this Parliament surrounded by controversy. However, that did not detract from the way in which he carried out his parliamentary duties.

Alf Dohring invariably did his best, particularly for the people of Western Queensland. His memory will always be cherished by those people.

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (11.47 a.m.): I should like to add my tribute to my friend, colleague, and, in many respects, mentor, Sir Seymour Douglas Tooth. Doug, perhaps more than any other person, influenced my decision to enter politics. He gave willingly of his time, experience, advice and sense of values.

He passed on to many people his deep feeling for the Westminster system as the essence of democracy and his pride in Parliament as the forum where honourable members met their peers, accepted accountability for their actions and, should they be Ministers, answered for their stewardship. In other words, he stood on the principle that Parliament was the ultimate place for democracy to perform, and be seen to perform. He met these standards himself. His answers were detailed and accurate; his use of English was such that the standard of debate was often uplifted and enhanced.

In fact, Doug Tooth was a purist in English. Few of us here will forget his eloquence, his control or his diction. Perhaps his love of our language stemmed, in the main, from the fact that he was a student teacher under the old system at the tender age of 13 years and was still teaching at the Brisbane Central School in 1957. But I like to feel that it was also attributable to his love of England and of Royalty and of all that both stand for.

He was president of the Royal Society of St George. He was insistent that Parliament, of which the Queen is the nominal head, remain a synonym for democracy and be linked with a system that has held the Commonwealth of Nations together for so long.

Doug Tooth was Queensland's longest serving Health Minister. In 1957, the new coalition Government gave top priority to education, above other areas of administration. He agreed but he started planning then. When more money for Health started to become available in the 1970s, he was ready.

In 1974 he introduced a revamped and rewritten Mental Health Act. Most new hospitals which were to be constructed were planned in the Tooth era. Before that, in 1968, he announced the decision on Block 7, at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. There was scepticism and derision. His critics said that it was unnecessary and premature. Doug Tooth lived to see it built, and needed by the community. His dream had been realised.

Doug Tooth became a Liberal by deliberate choice. He grew up at Barcaldine. Virtually everyone there at the time supported Labor. Doug thought that there should be room for an opposing view, so he chose to be anti-socialist—an excellent decision, in my view.

Doug Tooth often suffered at the hands of some shallow-minded members of this House and of some sections of the media. Because of his thoroughness in debate and answer and somewhat deliberate delivery, he found it difficult on occasions to come to grips with modern media presentation. His contributions, therefore, were often not accepted for their intrinsic worth, though I believe that they reflected his sense of propriety and personal integrity. As a result, he was often upstaged in the media by those motivated by catching a cheap headline through scoring a political point rather than by material contribution to the core of the matter at hand. Doug Tooth often jokingly reminded me when commenting on media reference to this style, delivery and presentation that he had been twice as long a schoolteacher as he had a member of Parliament. He was, in my view, the epitome of a responsible Minister in the traditional sense.

Doug Tooth was a staunch Christian, a member of the Anglican Synod, a regular communicant and a driving force behind the Friends of St John's Cathedral.

One of his most noticeable achievements—even though he was not an outdoors man—was the creation of the Brisbane Forest Park. Recent arrivals in this House may not know that it was Doug who first brought this magnificent concept to the notice of Cabinet, and got it off the ground, but everyone now knows we have Australia's greatest national park concept on Brisbane's doorstep—thanks to Doug Tooth.

After his retirement, Doug Tooth was made chairman of the park authority, and I really believe the Government should recognise his foresight and initiative in the form of a cairn or some other suitable memorial within the park.

I still have in my possession a speech made by Dr Gordon Urquhart, Director of Psychiatric Services, on the occasion of Doug Tooth's retirement, and a few paragraphs are well worth repeating today, because they reflect the view of the senior public servants in the department during his time as Minister. Dr Urquhart said on the eve of Doug Tooth's retirement—

“This is the end of an epoch—an epoch memorable not only for outstanding achievement in the field of health care but one which will have far reaching effects because of the extensive, sound and yet innovative plans which Doug Tooth has laid.

No one in the Department can claim to have worked harder or with more zeal and dedication than Doug Tooth.

Sometimes perhaps many of us may have wished he had not set such demanding standards but all will readily admit his personal ministry had much to do with the achievements by which his ministry is marked.

A quality of that ministry often overlooked is the stability which has allowed not only development but consolidation.

One does not have to be a serious student of politics to know that many Ministers bring far more prejudice than knowledge to their portfolios.

It is not uncommon in these days or in the past for very important decisions to be made on political impulse or as a matter of convenience rather than of conscience.

Such decisions are often most disruptive and destructive to logical development.

Throughout his ministry, Mr Tooth has avoided such changes and his department has felt and appreciated the stability he has imparted to it.”

That is the sort of impartial, but discerning, tribute which Doug Tooth earned and deserved. All Ministers should hope the same will be said of them.

Some time ago I asked Doug Tooth what his proudest achievement in life had been. He said, “To have received a commission to serve as one of Her Majesty's Ministers.” No more than that can be added, except to pass on to his widow, Eileen, his daughter, Dr Patsy Quayle, and his grandchildren the sympathy of this House, and of myself, in the loss of a quiet but very proud achiever—and friend.

Mr UNDERWOOD (Ipswich West) (11.54 a.m.): I offer my sincere condolences to Keith, Peg and the Jordan family on the death of Vi Jordan, as well as those of the Australian Labor Party and the people of Ipswich West. I also offer my sincere condolences to the families of Sir Douglas Tooth and Mr Dohring, whom I had never met.

Vi Jordan will go down in history as one of the outstanding members of the Queensland Labor movement and a leading Queensland citizen. Hers was the life of service and achievement, yet of herself she said—

“I was simply a person interested in the community who believed that a woman could do the job as well as a man.”

Her name and reputation are legendary in Ipswich. People who sought assistance or advice were told, “See Vi Jordan. She will help.”

Vi was born in 1913 and attended the Brassall State School and Ipswich Girls Grammar School. She was a keen sportswoman who played representative fixtures. Her love and compassion for her fellow citizens found her involved in community affairs early in life. Active in politics, on 3 February 1949 at the Ipswich Trades Hall, she was nominated by Mrs Welsby and seconded by Mrs Warren for membership of the Australian Labor Party. Her nomination was carried unanimously. Her first Australian Labor Party branch meeting was for the women's committee of the Bremer branch on Thursday, 3 March 1949, at the Trades Hall, Ipswich. At that meeting she wasted no time at all and moved and seconded motions.

The years 1948 and 1949 saw two great struggles and crises for the people of Ipswich, but Vi Jordan was to the fore in helping. In 1949 the great miners' strike occurred and Vi was active working on the distress committee. The great rail strike of some nine weeks' duration occurred in 1948. With others, Vi organised trucks to deliver fruit and vegetables from the markets to the strikers at Trades Hall.

Her activities were not limited to the local community and Australian Labor Party, but extended to State and Federal levels. Vi, as delegate to the 24th Labor in Politics Convention, had the honour of being the first woman elected to serve on the important agenda committee. Later, she was elected national president of Labor women. In 1961 she was elected as an alderman to the Ipswich City Council and in 1967 vacated that office following her election to the Queensland Parliament in 1966. Vi distinguished herself as an alderman and drew on her persistence, compassion, strength and other abilities.

Vi was one of the leaders in the formation of the Labor Women's Organisation of Queensland and in October 1962 entered the plebiscite for the seat of Ipswich West. However, that was won by Mr Ivor Marsden, MLA, Ipswich West. But in 1964 Vi won pre-selection for the seat of Ipswich West and became the first Labor woman to be elected to the Queensland Parliament and only the second woman to be elected to the Queensland Parliament. Her interests were always for the people and the issues that affected their lives: children, women, railwaymen, miners, housing, education, health, equal pay and working conditions, discrimination and so on.

In 1974 she actively led the way in another crisis that hit the people of Ipswich—the Australia Day floods. Many people in the Ipswich West electorate were disastrously affected and her tireless efforts for all of Ipswich were of great comfort and assistance to many.

Ipswich sent the first Labor member to the Queensland Parliament; it also sent the first Labor woman to the Queensland Parliament—Ellen Violet Jordan. In June 1976 Vi was made a Member of the Order of Australia for her services to local government. She did not do the job as well as a man—she did it better. We salute Vi Jordan, the people's representative.

Hon. J. W. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove) (11.59 p.m.): I wish to associate myself with the expressions of sympathy for the families of the late Mrs Jordan and the late Mr Dohring. Unfortunately, I did not know either of them, but their achievements, which have been mentioned in the House this morning, will secure them a place in Queensland's history. They obviously deserve the gratitude of the community.

Sir Douglas Tooth I knew well. I met him for the first time, as did many other Queenslanders, in the middle of an election campaign. I was a schoolboy waiting at a tram stop in Kelvin Grove and Sir Douglas was there meeting his constituents. At that time I did not have a vote, but Doug Tooth believed in catching them young and putting them on the right track early. And that is what he did with me at that tram stop.

The facts of his career have been mentioned. By common recollection, he was a doughty fighter. On the day that he retired from Parliament, Sir Gordon Chalk said of Sir Douglas, "He has never backed away from attack."

My memories of him are not, like those of so many members, of a colleague in this House. I was privileged to succeed him in the seat of Ashgrove, so my recollections of him are those of a loyal friend, an adviser and a political mentor.

I do not think that any new member entering this House could have had a better friend. The usual kindly gestures, the introductions to groups in the electorate and attending to hear the new member's maiden speech one could expect from a man like Doug Tooth, with his extreme courtesy. But the friendship he gave me went far beyond that. He gave me encouragement and advice on a wide variety of topics, and during my first two years in Parliament, whenever the telephone would ring at 7.30 a.m., I would know that Doug was back from his morning walk and wanted to raise something with me and give me the benefit of his advice on some matter which he thought was important to me.

I last saw him in hospital three days before he died. He was a very sick man, but not so sick that he could not find the strength to canvass a few current issues with me and give me his views—and very sound views they were, too.

Those who read Sir Douglas Tooth's speeches in "Hansard" will see a number of recurring themes. Doug took a stand on a number of issues, and he left no-one in any doubt where he stood. He did not chop and change. One of the things that a newcomer to politics finds disturbing is the changeable nature of policies, alliances and people's opinions. Unlike the laws of the Medes and Persians, the laws and politics of Australians are far from immutable. But Doug Tooth was not typical in that respect.

Where he stood today one would find him tomorrow; still soldering on, still arguing. There is an old hymn that reminds me of him, "Fight the good fight with all thy might" and that was Doug Tooth.

He is very reminiscent of John Bunyan's characters in "Pilgrim's Progress" Mr Standfast or Mr Valiant-for-truth, defending the same ideals, pegging away at the same goals day after day, and finally achieving them.

His vision of the future is in his maiden speech in this House. He said—

"... we look forward to the dawn of a new era for Queensland, one in which the frustrations and burdens of bureaucratic tutelage which are inherent in any socialistic approach to the problems of government will be swept away, and in which freedom, within very wide limits, will stimulate self-help and the acceptance of responsibility, and so promote the best interest of all our citizens."

That was his philosophy; a robust philosophy of self-help. The Premier referred to his country background and his first 30 years in the West. Occassionally that crops up in his speeches, together with his robust philosophy of self-help. In one debate, talking of the effect of drought, he said—

"It reminds me of a chap who went onto Nortledge station. After a very severe drought in which he lost almost everything he had, he wrote to the Press about his severe reverses and said that he hoped with the help of God, a stout heart and two bulls to re-establish himself."

That was Doug.

The Minister for Transport has mentioned his central belief in the Crown as the cornerstone of our Constitution and the ultimate guarantee of our liberties.

The Premier has mentioned his service to the Church of England and St John's Cathedral. I would like to add a little to that. He was a regular attender at the cathedral as a member of the congregation. His favourite service was the 6 o'clock Evensong on Sunday evening, and, as my family usually attended the earlier service at 5.15, we often had an opportunity on those occasions to talk to him. The conversation often turned to the completion of St John's. It was an ambition very close to his heart. Characteristically he set out to do something about it. Not only did he chair the committee devoted to the raising of the money but he also devised schemes to make the best use of the money that was there.

He knew that one of the big costs in the past had been the incredibly detailed drawings and meticulous work necessary when the stones were fashioned away from the site. So he devised a practical way of avoiding most of those costs. He suggested that a stonemason and his apprentice could, by fashioning the stones on the site, minimise those expenses. They would fashion the stones there and then so that they could fit. In this way, slowly but economically, he could see a cathedral rising there in the fashion of the Middle Ages. Who knows? Some day that might come about as he foresaw it. Perhaps the tourist attraction of craftsmen building a mediaeval cathedral may so stimulate donations that, one day, we will see its finish.

No tribute to Sir Douglas would be complete without reference to the support and encouragement of his family, particularly Lady Tooth, his daughter, Patsy Ann, his son-in-law, grandchildren and his niece. Our sympathy goes out to them at this time. For ourselves, we remember a loyal colleague and a standfast friend.

I mentioned that he reminded me of Bunyan's character, Mr Valiant-for-truth. It is appropriate to recall Bunyan's concluding words of that character, words that may be used of Sir Douglas. They are—

"My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles who now will be my rewarder." So he passed over and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (12.8 p.m.): On almost every occasion when Parliament resumes after a recess we mourn the passing of friends with whom we have sat in this House or learned about in our travels throughout the political realms of this State. It concerns me that we probably pay our tributes too late. We pay them after those people have gone. Rarely after they leave this House do we think about our mates who were here with us; neither do we go to see them.

In the last couple of weeks before Vi Jordan died I wrote a letter to her. I said that I would like to visit her and discuss old times. I just did not get around to it; I became busy doing other things. The lady who was looking after Vi Jordan wrote to me and said that Vi was in a very bad way. I missed the opportunity of saying "Goodbye" to an old friend. I said it in my letter, but that is not as good as doing it personally.

Today I join with those honourable members who have expressed our compassion and concern for the families of these deceased former members. It is the families who miss out because of the work we do in this House. The families of Doug Tooth, Alf Dohring and Vi Jordan lost something because of their being elected to Parliament. They lost some of the companionship that was due to them because their parents were out on parliamentary business. On many occasions members attend functions in their electorates when they should be at home with their families.

I remember going to Vi Jordan's home as a young organiser when Bill Hayden was starting out as a candidate. For the first couple of nights I slept on the veranda of Bill's house at Redbank, when he was a policeman. Vi invited me to stay at her home. Her husband, Dave, helped cook the meals and get things ready for us. Many other people slept in that back room in Vi's home. I remember Gough Whitlam, Bob Hawke and others sleeping there after Vi had taken them home following meetings. She looked after all of us, fed us and put us out on the road again.

Vi led the fight for women in politics. When we talk about the unsung women we should talk about Vi Jordan and not the Germaine Greers. Vi Jordan's name should go in the record book as one of the people who fought hard for women's rights on her own. Her name should be put ahead of many of the women who will make headlines in the future fighting, arguing and developing the case for women in Parliament.

I saw Vi Jordan take on a male-dominated organisation in the toughest plebiscite I have seen in Ipswich. I ran it for the Labor Party. After the result had been thrown out, I was sent there to re-run it. She suffered abuse from people who came out of hotels, but she stood her ground. She attended many conventions and demanded that women have the same rights as men. She took on people such as Jack Egerton and won. She obtained delegate representation for women on the Central Executive body and the State Conference body. Finally, she won the fight to become a member of Parliament. She did not do that with any assistance or rewriting of the rules. She had the character and courage to stand up and fight for her beliefs. She won on her own.

On a number of occasions I fought with Doug Tooth when he was Minister for Health and I was the shadow Minister. No-one could ask for a more dignified opponent. He believed in what he was doing; he fought for his beliefs. Nobody could ask for more than that.

I met Alf Dohring during the 1956 election. Following the split in the party in 1957, we were no longer friends. The Premier said that he was a quietly spoken man. Doug Tooth was a similar person. In many ways I thought that Doug Tooth was a shy man. He could move along the corridors of Parliament House without anyone realising he was there. I always enjoyed speaking to Doug wherever I met him.

Today I pay a special tribute to Vi Jordan. I extend my sympathy to Keith and his family. I know that the people of Ipswich and the persons by whom she has stood, especially during the strikes when she helped to gather food for people in need, will join with me in those remarks. I remember Vi as a mother to many political figures. She cared for us well and got us back on the road. I also remember the other Vi who had the courage of her convictions and the will to fight for her beliefs. It is pleasing that she finally won her fight and became a member of Parliament. We pay our respects to her today.

I extend my sincere sympathy to the families of these politicians who gave so much to the people of Queensland. Their contribution is not always recognised.

Hon. W. D. HEWITT (Greenslopes—Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services) (12.13 p.m.): The inexorable processes of time and political fortune are such that of the nine new members who came into the Parliament for the first time in 1966, only four of them remain. Vi Jordan was one of those nine. Of the 78 members who were in the House in 1966, 24 are deceased. Vi Jordan and Douglas Seymour Tooth now join that number.

Doug Tooth was a scholarly gentleman and a vigorous debater. He held a passionate belief in his own well-established principles. He spent most of his adult life in politics, in one way or another. It was fitting that he should end his career as a Minister, a position that he filled with great distinction. He supported a number of community organisations, and his contribution to them was never of a perfunctory nature. He was a foundation member of the Sir Thomas Moore Society and, at the time of his death, was its senior vice-president. He enjoyed studying the life of that great man and his principles and tried to relate them to contemporary society. Doug Tooth went to his greater reward full of years, respected by all and with a distinguished career behind him.

Vi Jordan entered this Parliament on 28 May 1966 with Mr Kaus, Mr Miller, Mr Hinze, myself and others who have since left. She was a likeable and friendly lady. She had political opponents; but no political enemies. She worked hard; she debated vigorously; she was an assiduous attender in the House.

Mrs Jordan occupies a small niche in Australian political history, and I seek to remind the House of that today. With me she was appointed to the panel of temporary chairmen. When Mr Lickiss was absent from the State I became the Acting Chairman of Committees. On 10 October 1972 in that capacity I invited Mrs Jordan to take the chair in Committee for the first time. In doing so she became the first woman to preside over an Australian Parliament. Mrs Edna Roper took the chair in the New South Wales Legislative Council on 18 September 1973, so quite clearly it is established that Mrs Jordan holds that place in the history book. I enjoyed reminding her about that. I know that she took quiet pride from the fact that she was the first woman to preside over an Australian Parliament, and it was a matter of some satisfaction to me that I was able to play some part in her filling that role.

I respected her greatly, in the same way as I respected Doug Tooth. The credentials of Mr Dohring are such that he commanded the respect of his colleagues during the years that he was here. I associate myself with the motion of condolence before the House today.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (12.18 p.m.): I support the motion of condolence relative to Sir Doug Tooth and Mrs Jordan, both of whom I knew very well. I served in Parliament with them and regarded both of them as being very fine members of Parliament.

My main purpose in rising is to speak about Alf Dohring, who was a member for Roma years ago. I well remember his entering Parliament by way of a controversial plebiscite. The Leader of the Opposition referred to it, but I shall not deal with it. Let me say that Alf Dohring was a little lucky to be elected to Parliament but after he entered Parliament he made an excellent member. As the Premier said, Alf Dohring was a very sincere person. He would listen to anybody. He did a lot of good.

I remember an occasion on which I sought his help. At the time I was a member of the Bungil Shire Council. The story was that electricity was to be connected to Injune. The shire council bailed up on me; I was not getting my own way. I telephoned Alf Dohring and told him that I would like to see the then commissioner in charge of electricity supply, Mr Neil Smith. I asked Alf Dohring to arrange an appointment. He said he would and that he would come along with me. We went down to Neil Smith's office in Eagle Street, and Neil Smith nearly exploded when I told him that the Bungil Shire Council would not support the connection of electricity to Injune. I said to him, "Unless you give me some information, we won't have electricity." These days things are quite different, but in those days that was the position. Mr Dohring was all for the connection of electricity.

I went back to the shire council, whose members were using their heads—a bit like parliamentarians at times. They said, "No, we will only vote on the matter of electricity for Injune if we have a full council meeting." The point was that always at least one member of the council stayed away from the meetings. The matter dragged on for months. Eventually I succeeded in having a motion carried that the matter would be handled at the subsequent meeting no matter who was missing. Fortunately, the only fellows missing from the next meeting were a couple who were against the proposal, so everything worked out well. I have a lot to thank Mr Dohring for.

I had a good deal of contact with him when he was a land ranger. He was a real old-timer and he always drove a buggy and pair. He had a heart of gold. His wife predeceased him, but he is survived by a daughter. Some time ago she asked me if I could get him into an old people's home at Sandgate. That was the last thing I did for him. Last year I saw him at the members' party. He was a fine old gentleman.

Motion (Mr Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Appropriation Bill (No. 1)

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice:
I move—

“That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the constitution of Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, the receiving of Resolutions on the same day as they shall have passed in those Committees, and the passing of an Appropriation Bill through all its stages in one day.”

Motion agreed to.

RINGING OF BELLS FOR DIVISIONS AND QUORUMS

Sessional Order

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice:
I move—

“That during this session, unless otherwise ordered, and notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders, when a division is demanded or a quorum is required to be formed, the division bells shall be rung for a period of four minutes: Provided that for consequent divisions or after the first division in Committee on the clauses of a Bill, the Chair may order the bells to be rung for two minutes only.”

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Sessional Order

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice:
I move—

“That during this session, unless otherwise ordered, and notwithstanding the provision of Standing Order No. 68, questions may be asked by members without notice being given. The period allowed each day for the asking of questions upon notice and without notice and for the answering of questions shall not exceed one hour and the total number of questions asked by each member shall not exceed three on any sitting day: Provided that this period shall terminate at 12 o'clock noon on the days allotted for the discussion of matters of public interest.”

Motion agreed to.

SITTING DAYS

Sessional Order

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice:
I move—

“That during this session, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for the dispatch of business at 11 o'clock a.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in each week, and that on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and after 1 o'clock p.m. on Wednesdays, Government business shall take precedence of all other business.”

Motion agreed to.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr CASEY (Mackay—Leader of the Opposition): In view of incidents that occurred so far as ministerial conduct is concerned while the House was in recess, and despite the explanation given this morning by the Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs, I seek leave of the House to move that so much of the Standing Orders as is necessary be suspended to allow me to immediately move a motion regarding the urgent need for the appointment of a parliamentary public accounts committee in Queensland.

Question—That leave be granted—put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 24

Blake	Kruger	Underwood
Burns	Kyburz	Warburton
Casey	Mackenroth	Wilson
D'Arcy	McLean	Yewdale
Davis	Milliner	
Eaton	Prest	
Fouras	Scott	<i>Tellers:</i>
Hooper	Shaw	Hansen
Jones	Smith	Vaughan

Noes, 48

Ahern	Hartwig	Prentice
Austin	Hewitt	Randell
Bertoni	Innes	Row
Bird	Jennings	Scassola
Bjelke-Petersen	Katter	Scott-Young
Booth	Kaus	Stephan
Borbidge	Lane	Sullivan
Doumany	Lee	Tenni
Edwards	Lester	Tomkins
Elliott	Lickiss	Turner
FitzGerald	Lockwood	Wharton
Gibbs, I. J.	McKechnie	White
Glasson	Menzel	
Goleby	Miller	<i>Tellers:</i>
Greenwood	Moore	Gygar
Gunn	Muntz	Neal
Harper	Powell	

Pairs:

Gibbs, R. J.	Knox
Wright	Hinze

Resolved in the negative.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee): I seek leave to move the suspension of so much of the Standing Orders as is necessary for me to immediately move a motion regarding the conduct of an inquiry into high electricity tariffs in Queensland.

Question—That leave be granted—put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 23

Blake	Mackenroth	Warburton
Burns	McLean	Wilson
Casey	Milliner	Yewdale
D'Arcy	Prest	
Davis	Scott	
Fouras	Shaw	
Hooper	Smith	<i>Tellers:</i>
Jones	Underwood	Eaton
Kruger	Vaughan	Hansen

Noes, 47

Ahern
Austin
Bertoni
Bjelke-Petersen
Booth
Borbidge
Doumany
Edwards
Elliott
FitzGerald
Gibbs, I. J.
Glasson
Goleby
Greenwood
Gunn
Harper
Hartwig

Hewitt
Innes
Jennings
Katter
Kaus
Kyburz
Lane
Lee
Lester
Lickiss
Lockwood
McKechnie
Menzel
Miller
Moore
Muntz
Powell

Prentice
Randell
Row
Scassola
Scott-Young
Stephan
Tenni
Tomkins
Turner
Wharton
White

Tellers:
Gygar
Neal

Pairs:

Gibbs, R. J.
Wright

Knox
Hinze

Resolved in the negative.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr KRUGER (Murrumba): I seek leave of the House to move that so much of the Standing Orders as is necessary be suspended to allow me to immediately move a motion regarding the immediate establishment of a register of foreign land ownership in Queensland.

Question—That leave be granted—put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 23

Blake
Burns
Casey
D'Arcy
Davis
Fouras
Hooper
Jones
Kruger

Mackenroth
McLean
Milliner
Prest
Scott
Shaw
Smith
Underwood
Vaughan

Warburton
Wilson
Yewdale

Tellers:
Eaton
Hansen

Noes, 46

Ahern
Akers
Austin
Bertoni
Bjelke-Petersen
Booth
Borbidge
Doumany
Edwards
Elliott
FitzGerald
Gibbs, I. J.
Glasson
Goleby
Greenwood
Gunn
Harper

Hartwig
Hewitt
Innes
Jennings
Katter
Kaus
Lane
Lee
Lester
Lickiss
Lockwood
McKechnie
Miller
Moore
Muntz
Powell
Prentice

Randell
Row
Scassola
Scott-Young
Stephan
Tenni
Tomkins
Turner
Wharton
White

Tellers:
Gygar
Neal

Pairs:

Gibbs, R. J.
Wright

Knox
Hinze

Resolved in the negative.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—
“That the House move to item No. 8 on the Business Paper.”

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

“Melbidir” Trip to Torres Strait Area by Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs

Mr CASEY: In directing a question to the Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs, I refer to his attempted whitewash in the House this morning and his failure to justify his fishing trip aboard the “Melbidir”. I refer specially to the statement by the Premier that he ordered the itinerary to be changed to delete uninhabited islands from the tour, and to the contrary statement by the member for Windsor (Mr Moore), who was a member of the touring party, that no such message was received and no changes were made to the program.

Mr MOORE: I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is referring to remarks that I am alleged to have made. He has no proof that I made them. I did not make those remarks, especially in the way in which he has mentioned them.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to accept the denial.

Mr MOORE: I find the remarks offensive and ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr CASEY: I accept the honourable member’s explanation, but I note that he did not deny them in the media when they were published.

I now ask: So that there can be no confusion on this issue, will the Minister tell the House whether such a message was sent, whether it was received, and whether it was acted upon. If so, why were the uninhabited islands included in the tour in the first instance?

Mr TOMKINS: This morning I made a complete statement about the trip, and I believe that I covered every aspect of it.

Mr Casey: You failed.

Mr TOMKINS: The Leader of the Opposition has only to read the statement.

Mr CASEY: This morning the Minister certainly did not give a full explanation of the trip. Those aspects are not dealt with in the copy of the ministerial statement that I have received. I ask him: Of what assistance, other than perhaps in baiting hooks, were the State manager of a bank, the chairman of the TAB (there were no racecourses for him to inspect), a former member of Parliament who certainly shows no sign of wanting to return to this Parliament, and a grazier from Roma? What assistance were those people to the Minister on a tour that he himself described as a normal administrative tour?

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member seems to think that he can take over the House, have a discussion, make accusations and ask questions all at the same time, as if he were conducting a court. The matter of conducting a court might interest him more personally a little later, but he cannot conduct a court in this Chamber.

Mr CASEY: I also ask the Minister: Of what assistance were those people to him on a normal administrative tour? Is he also aware that a seminar of all nurses on the islands in the Torres Strait, whose interest is the good health of those remote and disadvantaged Queenslanders, had to be postponed because of the use of the “Melbidir” by him, the Minister for Commerce and Industry and the other guests on the tour?

Mr TOMKINS: I have no knowledge of that. As I indicated in my statement this morning, I went on a normal, routine trip by the “Melbidir”. The people I invited were guests of mine. I cannot see any more in it than that.

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

Register of Foreign Land Ownership

Mr CASEY: My final question is directed to the Premier. I refer him to the proposed register of foreign land ownership in Queensland and ask: As the Queensland Cabinet, after years of procrastination, has finally taken a unanimous decision in his absence to support the principle, which incidentally has the backing of all three major political parties, will the legislation now proceed with his unqualified support, or will he continue, as he has publicly stated, to block such legislation despite the fact that even his own party president, Sir Robert Sparkes, said recently at his party's conference, "In the final analysis it is a matter for the party and not for one man."?

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: The fact that the Leader of the Opposition and his party support it makes me frightened about it and makes me doubt the wisdom of introducing such a measure. However, the honourable member has been here long enough—or he should have been—to know that the Government will announce at the appropriate time what legislation it will introduce and what legislation it will not introduce. I regret that he has to contain his curiosity, perhaps for some considerable time. Be that as it may, this is not the time to tell the honourable member what will be undertaken by the Government. We can tell him at some other time.

Mary Kathleen, Gunpowder and Monument Mines

Mr BERTONI: I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: In view of the downturn in metal prices and other economic factors and the subsequent announcement of the closure of the mining towns of Mary Kathleen and Gunpowder—and possibly of Monument, which is commonly known as Duchess phosphate—will he advise what assistance the Queensland Government has given, firstly, to the workers and, secondly, to the prevention of the complete destruction of the Mary Kathleen township?

Mr I. J. GIBBS: I am aware of the interest that the honourable member has shown in all the projects in his area and all aspects of their future. The directors of Mary Kathleen Uranium Limited announced in about May 1982 that operations at Mary Kathleen would cease by the end of 1982; that mining operations were scheduled to cease by September 1982; and that the treatment of stockpiled ore was expected to be completed by December this year. Sufficient stocks of uranium oxide (yellow cake) will be accumulated by December 1982 to meet all the current contracts.

Extensive exploration work by the company failed to locate additional reserves of ore of a grade that would justify further long-term contracts. The current spot market for uranium oxide is weak and prices do not justify the continuation of the operation in the short term.

The company is presently discussing with the Government closing down procedures and the long-term rehabilitation of mine and plant site. It is expected that in early 1983 an auction will be held to dispose of the mining plant and equipment, as distinct from the township. I know that great concern has been expressed about the death of the town when mining ceases. Many discussions have taken place and the honourable member has been involved in some of them. I know that he will keep an eye on proceedings. Later this year I intend to visit the area with the honourable member and have further talks with the company about the effect that the closure will have on the people involved. The Government wishes to see whether it can assist those people in any way or give them any guidance.

In relation to the Gunpowder joint venture—a feasibility study on the project to produce 10 000 tonnes per annum of copper cathode by in-situ leaching of the Gunpowder ore bodies followed by solvent extraction and electrowinning has been completed. The project has been shown to be technically sound, which is important, but economic viability requires substantially higher copper prices than are presently available.

The small-scale leaching and cementation operation has been continuing but, because of its scale and low copper prices, has operated at a loss. The company has therefore announced that underground mining activity will cease immediately and that production of copper by cementation will terminate in early September. The mine will then be placed on a caretaker basis with a small staff until such time as confidence in a sustained improvement in copper prices provides the opportunity to recommence the project.

Because the people who work there are specialists and experts in their field, I am sure they will be placed in other employment. The technology that they have worked with in the previous months will stand them in very good stead. The Government will have discussions with the company, and, if necessary, with the union, to see what assistance can be provided by way of co-ordination and co-operation to ensure that no undue ripples occur.

Queensland Phosphate Limited is a subsidiary of Western Mining Holdings. After being on a care-and-maintenance basis for three or four years, the mine re-opened in early 1982 and currently produces approximately 250 000 tonnes per annum. It is interesting to note that at the time of close-down the plant's capacity was 1 million tonnes per annum. The product is shipped via Townsville to Australian and overseas customers. In fact, one shipment went to Korea. If a shortfall occurs from traditional sources, such as Nauru, then operations can be readily geared up to supply the increased markets.

Both the Government and my department will continue efforts to ensure that Queensland gains its share of the market and to ensure that the Queensland Phosphate operation does not fall below the 250 000 tonne capacity. I hope that that capacity can be increased. The important point is that the mine is currently working, and I hope that it will continue to work and eventually gear up to be a very important project.

In the current economic climate, everybody has to work hard to smooth over any rough patches that may arise. We must ensure that those involved in the technical, managerial and other levels of the operation can see that the Government has taken an interest in an endeavour to prevent any undue hardship in the honourable member's electorate.

Health Survey of North-west Queensland

Mr BERTONI: In asking a question of the Minister for Health I refer to a recent health survey carried out by the State Government in the north-west area. Will the Minister advise the purpose of the survey, and when we can expect the implementation of any recommendations arising out of it?

Mr AUSTIN: It is true that officers of my department carried out an extensive survey of North-west Queensland, of which the honourable member's electorate is a part. Under the provisions of the Hospitals Act I commissioned three officers from my department—a nurse, an administrator and a doctor—to carry out a survey not only into hospitals but the whole of the health services provided in the area, including maternal and child health, community health, Aboriginal health and the many other areas looked after by my department.

A report has been prepared and should be in my office within the next day or so. Subsequent to my examination of it I shall take it to Cabinet, and any direction that Cabinet might give in relation to it will be acted upon.

Electricity Tariffs in North-West County Council Franchise Area

Mr McKECHNIE: My question to the Minister for Mines and Energy arises following the Opposition's attempt this morning to move a certain motion, and I would therefore like the Minister to make a statement. Has the Minister agreed to meet a deputation from my electorate comprising electricity consumers who are supplied by New South Wales electricity authorities? How much has the cost of electricity increased in the North-West County Council franchise area in the last 12 months?

Mr I. J. GIBBS: I thank the honourable member for that question because there has been a lot said recently about cheap power and attempts made to produce a climate of opinion among normal everyday people that they and the pensioners are starting to subsidise big industry. I think the short answer is that all the bleatings of some people in this House—

Dr Edwards: He is completely out of step with Mr Cain.

Mr I. J. GIBBS: With Mr Cain, and with Mr Wrان. In fact, I think he might have "ran" out on him.

The truth of the matter is that domestic power users receive something like 42 per cent of the power produced in this State but pay only 40 per cent of the amount charged for all electricity produced. That answers the honourable member's question in very simple terms. Perhaps the honourable member for Nudgee might learn something from the honourable member's question and from the answer to it. As I said, in simple terms, 42 per cent of the power produced is used domestically, but such users pay only 40 per cent of the revenue received, so there is a deficiency there of 2 per cent. It is a pity that the Opposition spokesman tries to denigrate people in industry, particularly those people on the shop floor who really make everything work. They are the people who are supposed to be his friends. He always tries to denigrate them, the mining companies and the people who work in the mining companies. In this State, under the leadership of the Premier and the Deputy Premier, there is a great deal of confidence in the electricity supply industry, in contrast with the position in New South Wales.

The cost of electricity supplied by the county councils in New South Wales has risen this year by something like 60 per cent. It seems to rise almost each month whereas, in Queensland, the Act prescribes that there will be one increase a year, and all people know exactly where they stand.

An article in "The Sydney Morning Herald" of 18 June 1982 reads—

"The State Government has refused to pay its annual financial assistance to country County Councils to help maintain electricity services to rural areas. Farmers in some areas are now facing increases in set charges for the supply of electricity of more than 100 per cent from \$48 a quarter to \$102 a quarter."

That is over and above what they normally pay as a fair, square deal for their electricity. The article continues—

"All tariffs and subsidies were under review and the investigation would be finished by July 1st."

That assistance was stopped without notice and the people were charged more for their electricity. The people living along the Queensland border and in those county councils are suffering. I do not know what will happen concerning electricity tariffs in New South Wales.

Dr Edwards: Those people want the border shifted south.

Mr I. J. GIBBS: Yes, so that they can have a better Government.

I will be happy to meet these people. Arrangements have already been made for a deputation where there will be discussions on how we can assist the people across the border, who are really Queenslanders. It is not their fault that they happen to live on the other side of the border.

Comparison of Progress in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria

Mr LESTER: I ask the Premier: Could he outline for the last three months the progress in the State of Queensland, and could he make a comparison of that progress with the States of New South Wales and Victoria?

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: The question covers an area of great magnitude. As I would like to state the position accurately, I ask the honourable member to put the question on notice.

Mr LESTER: I do so accordingly.

Grants Commission Recommendation; Queensland Loan Commitments

Mr D'ARCY: I ask the Premier: Could he explain to the House and to the people of Queensland why he covered before the Federal Government and accepted \$127m less than the Grants Commission recommendation without a whimper? As the Grants Commission had made its recommendation because of the poor level of services in this State, why was it necessary then for the Premier and the Treasurer to rush overseas to meet Queensland loan commitments?

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Treasurer and I tried very hard to convince the Commonwealth Government and the other States to agree to give us the money recommended by the Grants Commission. Nobody would willingly give away money to which

he believed he was entitled. As the honourable member did not attend the Premiers Conference, he would not understand the impossible position that confronted the other States.

Mr D'Arcy: You are generally not so generous.

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: We are not generous in that sense. The impasse that was finally overcome was the one to which the honourable member made reference. That is something that was outside the power and scope of the Queensland Government. Naturally, it would not agree to something that would adversely affect Queensland. In the circumstances, there was no other alternative, and the Commonwealth refused to provide additional funds.

Interest Rates

Mr D'ARCY: My next question is to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. Like most Queenslanders, I welcome his statement to the effect that housing interest rates are likely to fall by 2 per cent. I ask him as a financial guru on what mystique he bases his prediction, as his previous efforts rate only with those predictions that appear on the sporting pages of Saturday morning newspapers.

Dr EDWARDS: My statement was based on a review of the present economic position in the light of the world movement in interest rates. Apparently the honourable member has not read that within the past two weeks a marked decline in interest rates occurred throughout the world, especially in the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

Mr D'Arcy: You don't understand them.

Dr EDWARDS: My record as manager of the State's resources is far better than that of the honourable member.

Mr Hooper interjected.

Dr EDWARDS: Even the member for Archerfield agrees with me. I wonder whether he would dare follow in the footsteps of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition as the Opposition's spokesman on economic matters.

There is no doubt that interest rates throughout the world are tending to decline, but apparently the Deputy Leader of the Opposition does not recognise that.

Mr Jones: You were wrong last time.

Dr EDWARDS: Certainly I was wrong last time in some of my estimates. I do not claim to be an expert in the forecasting of interest rates throughout the world. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, of course, claims to be an expert on everything.

There is no doubt that if all political parties and all people within the community in developed countries made a genuine attempt to live within budgets and to decrease the loan programs required by Governments so that borrowings in both the private and public sectors could be less, there would be a turn-around in interest rates in the near future. The decline in interest rates is a healthy sign and one that should be welcomed. If the honourable member for Woodridge were honest, he would admit that he has a vested interest in high interest rates. As a member of the Opposition he can easily make irresponsible comments. He should recognise that as a member of this Parliament he has a responsibility to make worthwhile statements.

I see the first glimpse of light in relation to interest rates and I hope that my forecast will come true.

French Atomic Tests at Mururoa Atoll

Mr D'ARCY: I ask the Minister for Health: Is he aware that the French Government detonated a 20 kilotonne underground atomic blast at Mururoa Atoll in the Pacific on 2 July, which was the second such blast within a week? Is he aware that serious well-founded accusations have been made concerning radiation pollution of the Pacific

Ocean as a result of those tests and that the fish life and the plankton chain of the Pacific have been poisoned by this nuclear experimentation? As it has been claimed that this insidious form of poisoning is reaching the Queensland coast, I ask: What tests are being carried out by his department or the Government to monitor the effect on Queenslanders who eat food taken from the Pacific food chain?

Mr AUSTIN: That is a particularly interesting question from a member of a socialist party. After all, his socialist colleagues in France are the ones who are exploding these bombs. One of the ironies is that the French Health Minister is a Communist.

The honourable member for Woodridge would know that the Australian Atomic Energy Commission monitors atmosphere and fall-out in this country, so I would suggest that he speak to one of his Federal colleagues and have him direct the question concerning fall-out to the Federal Government. Within my department I have a section that, in conjunction with the Australian Atomic Energy Commission, monitors radioactivity. That work is continually going on throughout Queensland. If there are any untoward effects of the explosion of the bombs in the Pacific, I will make the necessary public announcements.

Queensland Cultural Centre

Mr BOOTH: I ask the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts: What has been the public response to the recently opened Queensland Art Gallery at the Queensland Cultural Centre? Has that response demonstrated the Government's wisdom in bringing to fruition such an ambitious project?

Mr ELLIOTT: Since 21 June, when the art gallery's official opening was held, response by the public has been overwhelming and enthusiastic. It is interesting to note that that response has not been only from citizens of this city. Tremendous numbers of children and other groups have come from a wide area of the State, both privately and as part of organised tours. In fact, bus loads of children from Warwick, represented by the honourable member who asked the question, from Kingaroy, and from the area of the Darling Downs covered by my own electorate, have visited the gallery. Their enthusiasm has demonstrated very clearly the foresight of the Government in planning such an imaginative project and its wisdom in proceeding with it.

Quite frankly, I believe that the centre constitutes a rare concept not only within Australia but in the southern hemisphere in that four areas will be presented: the art gallery, the performing arts centre, a library, and also a museum. Nowhere else in the southern hemisphere is there a complex of such magnitude that combines the various disciplines that are of interest to the public. I think it is fair comment that the people of Queensland have heralded the opening as an event of major significance, and I am delighted to have been associated with it.

I congratulate those who went before us who had the foresight and the courage—for a government to plan such a facility requires a great deal of courage—to undertake the project. As one who lives outside the metropolitan area, I am delighted at the tremendous response that has been forthcoming from country people as well as from city dwellers.

Annual Report of Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation

Mr WARBURTON: In asking a question of the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts, I refer to his ministerial statement this morning concerning the annual report of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation and his subsequent tabling of a replacement report for the year ended 30 June 1981. The Minister told the House that there were minor inaccuracies of no great significance in the statement of income and expenditure in the first report. I ask: How can the Minister have the audacity to make such a statement when the figure shown in the report for salaries varied by \$183,631; general administration expenses varied by \$258,664 and the Vote for publicity varied by \$76,165? How is it that the former Auditor-General, Mr Peel, is able to say that the first statement of receipts and payments is correct and has now put his seal of approval on a statement that contains very significant differences as far as the Opposition is concerned, even though he resigned as Auditor-General in December last year?

Mr ELLIOTT: I am advised—I believe correctly—that the situation is that the statement first put forward related to a certain period. An inexperienced officer, not fully understanding the situation, included a period after 30 June, and therefore the Auditor-General's certificate was appended to a report relating to a period after 30 June. None of the figures in the statement were in fact incorrect, but the period referred to was incorrect. My understanding is that in fact no figures were incorrect but that it was purely and simply a clerical error.

Mr WARBURTON: I have a further question to the same Minister. In his ministerial statement the Minister indicated that he consulted with the new Auditor-General, Mr Craven, who signified that the financial statement and Auditor-General's certificate included in the substitute report were correct. Does this mean that Mr Craven and not Mr Peel in fact audited the new financial statement?

Mr ELLIOTT: I suggest that the honourable member put the question on notice. I have just given an answer to his question. If he would like any further replies in relation to it, I will give him a detailed answer.

Mr WARBURTON: In view of that, I have no alternative but to ask that the question be put on notice.

Tourism Working Party

Mr WARBURTON: I direct a question to the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts. In early May this year the Minister admitted that tourist development in Queensland was being retarded by bureaucratic red tape and conflict over environmental issues, and he announced plans to set up a permanent tourism working party designed to cut the red tape and reduce the conflict. They were the Minister's words. I now ask: What are the names of the members of the working party and their background, and what work has the working party carried out to date?

Mr ELLIOTT: This is a particularly interesting area. During the past 18 months or so the Government has been able to make use of the services of people who have great knowledge and background. They have come from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. They have looked at a large number of significant areas of tourist attraction and also at potential sites for tourist development.

The latest suggestion to come from the party was mentioned by me in Mackay the last time I was there. I was speaking to people who are interested in the possibility of developing the area surrounding The Beak. It is probably the latest development in this concept. The Land Administration Commission will make over the land to the Tourist and Travel Corporation and, through that arm of government, the people of Queensland, together with private enterprise, will ensure that development of which we will all be justifiably proud will take place in that area. That indicates what the Government is trying to achieve, that is, balanced development and development below tree-top level. Overseas and interstate visitors, as well as Queenslanders, appreciate the natural beauty of The Beak area.

Instead of trying to throw brickbats, the Opposition spokesman should be more interested in looking at exactly what the Government is doing, and he should realise that this is a forward step that will ensure that such developments are carried out with every consideration for the environment.

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

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH

Mr SPEAKER: I have to report that His Excellency the Governor, on Tuesday, 3 August, delivered to Parliament an Opening Speech of which, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy. I presume honourable members will take the Speech as read?

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (3.11 p.m.), who was received with Government "Hear, hears!" said: I move—

"That the following Address be presented to the Governor in reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency in opening this, the second session of the Forty-third Parliament of Queensland—

'May it please Your Excellency:—

We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislature of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Throne and Person of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to tender our thanks to Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present session.

The various measures to which Your Excellency has referred, and all other matters that may be brought before us, will receive our most careful consideration, and it shall be our earnest endeavour so to deal with them that our labours may tend to the advancement and prosperity of the State.'

I am very conscious and proud of the great honour conferred on me today in being requested to move the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech at the commencement of the second session of the Forty-third Parliament.

At the outset let me congratulate His Excellency, Sir James Ramsay, on his statesmanlike address which not only portrayed very clearly the achievement of our coalition Government but also demonstrated many major projects that the Queensland coalition is committed to carry out for the benefit of Queenslanders generally.

It has been the good fortune of the citizens in the western area of my electorate to have had two visits in recent years by Sir James and Lady Ramsay, when they were greeted with a great deal of enthusiasm and hospitality. I know that they are held in the highest regard not only by citizens of my electorate but also by the citizens of the whole State of Queensland.

Together with my coalition colleagues I am proud to serve the people of Queensland, the State which has become the foremost in the Commonwealth of Australia, a State which is continuing to outstrip all others in its development and growth of both material assets and, the greatest asset of all, its people.

There has been criticism of claims, spearheaded by the Premier, about Queensland's greatness. This is only to be expected from other States that are jealous of our position, but when we hear prophecies of doom from certain members within our own walls of Parliament "knocking" our progress and saying it cannot last, then it is time to pause and present them with a few facts.

The net value of Queensland's rural production has been above the national average for most of the five years to the year 1980-81.

In 1981, an Australiawide survey showed that, by value, 46.9 per cent of the nation's planned non-residential and civil engineering projects were in Queensland.

The State had 40.8 per cent of the value of total foreign investment proposals for new national investment in 1980-81.

The value of overseas exports has nearly doubled since 1975-76. Queensland's overseas trade surplus balance was \$2,632m in 1980-81 compared with the national surplus of \$205m.

Electricity generation in Queensland has outstripped the national average over the past five years.

The tourist industry is the fastest developing and most labour intensive industry in Australia.

Australia is the 15th major exporter in the world, and in 1980-81 Queensland accounted for 23.5 per cent of all national exports.

I could present dozens more indisputable facts and statistics, but the few that I have given are sufficient to prove the point that Queensland is the greatest State and that it is continuing to forge ahead of the rest of the Commonwealth.

Mr Hooper: You have not proved your point. You have not presented sufficient evidence to the House.

Mr RANDELL: I ask the honourable member for Archerfield to listen.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Mirani to proceed with his speech.

Mr RANDELL: My own electorate of Mirani is, in effect, a Queensland in miniature, containing a large proportion of the State's sugar-producing area, huge beef cattle herds, a large area of the Bowen Basin's export-coal-producing mines, a rapidly developing grain industry, vast tourism potential, commercial fishing and a valuable dairying industry. Apart from manufactured goods, these industries cover almost the whole spectrum of Queensland's production.

Let me look first at the sugar industry. There is nothing to be gained by trying to hide the fact that this season, and perhaps for several more to come, the Queensland sugar industry will be facing hard times. This is in no way the fault of the industry, which over the years has built itself into a model industry that many try to emulate.

The blame for the decline rests squarely on the shoulders of the European Economic Community, with its politically motivated subsidies to sugar-beet farmers that naturally motivate them to expand production to a stage at which they—and only they—have created a vast over-production on the world market, with a resultant drastically reduced world price. The EEC, through its policies, has brought the world sugar market to the brink of disaster.

There is a solution. That is for the EEC to join the International Sugar Agreement, accepting all the responsibilities and disciplines of full membership. Even then it will take some time for the over-production and surplus situation to be brought back to a balanced position with production and growth of demand levelling out.

It may be a cruel thing to say, but the only other solution that will bring all this about is a series of crop disasters. These would certainly bring untold suffering to farmers, particularly those of the developing nations involved in sugar production.

I know that from the Federal Government sphere, with the assistance of the Queensland sugar experts, there is a continuing effort through negotiation to bring the EEC into the fold of the International Sugar Agreement. I commend this and, in fact, urge an even stronger initiative.

I believe that Australia—in this case, Australia basically means Queensland—should be the leader in the international moves to solve the world's sugar problems.

Mr Davis: What about Western Australia? The Premier did nothing about that last week.

Mr RANDELL: Just listen. I shall come to that matter in a moment.

We have other troubles right here in Australia. I refer to the ill-judged and ill-timed proposal of the Western Australian Government to establish a crystal sugar industry in the Ord River irrigation region.

For several years up to the present time, the Queensland sugar industry has given every assistance to the Western Australian Government during its investigations into the establishment of an Ord River sugar industry. And make no mistake about it, Mr Speaker, the Queensland sugar industry leads the world in its research and knowledge of sugar-cane-growing and the extraction of sugar.

Mr Hooper: Do you believe that Western Australia has the right to start its own sugar industry?

Mr RANDELL: I am coming to that. If Opposition members listen to my advice, they might learn something.

However, at this stage of world sugar depression, the Western Australian Government is mulishly ignoring the advice from Queensland that previously it fell over its own feet to accept.

The Queensland industry has told Western Australia that now is not the time to go into sugar production. Queensland does not say an Ord River sugar industry should not or should never be established; it does say that now is not the time.

The Queensland sugar industry has already been through a severe depression, which started in the mid-sixties, and this required massive reconstruction loans from the Federal Government. The fact that these loans were repaid well in advance of the due date is a credit to the expertise and efficiency of the Queensland sugar industry.

At this very stage, it appears that similar reconstruction and carry-over loans will again be needed. If they are needed by experts, how then could an amateur Western Australian industry hope to cope without Federal financial help?

A Government Member: It has not even got a port.

Mr RANDELL: It has not got a port; it does not have a sugar mill; it has not got the infrastructure. People would have to live in the wilds of Western Australia to work in a sugar industry in that State. I do not see how it could possibly compete with Queensland's.

Only last week the Prime Minister told a delegation led by our Premier to discuss the Ord River moves that an industry developed there at this stage would have to stand on its own feet and could not expect any Federal funds to support it.

I commend the Premier and the Queensland sugar industry leaders for their continued vigilance to protect Queensland cane growers and millers and the thousands of workers dependent on employment in the fields and mills.

Mr Blake: That is not what Sir Charles Court said.

Mr RANDELL: I am not worried about what Sir Charles Court said; I am worried about what Queensland said.

I trust that the Premier and the Queensland sugar industry leaders will continue to monitor the Western Australian situation until world conditions allow an economically feasible Western Australian sugar industry to be established without detriment to the already established industry, and I suggest that Opposition members should get right behind them.

In a recent Press release the Minister for Primary Industries said—

“For Western Australia to proceed with a new industry in today's economic climate is nothing short of irresponsible.”

Apart from sugar substitutes to which I have referred previously, another matter of concern to me is the unethical advertising that we have seen on television lately. This TV advertising always seems to knock sugar as a food. I refer to the TV advertisement about Vita-brits. Two Vita-brits appear in the advertisement: one looks mungey and the other looks quite wholesome. The advertisement states that one Vita-brit does not contain sugar. If the manufacturers of Vita-brits think enough of their product, surely they can let it stand on its own feet without knocking sugar.

Mr Moore: The kids will put the sugar on, anyway. If there is not enough, they will add a bit more.

Mr RANDELL: There is nothing wrong with sugar. It is an energy-making food. If that type of TV advertising continues, members of Parliament who represent the coastal electorates from Bundaberg in the south to Cairns in the north might consider urging their constituents, thousands of whom depend on the sugar industry for their livelihood, to boycott that product.

With such international and national pressures on the Queensland sugar industry, it is appropriate at this stage that I turn to a specific problem facing the industry in my own electorate. I refer to irrigation and, in fact, to a specific irrigation scheme—the Eton irrigation scheme. I am aware that at times during my term in this Chamber I have made myself unpopular by continually harping about increased funding being required for this scheme. The eight mills of the central sugar district produce between them almost one-third of the total Australian sugar output. Of those eight mills, six are in the Mirani electorate, and three of those mills share a dry, rain-shadow area which must be irrigated. One only has to look at those areas in the dry seasons to see the hardship being experienced because of a lack of irrigation.

I have to say that I believe that the procrastination by both the Federal Government and the State Government has put the progress of this scheme into the doldrums. The flow of funds from both the Federal Government and the State Government has tapered off

drastically, and the Eton irrigation scheme is now years behind its original programmed completion date. The delay in the completion of the Eton irrigation scheme is such that the scheme will now cost \$47m compared with the original estimate of \$21.8m. I often wonder whether it will ever be completed. If progress is not stepped up very soon, because of natural inflation the scheme will cost many millions of dollars more. I was pleased to read recently that the progress of this scheme will be accelerated.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member refers to what is happening under Fraser. He wants to cast his mind back to the Whitlam days. They nearly killed us, and we will never forget them. I often think that Opposition members should get out of the cities and see what is happening in the country areas.

Water is an essential ingredient of any rural production, but so too are communications, and I am sure that other members will refer to those matters in this debate.

I repeat that communications are an essential ingredient of rural production—road and rail links to transport produce to export points. Until about 1970 there was no rail access to Mackay's hinterland, where an important grain industry is now developing. Mainly because of the hinterland development, today sealed roads have replaced what were previously no better than bush tracks. Extensions to the rail system linking mines to the world's biggest coal export facility at Hay Point provide a permanent way for the egress of the Central Highlands grain crop. Only last week-end the Minister for Northern Development and Maritime Services officially opened the new grain export terminal at Mackay Harbour.

Although only about 8 000 tonnes of sorghum was received at the new terminal this season as a trial run, by next season all rail links will be completed from the hinterland to terminal services. A comparatively recent survey by the grain industry has shown that, by the year 1990, 350 000 tonnes of grain could be exported through the port of Mackay, and it is expected that by the year 2000 we will be exporting 450 000 tonnes. That is spectacular growth indeed and shows that not only are we in the region providing a large part of the world's energy needs but also that we are playing our part in the supply of grain foods to world markets.

Although problems of rail links seem to be resolved, the road network still leaves a great deal to be desired. The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police is to be commended for his own initiatives and for his support of submissions by me and members representing adjoining electorates for a massive upgrading of the road network in the central region. There are two separate problems with our roads: heavy mine-engendered traffic using secondary council roads—roads which were never designed for traffic of such volume or weight—and a main highway system that cannot cope with the tremendously increased traffic flow resulting from progress under the present Government in this great State of Queensland. Certainly, in each sphere there is a glimmer of hope. For country roads, it comes from the Government's move to have a greater share of infrastructure funding from developing mining ventures. For our main highway system, State efforts have achieved a somewhat better funding deal from the Federal Government, although obviously much more is needed.

It is pleasing indeed to note that work on the Sarina-Marlborough stretch of the Bruce Highway is now scheduled for completion early in October, two months ahead of the earliest previous estimate. It will be worth every cent of the \$12m or so that has gone into upgrading that stretch of national highway to all-weather standard. Gone will be the countless hours and days of delay and the danger to life caused by the flooding of the inland route.

Much expensive work still has to be done on the Bruce Highway north of Sarina to make it an acceptable and safe road surface for the many thousands of local people and visitors who use it each year. It is a hopeful sign that work will in fact start next month on the highway in my electorate immediately south from the city gates of Mackay to Boundary Road. It will commence in about a month's time and will cost approximately \$800,000. Next year a further stretch has been programmed in the area from Boundary Road to Bakers Creek. I urge the Minister for Main Roads to press on with his efforts to obtain more Federal funding for our national highways, particularly in the light of the opinion of the Commonwealth Bureau of Transport Economics that funding for Queensland highway works was quite disproportionate in comparison with funding for other States.

Several times I have mentioned coal without giving details of its immense value to my electorate and the region in general. In the 1980-81 financial year, the total value of coal for export produced from the Mackay hinterland region was \$667,262,724—a tremendous amount. That compares with the \$353,502,055 value of sugar production in the Mackay region. However, when the two are compared, it must be remembered that the value of sugar earnings to the Mackay region is more important because most of that money circulates and remains within the district and is of benefit to the people and businessmen in the area. Nevertheless, earnings from coal export were almost twice those from sugar. Many local benefits are derived from the mining industry in the hinterland. I have already mentioned new rail and upgraded road links between the coast and the hinterland. In addition, there is an influx of vital new population to hinterland towns and the added prosperity brought to the region through its spending.

During the development of the Bowen Basin mines, the towns of Moranbah and Dysart have been built, the town of Middlemount is all but completed and in my electorate work has commenced on the new town of Glenden to serve the mine being developed at Newlands.

The Hay Point coal-loading facility was completed by the Utah Development Company to serve its mines, and the duplicate facility of Dalrymple Bay is well on the way to completion as a common user coal export facility for mines already in operation, those very close to operation or those in the course of development. Another export facility is being constructed at Abbot Point, which is in the electorate of Whitsunday, to serve the Newlands mine and the existing Collinsville Coal Company, both operations of MIM Holdings Ltd. All these operations provide job opportunities for local inhabitants as well as the stream of interstate people who are coming to Queensland, which creates ever-increasing opportunities for the establishment of supportive secondary industries.

In the current climate of decline in international demand for coal and more nations competing with Australia for a share of the coal export market, some doubt has been cast on the opening of other mines in the Bowen Basin. Certainly there appears to have been a certain slowing down or marking time in planning and development work, but I look forward with confidence—as I know most of my colleagues and the mining industry itself do—to an upturn in world market prospects in the not too distant future.

Last week's news that the Federal Government has dropped its \$1 per tonne export levy was very welcome indeed; that is the sort of action needed to help our coal industry regain its toe-hold in the world export market. In 1980-81, the levy on the tonnage exported from the mines of the Mackay region earned \$16,225,359. The deletion of that levy means that exporters can offer slightly better terms to world buyers, which could make all the difference in bids to gain contracts.

Such vast mining undertakings with their vast automated systems, walking draglines and bucket-wheel extractors still require people—men to carry out the operations and their families to give them support and comfort. No-one can deny that the mining companies have provided housing in the new towns and recreation facilities for their inhabitants. However, a certain need still exists for other than company housing and, with the current high interest rates, not too many people can engage a builder to construct a home for them. That problem extends well beyond the mining hinterland; in fact, it is common to the whole of Australia and has created a minor slump in the building industry.

A great and growing need exists for welfare housing. Before I hear an outcry from the Opposition benches, I say that welfare housing does not mean free Government hand-outs; it means rental housing at rents that can be afforded by families receiving only the basic wage. Create a building "mini-boom" if it can be termed that, and work will be provided for builders' labourers and many other supportive workers and, at the same time, affordable accommodation will be provided for them. In an endeavour to achieve that, I commend the Government's decision to implement a new housing scheme to assist people to buy their own homes. To anyone with foresight, this obviously means the provision of additional rental housing. I mention briefly that there are two separate schemes, one subsidised and the other commercial. Both provide low initial payments to help in the first few years, which are usually the most difficult, and also income-g geared payments, which differ significantly from the traditional lending practice. Under the new income-g geared schemes, borrowers will pay a defined percentage of their

incomes for the full period of the loan, which means that borrowers will know the percentage of their income required to service the loan and thus will reduce the uncertainty of repayments presently faced by home buyers of increased interest rates. This new approach to home purchase funding, and the funds made available by the State Government, have been designed to further assist needy families to achieve their goal of home-ownership. Of course, it is another of the many initiatives the Government has undertaken to create a better life for the citizens of Queensland.

The beef industry is, unfortunately, experiencing the same difficulties with world markets as are the sugar and coal exporting industries. Australian beef cattle numbers have declined by 25 per cent from the peak of over 29 million head in 1976 to 22.4 million in 1981. Queensland cattle numbers have also declined, but only by 13.5 per cent from our peak of over 11 million in 1978 to 9.5 million in 1981.

Increased per capita domestic consumption of beef, now 48.5kg per head of population, has not been sufficient to negate the effects of reduced overseas demand. Even the most optimistic forecasts do not see an increase in economic activity until towards the end of the year.

Australia's beef and veal exports to the United States during 1981, at 230 000 tonnes, were the lowest for 10 years and well below the record 396 000 tonnes in 1979. High interest rates, plentiful supplies of pig and poultry meats and depressed economic conditions were the major factors contributing to this situation.

Reduced Japanese demand has further dimmed overseas market prospects, and strong United States pressure on Japan to increase beef imports from that country has only aggravated this position. Fortunately, Korea re-entered the market. However, even its purchases from Australia are expected to decline from 35 000 tonnes last year to only 20 000 this year.

With all the problems facing the beef industry at the present time, there is, in my opinion, an obvious start to attaining any solution. I believe that all factions in the beef industry should get together and present a solid and united front to the world. They should show that there is one Australian beef industry and that any problems they see from the outside can easily be solved by such a united organisation—problems such as beef inspection, rationalisation, and any other that they see.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr RANDELL: If the honourable member looks at what goes into beef production ——

Mr Davis: I am saying that the housewives ——

Mr RANDELL: I have said on previous occasions ——

Mr Hooper interjected.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member for Archerfield has not been outside Brisbane.

Mr Hooper interjected.

Mr RANDELL: Perhaps we should invite the honourable member to come up and have a look.

Mr Vaughan: We would go through your electorate like a packet of salts.

Mr RANDELL: If the honourable member came into my electorate, he would want to go through it like a packet of salts because I do not think he would be welcome there.

I have said on previous occasions that there appears to be great merit in a close examination of the proposals of that great beef man Sir William Gunn. No one man's suggestions are ever perfect, but the basic Gunn proposals mulled over, and perhaps streamlined, could be the answer the beef industry is awaiting. I said "streamlined" and that is exactly what I meant, because I would hate to see bureaucracy spoil what is a basically sound idea. As both a beef producer and a sugar producer, I see merit in Sir William Gunn's proposals to evolve a beef industry with production and marketing organised along the already proven lines of the sugar industry.

Tourism will provide one of the greatest money earners and job providers of any industry in our Sunshine State, and it is an industry described as such by one of the world's leading tourist experts, the research department of the Boeing aircraft company of Seattle, Washington. A report by that company on the State's tourist potential forecast that natural tourism

growth had the potential to create about 30 000 new jobs in the service and hospitality sectors in Queensland by 1985. However, the report also said that, with more aggressive strategies, the new job figure could be as high as 57 000.

The natural growth was based on 10 per cent in the international area and eight per cent in the domestic field. That indicated that Queensland would require an additional 12 000 hotel rooms by 1985, representing an investment of more than \$1,000m and an overall benefit to the Queensland economy of about \$1,500m a year. With aggressive promotion, during the five-year period, the new job requirement would jump to 57 000, the additional hotel rooms to 21 000 and the investment to \$2,000m bringing an economy benefit of \$1,900m per year.

The recent announcement that the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation would be involved directly with the development of the development of The Beak area at Shute Harbour, to the north of my electorate, to give it an income to facilitate further State tourism promotion is indeed welcome. The formation of this governmental body has already produced a great boost to Queensland tourism, and any means by which it can itself generate funding is indeed to be welcomed.

Tourism brings me naturally to perhaps the greatest attraction ever to be staged in our State—the Commonwealth Games. We will have thousands of visitors from within the Commonwealth of Australia and the British Commonwealth and many of them, having travelled so far, will want to see more of our State and nation. This gives us a wonderful opportunity to promote our State, not so much to the visitors who are already here for the Games but by their word of mouth to all their friends in the other States and countries from which they have come.

I urge every member of this House to spread the message through his family and constituents that we must make the greatest possible effort to show these visitors that Queensland is not only just the Sunshine State, but also the friendly State. It is the greatest State in Australia. We certainly want the tourist dollar—that is just good business—but more importantly we want the visitors to see our State, what we have and what we are developing. We have the potential to be the greatest tourist country in the world. Who knows, we might have to start turning people away from our shores because we have become so popular.

That may be a light note on which to end my remarks on tourism, but it is indeed a very serious note, too. I intend all Queenslanders to get the message that we must promote our State—not just for tourism, but to help underpin the vast developments which, despite what the knockers say, are continuing and will keep on keeping on.

Before I finish, I must make known my views and the views of all of my country colleagues and of all local government authorities on the dropping of the local government subsidies.

Those of us who come from the country are perhaps more aware of important things such as natural, seasonal variations and difficulties in the market-place where our goods must be sold. I make a particular plea on behalf of the members who must represent the country electorates such as mine where we frequently have a very full plate of problems, that the Government reinstate the subsidies which are vital to the operation of local authority services.

In my electorate of Mirani, there are no fewer than six sugar mills—at Plane Creek, Racecourse, Marian, Cattle Creek, Pleystowe and North Eton, I have two hospitals, three high schools, soon to be four following the construction of one at Middlemount, 35 primary schools, and the Southern Hemisphere's largest coal port. When the duplication is complete, it will be the largest in the world.

Most importantly, there have been major changes in the demographic trends and population, and these changes require funds to service them. I mention these matters because, although growth is not restricted to only the seat of Mirani, it is my purpose today to point out that we have problems that are not even experienced in large cities such as Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba and Townsville. We have the extraordinary combination of rapid and unforeseen growth occurring in local authorities with a very small population base and very little money.

Let me illustrate my point. The Queensland total population recorded in the census of 30 June 1976 was 2 037 197, and this has increased, as measured at the 30 June 1981 census, to 2 294 546. This population increase is equal to 11.2 per cent for the five-year intercensal period, or, in simple terms, 2.06 per cent per annum, calculating in simple interest, so let us say 2 per cent per annum in round figures.

The shire of Broadsound is in my electorate. I recently had the honour to be chairman of the council. In the same period that shire saw a population growth from 3 379 to 6 905, or a differential growth of 3 526. In other words, population more than doubled. In precise mathematical terms, a growth of 101.04 per cent occurred, or 20.21 per cent per annum. The facts show that Broadsound Shire had 10 times the percentage growth of the whole of the State, and, of course, with this growth there have to be problems.

It may be said, "But surely the mining companies are paying for some of the development". I agree, but I make no apologies for my attitudes in the past. In my public life I have conscientiously striven at all times to obtain more funding from the mining companies to solve those problems that I consider are fairly theirs.

Mr Hooper: They have every obligation to provide the infrastructure for towns.

Mr RANDELL: They do provide the infrastructure for towns. They should provide some of the infrastructure for access roads.

We must not shirk the problems that fairly belong to the Government. In my view, it is essential to get our priorities in order and redress the subsidy reductions in all of the rural shires in this State. I make no apologies for stating that the restoration of subsidies of the shires of Pioneer, Sarina, Mirani, Nebo and Broadsound and other relevant rural and rapidly developing shires must loom large in any proper set of priorities.

Mr Speaker, I conclude my speech on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech of His Excellency the Governor by saying that I am proud to be a member of this coalition Government with such a great record of achievement over the years—a record that has made Queensland the envy of all other Australian States. I am confident that the policies outlined in the Opening Speech of His Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Sir James Ramsay, will maintain the prosperity of the State of Queensland and the well-being of its citizens.

Mr PRENTICE (Toowong) (3.46 p.m.): It is an honour to second the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply so ably moved by my colleague the member for Mirani. In doing so, I affirm my loyalty and that of the people of Toowong to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

I place on record the appreciation of all Queenslanders for the hard work that His Excellency the Governor, Sir James Ramsay, has done. He has brought dignity to his position. It is said that the former Governor General, Sir Zelman Cowan, performed a role of healing as Governor-General of Australia and that he removed some of the divisiveness that was seen to be associated with that position. Queensland has not had that divisiveness, but Sir James Ramsay has shown the type of leadership that the technical head of this State should show. By travelling throughout the State, he has shown concern and care for the needs of the people of Queensland. He has gone out of his way to ensure that he is seen, and he has made himself accessible to the people of Queensland.

As I look at His Excellency's Address, I see a record of great achievement. I know that the Government will honour its promise that the work will be carried out. I look at that against a background of a Parliament, like many other Parliaments in this country, that is restricted to a term of three years. I would argue, as others would argue in different parts of this country, that one of the difficulties faced by Government and Opposition members is that the term of the Parliament is too short. Honourable members should consider whether we, as a Parliament, should ask the people if parliamentary terms should be extended to, say, four years. I suggest that an all-party committee should be established to investigate that matter. That committee should have an opportunity to examine the experience of other Parliaments, particularly the experience of the New South Wales Parliament. The terms of reference should be restricted so that the ultimate decision must be made by referendum of the people of Queensland as a whole.

Mr Davis: Now that you have government by regulation for three years, you want government by regulation for four years.

Mr PRENTICE: I note the comment from the member for Brisbane Central. There is too much government by regulation, and I have spoken on that matter in the House on many occasions. However, the problem of government by regulation will not be affected by the length of the parliamentary term. What I suggest is that Governments are limited by three-year terms.

Mr Hooper: What about Governments limited by inability?

Mr PRENTICE: The honourable member refers to inability. He may be concerned about the Government; if he looked around his own Opposition benches, he would be even more concerned. I can see the reason why Opposition members have to take fishing trips and to go off to plot and to plan who will replace Ed Casey. Even then Opposition members did not fill out the papers correctly. The Leader of the Opposition survived by one vote. And the Opposition talks about inability! All I would suggest to the Opposition is that before it conducts its next round of selection councils it find some new candidates. If the Opposition was to do some work, the Parliament as a whole would benefit.

As I was saying, terms of three years create difficulties in the maintenance of proper and effective government. All too often decisions are made on the basis of a forthcoming election. All too often such decisions may be influenced to such an extent that they would not be in the interests of Queenslanders.

The need to extend parliamentary terms has been recognised by other Governments in this nation. The New South Wales Government, for example, recognised that need and took the matter to the people. The people said that in New South Wales there should be four-year terms.

A publication entitled "Parliaments of the World. A Reference Compendium" reveals that of a total of 56 popularly elected national Parliaments 25 are elected for a maximum term of four years and 24 for a maximum term of five years. It is time that this Parliament gave some consideration not only to good government but also to the people of Queensland, who undoubtedly are heartily sick and tired of the numbers of elections that are held in this State.

Over the last 10 years there were 17 Federal elections, four for the Senate, five for the House of Representatives and eight simultaneous elections. In addition, there were four Federal referendums, of which only one coincided with a Federal election. I think that in Queensland there were four State elections in the same period. The people are heartily sick and tired of having to vote virtually every year in one election or another. Parliament should look at that fact and extend its term for another year.

Mr Davis: The Federal Liberal Party has a two-year policy.

Mr PRENTICE: If the honourable member were to conduct his research more carefully, he would find that the Federal Liberal Party supports a longer term.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Brisbane Central will have an opportunity at a later stage to expound his philosophies.

Mr PRENTICE: I turn now to problems arising in my electorate of Toowong. Many speeches in the Address-in-Reply debate are parochial in nature, and it is important that members be given an opportunity to express the concern voiced by their electors, so that the Parliament is aware of that concern. Such concern is expressed not only on parochial matters but also on matters that affect the Government and the way in which it operates.

During the parliamentary recess, one issue that blew up in my electorate was that concerning the acquisition of properties by the University of Queensland. Over a number of years it has been buying private residences in the St Lucia area. For some time it was using those residences for residential purposes. However, in recent times it used those properties, which over the years would have cost some several hundred thousand dollars, for non-residential purposes such as office accommodation, a tertiary education institute, a chaplaincy centre, a tertiary education library, a bookstore and a tertiary admissions centre. They are all in residential areas and initially all were used without proper town-planning approval.

When my colleague in the local government area, Alderman Denver Beanland, raised this matter, the university sought town-planning consent from the Brisbane City Council. I am pleased to say that the council rejected the university's application. The university, by using those houses in that way, is bringing down the market price that the residents of St Lucia can realistically expect to receive for their properties. It is changing the whole character of the suburb. It is really interfering in people's rights in a way that should not be allowed.

I took a deputation of local residents to the Minister for Education, and I must say that we were pleased with his reaction. He was very encouraging in the support that he indicated he would give to the local residents.

Mr Hooper: You are referring to the blue rinse set in your area.

Mr PRENTICE: The honourable member may wish to refer to the blue rinse set, but the people in my electorate are concerned, and I am sure that the people in the honourable member's electorate would be just as concerned if a university were to use houses near them in the same way as the University of Queensland uses these houses in St Lucia. If somebody were to move into a residential area in the honourable member's electorate and set up an office without town-planning approval, which resulted in hundreds of people tramping into that office at various times of the year and in cars being parked everywhere, I would expect that the people in the honourable member's electorate would be upset. They would go to the honourable member and he would deal with the matter immediately. Indeed, that is the sort of problem that all of us face in our different areas. The difference here is that the University of Queensland should adopt a responsible attitude and act in accordance with the town-planning requirements. It should not have occupied those houses for those purposes.

The present situation is that the university's application to the Brisbane City Council has been rejected. The university has to decide whether it will appeal to the Local Government Court. It is my view, and the view of many citizens, that the university should accept the decision that has been taken by the council and should either divest itself of those properties or, at the very least, allow them to be used for residential purposes. If the university did that and so relieved some of the accommodation shortage associated with the university, I am sure that that would be accepted within St Lucia and the community generally.

That matter is of great concern to my electorate. The university should not buy any further houses until such time as the Government considers the whole question of the size of the university. The university itself has said that it purchased those houses looking to the future and to the possibility of expanding the campus of the university at St Lucia. The question that must be asked not only by me as the member for Toowong but also by other members of this Parliament, particularly those in the north and in the south-east, is: How big should the University of Queensland become? How much money should be spent in expanding what is already one of the two biggest universities in Australia in terms of enrolments? How much money should be spent on the University of Queensland before consideration is given to the James Cook University or the Griffith University, and to the possible expansion of mainstream courses at the Griffith University or, indeed, at the James Cook University? I suggest that the University of Queensland should hold fire and that the Government should give serious consideration to what steps it will take in the tertiary education field in the future.

The University of Queensland creates problems in some ways. It is also one of the great assets of my electorate. Although I differ with the administration of the university in this matter, I think that it is of great value to have the university in an electorate like mine. The university is of great benefit to the community as a whole.

Previously I have referred to the difficulties of parking in Toowong, and I flag the matter one more time. I have mentioned in this Chamber previously that I understand it is proposed that a high-rise development should be allowed over the railway station at Toowong. When that development takes place, I ask the Minister for Transport, as I have done previously, to ensure that provision is made for parking by those people who live in the Toowong area and hope to shop in the Toowong shopping centre. There is not enough parking there now. The Government has the ability with this development to solve that problem at little extra cost, and it should be prepared to take some action in that regard. Although the Minister has not given a firm undertaking, at least he has been prepared on every occasion to take note of the representations I have made.

On the matter of parking and traffic, I must say that I agree with the university on the location of a cross-river bridge. Other members have indicated that they would seek a cross-river bridge in the vicinity of St Lucia. If it were to be put anywhere on university property, it would destroy a campus that is well away from the main traffic flow—a campus that does not require a bridge entering its grounds. That would be most unfortunate. In any consideration of the location of a bridge, traffic flow must be borne in mind. It is all very well for people to talk about putting a bridge into the St Lucia area; but what it means is that the increased traffic—the heavy traffic—will have to use streets that are simply not equipped at this stage to cope with such traffic and cannot be modified to do so. It would cause massive disruption in a quiet residential area and disrupt the traffic itself. The siting of the bridge is important. All the alternatives should be examined by the council before a decision is arrived at.

Mr Vaughan: The same thing happened out my way with the Gateway Bridge.

Mr PRENTICE: The honourable member may be concerned about that. I am not aware of that problem, but I would be quite happy to talk to him about it at some time. However, my real concern is that in siting a bridge in the area I know—St Lucia and Indooroopilly—it must be ensured that the traffic to cross the bridge is able to flow on into the city, where most of it will be headed, with minimum disruption. Consideration could be given to duplicating the Indooroopilly Bridge or the Centenary Bridge or perhaps to locating a bridge further downstream near the Regatta Hotel, where it could feed straight on to a main road capable of handling the traffic.

The Brisbane City Council, I must say, in its decision on the university has so far done the residents of St Lucia a good turn. It is unfortunate that it is such a rare occasion. In Toowong the city council recently took a decision that will create great hardship for a number of residents. It has decided to close the Toowong Library, which is frequented by many of my residents, particularly the elderly and young school kids. That library did great service and would continue to do so if the city council had not taken a book-burning attitude and decided to shut it down altogether. The people of Toowong will miss out because of an ill-considered, ill-timed and shabby political decision that will be of no benefit to anyone. I say “political decision” as I suspect that it was made because the ward is held by a Liberal alderman. Perhaps it reflects one of the dangers that the people of Queensland should be aware of at the next poll.

In Victoria the Labor Government indicated through its Minister for Health that it would refuse to provide services in two Federal electorates—that of the Prime Minister and that of a senior Minister in the Federal Government. Why? Because they came from the other side of the political fence. That sort of politics should never be contemplated by any party. That it was done by the Labor Party in Victoria and appears to have been done by the city council, as Alderman Sallyanne Atkinson has so ably pointed out, highlights just one of the dangers that each and every one of us should be aware of when we vote at the next election. The Labor Party, if it ever came to office—God forbid it should happen—would be prepared to use such shabby tricks to perpetuate itself in office. I do not believe that that sort of conduct should ever be allowed.

I must say that the people of the Toowong electorate have been of great assistance to me in the short time that I have been in this Parliament. They have shown a willingness to bring matters to my attention whenever they arise. I have deliberately gone out of my way to encourage them to do so.

All too often people decide that they will not take a problem to a member of Parliament because they think, “What is the use? What will he do? What can he do?” They may be cynical about whether politicians—I speak of all parties—will do anything. As each member of the Parliament knows, the reality is that it is only when the people of an electorate really stand up and speak their minds, come to an electorate office or ring a member of Parliament and tell him what they think, that a member of Parliament can do his job most effectively. Once again, I invite the electors of Toowong to telephone me on any occasion on which they have a problem that they wish to raise, whether it be a criticism of the Government or myself or whether they wish to put forward some constructive suggestions. Parliament and representative Government really run at their very best when people actually make use of their local member.

The member for Nudgee looks surprised; I can only assume that people do not come to his office.

Mr Vaughan: You should not have to say that.

Mr PRENTICE: The honourable member says that I should not have to say that, but I believe that on every possible occasion we should inform the public that we are here to serve them and not the other way around.

Mr Moore: We are not like the ALP; we are accessible.

Mr PRENTICE: Indeed, we are accessible. I am amazed at the number of people who get in touch with me because they cannot get in touch with their Labor member.

I wish to move on to the question of the funding of fire brigades, which concerns my electorate because it, together with the electorates of Merthyr and Surfers Paradise, has one of the highest concentrations of home units in the State. One of the greatest problems faced by home unit owners is the current method of financing fire brigades. Presently the cost of running fire brigades is met partly by the State Government, partly by local government and 75 per cent by the insurance industry, which meets that contribution by imposing a fire brigade levy of \$1.10 on every \$1,000 insured on premiums on property insurance. I think I would get agreement across the board that that imposes an unjust penalty on people such as home unit owners who are forced by law to insure to full value.

A proposal has been put forward that I believe will meet the needs of many of the people in my electorate, the people who are concerned about having to pay a high proportion of the cost of running fire brigades in this State. I believe that the system proposed by the Government, which has been approved by Cabinet, provides a realistic way of spreading the cost throughout the community. Honourable members should be prepared to look at that with an open mind and allow the collection as has been suggested. Even if the collection is handled in a different way, the important thing is that the burden will be shared equally.

In approaching matters such as that all too often the major problems are ignored and minor aspects are concentrated on. Not only must we ensure that the costs are shared equally by the community; we must also ensure that the contributions bear a relationship to the service provided. Not everybody gets the same quality of service. The introduction of a new scheme gives the Government the opportunity to provide a two-level approach—a levy for vacant land and a levy to cover single units and multi-unit dwellings. In each of those categories the rate will be able to reflect the way in which the property is serviced by fire stations—whether it is on a full-time basis, whether it is on a predominantly full-time basis, or whether the service is provided by auxiliary staffers. If we follow that sort of approach, I believe that, with collection by local authorities, which have the mechanism to do it, we will have gone a long way towards solving our problem. Commercial and industrial buildings can be dealt with after further study, but the local authorities will be in a position where they will bear no burden for having to collect that money. They will be able to obtain additional funding and, in addition, they will bear no responsibility for non-payment of that fee by individuals. I believe it is a scheme that is worthy of support by all Queenslanders. I have spoken with the Home Unit Owners Association, which has a large number of members in my electorate, and it is whole-heartedly behind it. I believe it is something that should be accepted by all Queenslanders.

In closing, might I say that the people of Toowong know that I am always accessible. They know that whenever they wish to see me, they can. That is something that should apply to all members of Parliament. It has been my role and responsibility to ensure that the people of Toowong receive effective representation. To that end, in the next two weeks I will be distributing in my electorate a report of my activities during the first half of this parliamentary term. In that report I once again invite my constituents to contact me on any matter whatsoever. The report is, of necessity, brief so that it can be distributed throughout the electorate. I ask my constituents to read it closely and then to come back to me with any questions they may have. I believe that each member of this Parliament has a responsibility to so report, and I hope that the honourable member for Nudgee is doing the same as I am.

It has been a great honour to second the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, and I commend the motion to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Casey, adjourned.

SUPPLY

Vote of Credit—\$1,920,000,000

Mr SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that the following provision be made on account of the services for the year ending 30 June 1983—

From the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland, the further sum of \$925,000,000;

From the Trust and Special Funds, the further sum of \$900,000,000; and

From the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the further sum of \$95,000,000.

Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Miller, Ithaca) in the chair

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Treasurer): I move—

“That there be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1982-83, a further sum not exceeding \$1,920,000,000 towards defraying the expenses of the various departments and services of the State.”

Motion agreed to.

Resolution reported, received, and agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS

Committee

Vote of Credit—\$1,920,000,000

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Miller, Ithaca) in the chair

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Treasurer): I move—

“(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1982-83, a further sum not exceeding \$925,000,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

(b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1982-83, a further sum not exceeding \$900,000,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

(c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1982-83, a further sum not exceeding \$95,000,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.”

Motion agreed to.

Resolution reported, received, and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1)

First Reading

A Bill, founded on the Resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means, was introduced and read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (4.20 p.m.): I move—

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

In the last Appropriation Act, passed by the House in December of last year, supply for 1982-83 to the extent of \$1,210m was granted—\$500m for the Consolidated Revenue Fund, \$650m for the Trust and Special Funds and \$60m for the Loan Fund.

The purpose of the Bill now before the House is to provide a further sum of \$1,920m of which \$925m is required for the Consolidated Revenue Fund, \$900m for the Trust and Special Funds and \$95m for the Loan Fund.

The total Supply which will now be available for 1982-83 pending the approval of the Budget for that year is \$3,130m—\$1,425m for the Consolidated Revenue Fund, \$1,550m for the Trust and Special Funds and \$155m for the Loan Fund. In total, this represents an increase of \$485m on the 1981-82 figure. This increase is necessary to cover the cost of salary, wage and other cost increases in the intervening period, and reflects also an increase in the proportion of total expenditures that is taking place in some areas in the early part of the financial year.

As you are aware, Mr Speaker, it has been traditional for the Treasurer of the day, in presenting this Bill, to take the opportunity to comment on the financial or economic position of the State or other important matters of interest to the community. It seems fashionable these days to talk of the pessimistic outlook for the Australian economy. Almost without exception, economists want to paint a bleak picture for the short term, as do some politicians. Unions endeavour to raise the spectre of rising unemployment. There is concern about possible increases in prices and greater inflationary pressures. The growth in the Australian population appears to be slowing. There are fears of a tight credit situation.

Let me say here and now that if we continue to listen to these prophets of doom, there will be doom. It will happen. Whether it ought to happen or not is another question. I believe strongly that we must be much more optimistic about our future. We must not allow ourselves to be taken in by these forecasts. In fact, we in Queensland have very good reason to be optimistic. We are the State with unbounded opportunity. We are the State that is going ahead. We are the State that the rest of Australia and, indeed, the rest of the world are looking to with increasing envy.

However, our faith in our future must be tempered with reality. I would not pretend that the world economy is in the best possible shape. Of course, there are problems and one only has to look at recent world economic reports to realise that they do exist.

I also fully appreciate that the state of the world economy will have some impact and influence on what happens in Australia, and Queensland cannot be completely isolated from this. However, I firmly believe that the Queensland economy has the capacity to withstand these external pressures better than any other State. It is more resilient. It has the ability to forge ahead while the rest of the country languishes in the doldrums. There is ample economic evidence available to support my belief in the future of this great State and to show why it is in its present position. One only has to look at our population growth. Between December 1980 and December 1981 our population grew at an annual rate of 3.5 per cent, far in excess of that for any other State.

People are leaving other States in droves and coming to Queensland because they believe, as I do, that Queensland is going to be the place to be in the future. At last count, there were over 3 500 people moving to Queensland from other States every month because of the opportunities which Queensland offers. They have seen what I am talking about and want to be a part of it. This movement though does place tremendous strains on our social infrastructure. The Government will have to continue to devote a significant share of available resources to this purpose. Another example is motor vehicle registrations. In the 11 months to 31 May 1982, new motor vehicle registrations in Queensland increased by 7.6 per cent compared with 4.7 per cent for Australia as a whole.

The confidence of our Queensland people in their State is also manifested in the increasing value of retail sales. The increase in the value of retail sales in Queensland, March quarter 1982 compared with March quarter 1981, was 14.4 per cent as against only 11 per cent for Australia as a whole.

More importantly, however, increased economic activity is creating jobs. Our level of employment is growing. Between May 1981 and May 1982, the labour force in Queensland grew by 3 per cent, compared with a growth of 1.5 per cent for Australia as a whole in the same period. However, unemployment is still at a level which is much higher than the Government finds tolerable.

A further indication of the underlying strength of the Queensland economy is the position of the Queensland building industry relative to that throughout the rest of Australia. For May 1982, the total value of building works in Queensland approved during the month was 16.3 per cent higher than that for the same month in the previous year. For Australia as a whole, the comparable figure was a decline of 6 per cent.

Mr Davis: Mostly down on the Gold Coast.

Dr EDWARDS: That is not correct at all. The honourable member would know full well that industry has gone through a difficult period, but the figures that I have quoted are for the whole of the State. I am sure that if the honourable member were to care to read the information that is available, he would be convinced quite readily.

The Government's new \$100m housing scheme will ensure continued activity for this industry. These statistics provide strong evidence to support my contention that Queensland is the emerging strength in the Australian economy.

However, economic indicators do not tell the whole story. Major developments, particularly in the mining area, have taken place, are taking place and will continue to take place in the future. The benefits of these developments to Queensland and its prosperity are reflected in statistics concerning increasing employment opportunities, an active building industry and so on.

However, the direct tangible benefits to Government revenues are also important. In 1978-79, total revenues of the railways were \$300.3m. In 1981-82, revenues had increased to \$490.8m, an increase of over 63 per cent in only three years. The major source of the additional revenue has, of course, been generated by new coal mines such as Norwich Park, Gregory, German Creek and Yarrabee. These new coal lines provide a high level of profitability which can then be made available for the benefit of Queenslanders generally.

Of course, railway revenues are only one area where the benefits of these huge mining developments are felt. Considerable revenues are also generated by way of royalties on the minerals mined. The provision of dams, roads, bridges, railways plus whole towns by developers contributes to the resources of the community. The Government also benefits by way of additional pay-roll tax, stamp duties, etc., which are generated directly and indirectly because of the higher level of economic activity that results.

Those persons with perhaps less than a full appreciation of the benefits of our mining developments have asked in the past: Where are the benefits for the ordinary people of Queensland? What's in it for them? At the risk of stating the obvious, let me quote just a few examples of how the people of Queensland are benefiting from development.

We have a free hospital system that is unique in Australia. Anyone who is ill and in need of hospital treatment can receive it free of charge if he or she wants it. No other State in Australia can offer such a service.

The cost of the free hospital system is very high and the continued provision of such a service in the face of drastic cut-backs in Commonwealth health care contributions can be sustained only because of the strength of Queensland's financial position and the ability of the Government to provide maximum social benefits at minimum cost to the taxpayer.

The ability of the Government to continue to provide for such social services will depend in part on continued development and growth. Any severe recession in the Australian and world economies will constrain the Government's ability to provide the kind of services that it would like to see the people of Queensland enjoy.

Queensland is not an island. Although it is better placed to deal with any economic adversity, it cannot be completely divorced from it. To meet the demands of a growing population, the State's infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and dams must be expanded and improved. It is not an easy task. The Commonwealth Government has consistently refused to support necessary expansions in the State's borrowings to meet this increased demand for capital expenditures.

The State has therefore been forced to provide for significant capital expenditures from its recurrent Budget. Again, the fact that the Government has been able to do this is testimony to the strong financial position of the State and the very high standard of financial management and expertise that prevails. Last year alone, over \$100m was provided from consolidated revenue to supplement the capital works program.

One does not have to be a great economist to work out that this has meant more job opportunities for Queenslanders, more business activity for Queensland industry and more prosperity generally. This is what development and progress are all about. These are the tangible benefits.

At the same time, Queenslanders are less heavily taxed than persons in any other State in Australia. Take pay-roll tax for example. Queensland concessions and exemptions in this area are generally the best in Australia. Queensland employers having an annual pay-roll of less than \$180,000 pay no pay-roll tax. This exemption level is almost 50 per cent higher than that of the next highest State.

At the same time, some States have seen fit to increase the rate of pay-roll tax by way of a surcharge on the larger employer. I hear that the Victorian Government, under Labor, is to introduce a pay-roll surcharge on fringe benefits paid to employees.

Mr Hewitt: And the whole State is in terror about it.

Dr EDWARDS: I hear that this is the reason why so many business people are making inquiries about establishing their businesses in Queensland. Mr Cain has already gone back on his promise about death duties. It is no wonder Victoria is in a mess already.

Mr Hewitt: The fact is that the proposals will relate to superannuation funds.

Dr EDWARDS: Exactly; and the people of Victoria will make their feelings known in the very near future.

I can say here and now that the Government is not going to impose any pay-roll tax surcharges. In fact, we will be looking at the level of exemptions in the forthcoming Budget to see whether further relief can be provided for the people of Queensland.

Consider also such things as business franchise licences for goods such as tobacco and petrol. These taxes are now imposed in every other State of Australia. They are not imposed in Queensland.

Mr Davis: Will you guarantee that?

Dr EDWARDS: I give the honourable member an absolute guarantee that they will not be imposed in Queensland by this Government. I have made that point clear from time to time.

Mr Davis: I have got that.

Dr EDWARDS: I know what happens under Labor Governments. The record in Victoria and New South Wales speaks for itself already.

Of course, the savings to the people of Queensland by not having these forms of taxation are enormous. Less taxation means more money in the pockets of our people, and that is how it ought to be.

I could go on and on citing examples of our low taxation, but I would only bore Opposition members. Suffice it to say that our rates of tax are amongst the lowest in Australia, and that extends across all areas of stamp duty, land tax and so on.

But the Government cannot do all these things if it does not follow some pretty basic rules.

Mr D'Arcy: You dropped the subsidies and asked them to put the rates up.

Dr EDWARDS: Rates throughout Queensland were not increased by a figure greater than the rate of inflation.

Mr D'Arcy: Some shires are up more than 20 per cent.

Dr EDWARDS: That is not the information that is available to me.

Mr Prest: I will show you some later.

Dr EDWARDS: The honourable member knows the reason for that. It is not related to subsidies. It is related to another matter that I know he will raise, and I support his view in that regard.

Firstly, the Government must ensure that maximum value is obtained for the expenditure of every dollar that the taxpayer contributes. The expenditure of funds provided by this Appropriation Bill is very closely monitored at the individual departmental level and by Treasury overall in terms of the economic and financial management objectives fixed by the Government.

Governments must be also visionary in pursuing policies which are appropriate for both the short and the long term good of the State. Governments must also provide a framework within which industry can develop, grow and expand and thereby create an atmosphere conducive to prosperity.

The healthy state of Queensland's finances today is, I believe, mute testimony to sound, correct and purposeful economic and financial objectives set by successive Governments over a number of years.

The future for Queensland is rosy. We have the ball at our feet. While we are reaping significant benefits already from our development, they are really only just beginning. Given the right economic conditions, our future is assured if it is managed correctly.

Despite the present oversupply of coal in Japan as a result of a developing slackness in the steel industry in that country, nine new coal mines have either very recently commenced or are firmly committed to open in the next year or two. These are Blair Athol, Riverside, German Creek, Oaky Creek, Newlands, Collinsville, Yarrabee, South Blackwater and Curragh. The additional royalties, rail profits, pay-roll tax and so on, generated by these developments will further assist the Government to assist the people of Queensland. The employment opportunities and economic activity that these developments will generate, both directly and indirectly, will further assure Queensland's future prosperity.

As these new developments take place, the demand for infrastructure will continue to assume great importance. Three new power-stations will come on stream in the next decade at Tarong, Callide and Stanwell, and the Government is looking for sites for up to five other power-stations to ensure that the State has sufficient electricity for both industrial users and the ordinary householder. We do not want power shortages such as have occurred in other States through inadequate planning and construction programs.

While the Government has placed great importance on the State's capital works program in the past, its importance in the future will be even greater. This will be the Government's biggest challenge in the next decade. We must have the necessary infrastructure to ensure that development continues to take place and to ensure that the quality of life in this great State can continue to rise to standards not previously dreamed of or aspired to. We must have the schools, the hospitals, the roads, the railway network, the water resources, the electricity and so on. We may need to forgo some short-term gains for the longer term good. Nevertheless, we can have all these things and more if we are prepared to be positive in our thinking, to be optimistic, to realise that we have the potential, that we are enjoying the benefits already and that there are more to come if we want them.

The Government can only do so much. It is up to us—to each and every Queenslanders—to look with renewed optimism and enthusiasm to the future, to ignore the prophets of doom—and we will hear some this afternoon—and to make sure that Queensland stays the great State that it is.

The Bill will provide for expenditure of funds to benefit the people of Queensland. The Bill will provide the wherewithal and authority for expenditures whereby Queenslanders can reap the benefit of our development. I commend it to the House.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (4.38 p.m.): Seven years after Fraser came to power, Australia, under Liberal-National Country Party Government, has been driven into the worst recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s. All the economic indicators such as the present CPI inflation rate of 10.4 per cent, the horrendous unemployment levels, the crippling interest rates, the skyrocketing of PAYE taxation, the falling housing

approvals and lack of consumer confidence have only to be listed to prove the abysmal failure of Fraser's economic policies. In 1975, Fraser promised "jobs for all who want to work". That promise is a pathetic joke in 1982, when Australia has the highest unemployment level since the 1930s.

Conservative economic policy is in tatters. The private sector has completely failed to expand to fill the gap brought about by public sector cut-backs. Inflation is on the rise again and is substantially higher than the OECD average. Liberal-National Country Party policy is wallowing in seven years of failure and it is time Australia adopted policies to stimulate growth and employment rather than contraction and a failed fight-inflation-first policy.

As we heard from the Treasurer today, Queensland has tried to project an image of isolation from the rest of Australia, but the same economic indicators destroy this Government's claims that Queensland is progressing while other States go backwards. Queensland is fortunate in having vast resources, as the Treasurer said, especially mineral resources that the world demands; but that good fortune has absolutely nothing to do with the policies and actions of this Government.

Dr Edwards: Come on!

Mr D'ARCY: Does the Treasurer think he put them there? Anyone would think so.

Mr Davis: They are giving it away.

Mr D'ARCY: Yes, the Government cannot even organise the taking out of those resources.

As a result of its policies, the Government skimps on providing essential services to the people of this State, in favour of building up huge cash balances of over \$1400m—cash balances that should be put to work instead of sitting on the money market. The Government does not know whether it is running a State Treasury or a merchant bank.

Although it is very nice to know that up to May in the last financial year the State earned \$188m in interest, how much of that was due to hoarding and not proper financial management? How much of the \$1,400m in cash balances is prudent financial management of cash flow and how much is hoarding and the result of a refusal to provide money for essential services in the State? These questions have never been answered by the Government because it knows that it cannot justify its practices.

State comparisons show very clearly that when compared with other States Queensland holds huge cash balances. What is the justification for this? The Premier, in particular, likes to say that Queensland is different. The figures show differently. Queensland is on the slide just as much as the rest of Australia. The major economic indicators show a deteriorating position. From June 1981 to June 1982, unemployment in Queensland increased. In 1981, 53 900 people, or 5.3 per cent of the work-force, were registered as unemployed. A year later, 62 800, or 6 per cent of the work-force, were registered as unemployed. Youth unemployment, an area we should be most concerned about, is shockingly high at 13.8 per cent—an absolute disaster! So much for the policies of the Government, a Government that has rhetoric, as we heard today, but no policies to alleviate the plight of the unemployed.

All the Treasurer told the people of Queensland today was that they had a free hospital system. That was introduced by a Labor Government some 30 years ago.

Mr Burns: At that time it was funded by raffle money, by the Golden Casket.

Mr D'ARCY: Yes, but today it is funded mainly by the Commonwealth Government with a pittance from the State.

What has occurred in Australia is that the health system, like other systems, now provides the lowest level of service. On a per capita basis the Queensland Government provides less money and gives a smaller range of services in essential areas than is provided in other States. The Government spoon-feeds its rhetoric to an unsuspecting public through a devious media. In real terms, Queenslanders are struggling to stay in their homes and feed their children.

The Government has failed to do anything about youth unemployment. In the next few years casinos will be established in Queensland and yet training for the hospitality industry lags sadly behind. No doubt the employees needed by the casinos will have to come from interstate.

Dr Edwards: Obviously you have not seen the hospitality college.

Mr D'ARCY: The one the Government is building?

Dr Edwards: Yes.

Mr D'ARCY: Three years ago the Government promised a hospitality college in Townsville but it is still under construction. What has happened to it? When the Townsville casino is opened the people in the North will not be able to get jobs there because they will not be trained for them, simply because the Government has not built the college that it promised. Last year the hospitality college received 1 100 applications for 90 positions. The young people of Queensland want to work but the Government will not train them or give them jobs. The Government is like Sir Robert Sparkes who wants to use the children of Queensland as factory fodder. Also, the Government imports its skilled labour.

The situation has been reached where a 6 per cent annual growth rate in real non-farm gross domestic product would take well into the second half of this decade before unemployment was brought back to its late 1960s and early 1970s average. Under the Government's policies, Queensland is not even near that 6 per cent growth rate.

Another major indicator is mining production and revenue. In New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia that increased, but in Queensland in value-added terms production declined to \$1.4 billion. Mining royalties stagnated at \$73m and stagnation and decline can be expected in the foreseeable future. The Government's policies on resource allocation and processing will continue to ensure that our resource sector will continue to be directed and determined by overseas demand rather than by internally generated growth.

Queensland's building and construction sector is also in decline. In March 1982, only 7 800 dwellings were commenced in Queensland whereas in March 1981, 8 100 were commenced. As anybody can see, over the 12 months that is a decline. Home loan approvals from the Queensland banking sector are down. In April 1982, \$35m was lent whereas for April 1981 that figure was \$49m, a substantially larger amount. That is a decline of over 40 per cent in lending by banks for building approvals in one year.

Current crippling high interest rates have created the absurd situation in which the banks have adequate funds to lend for housing but the number who can afford the high interest rates and repayments are few indeed. We are engaged in what one commentator has called "bureaucratic genocide"—forcing interest rates up to impossible levels and forcing people out of their houses and on to the streets because they find it impossible to keep up their repayments.

The Queensland Housing Commission is unable to cope. The Government's belated home and interest package is a welcome but ultimately band-aid approach to the problem of high interest rates, and in the meantime families are suffering and welfare services are failing to cope with the human problems created by this high-interest-rate policy decided by well-paid and secure bureaucrats and politicians.

If the Fraser Government continues with its failed tight-money policy, the 1980s will be a decade of social and economic tragedy. If present policies are continued, recession will deepen and interest rates will continue to climb with housing rates going up by approximately 2 per cent on current levels and that, of course, is directly opposed to what the Treasurer is saying—that they will fall by 2 per cent. In a moment I will prove that his policies are forcing up interest rates. Such predictions are the general consensus of economists and the business community.

Before the last election the Treasurer predicted a fall in interest rates. Since then housing rates have risen by over 4 per cent, and this represents, on a \$30,000 home loan, an increase in repayments of over \$100 a month. Certainly \$100 a month has not been put into the pay packets of workers in this State in that same period. In fact, as a financial guru, the Treasurer leaves a lot to be desired. His comments this morning are not even backed up by the Federal Treasurer, Mr Howard.

Dr Edwards: You didn't read what he said last night.

Mr D'ARCY: I heard him on the air yesterday. He referred to the false dawn of interest rates, the prime rate, to which the Treasurer was referring. The Treasurer does not understand interest rates. I do not know who he has been listening to, but it could not have been Mr Hielscher because he is smarter than that. The Treasurer is watching prime rates that are fluctuating wildly on an open market. He is not watching mid rates.

If he does not know what has occurred, I will tell him that huge amounts of overseas money have come into this State on a speculative basis. Fraser has devalued the dollar. It is going out the back door, as the Treasurer knows. He must realise that, because the American dollar is rising at present, that money will start to flow out. The only way in which the Federal Government can keep that speculative money on our interest-rate market is to keep interest rates high, because it has not kept up the productivity in the area to support it. If the Treasurer does not realise that, he does not realise that what he is actually doing is supporting that policy.

The Government is asking the ordinary taxpayer in Queensland to pay the present high interest rates to keep that speculative money here, because it was brought into this country through bad economic planning and policies. In fact, we were living beyond our means because Fraser forced us into that position for his own political ends. That is why the interest rate burden is being forced back onto the ordinary PAYE taxpayer in the community, and this will continue. Even if the prime rate continues to fall on world markets—that is highly doubtful and nobody really believes that it will—interest rates and the mid-term rate will not fall because of the way in which the Government has stacked the deck against the ordinary worker in this State.

In one of today's newspapers one saw the headline, "Banks doubtful on long term rate fall". The Treasurer might not have read the article. It stated—

"Despite the recent falls in interest rates in the United States and the United Kingdom capital markets, there seems little prospect of a 'sustainable' reduction in longer-term interest rates in Australia, the Commonwealth Bank says in its latest economic forecast for the Australian economy.

The bank says that overall, the prospects for the economy are at present, less than exciting."

It predicted that the rates would rise again in those countries, obviously something that the Treasurer does not understand.

We see another problem with the economy. Mr Howard said that he was less than optimistic. He said that the false storms had been on the American market before and that there was no long-term chance of the American economy picking up at present. We have failed to realise in Australia that the recession that the Treasurer claims has arrived here suddenly has been present in some countries for 18 months or two years, with America being a typical example.

Queensland is obviously being affected and is on the same path as the rest of Australia. The figures prove that the Premier's cry that Queensland is going against the Australian trend is false. We are on the slide with everyone else and this Government has failed to reverse that slide. Given the fact that the Government has failed to stop the slide of Queensland, it is appalling that it has adopted a miserly approach to the provision of social services.

Since 1977 Queensland has continually introduced surplus of revenue over expenditure Budgets. In 1980-81 the Budget result of total revenue less total expenditure was a surplus of \$161.357m or \$69.91 per capita. Figures suggest the result for 1981-82 will be similar.

Most State Governments budget for a deficit, but Queensland believes in providing services only when there is a public outcry. Grants Commission statistics show that we continue to spend the least on education, the least on culture and recreation, the least on health, and the least on welfare services. We do, however, spend more than the national average on law and order. Our total social services expenditure for 1980-81 came to \$609.29 per capita while the national average was \$699.79. Western Australia spent \$826.37.

In other words we are spending \$90 per capita less in the areas that count, the areas in which the Treasurer just claimed that he is helping the people of Queensland. The Treasurer knows that there is an appalling level of services in Queensland, yet the Queensland Government claims that we pay less in State taxes. He made that claim again today

and cited pay-roll tax as an example. That is one of the biggest myths ever perpetrated by this Government. The Treasurer is well aware that, in real terms, it is no more than a blatant lie.

Admittedly, Queensland has the lowest total State taxation, but if the total is broken down it is found that only three taxes are lower on a per capita basis, and the Treasurer knows that well and truly. He said that today. He said that pay-roll tax, gambling taxes and probate and succession duties are lower. They are the only taxes that are lower. They barely affect the average Queenslander.

Mr McKechnie: What about the petrol tax?

Mr D'ARCY: I will come to that in a moment.

State taxation and Federal taxation are sucking the average Queensland and Australian wage earner dry. Since 1975 Fraser has given four tax concessions to the PAYE taxpayer and over 80 to the business, self-employed and tax avoidance sector.

Since 1975 the PAYE taxpayer on the average wage with a dependent spouse and two children has seen his net tax as a proportion of income increase by 72.9 per cent. Those lucky individuals who earn more than \$32,000 have in comparison seen their net tax burden as a proportion of income decline by between 2 and 3 per cent. Such figures show the priority of the Federal Government—give to the rich and take from the poor.

The people of Australia are waking up to this fraud and the people of Queensland are waking up to fact that they have the worst services in Australia and that the only way to get money from the Queensland Government is to protest loud and long.

Although we spend the least on consumer protection services, the least on social services and were amongst the lowest on expenditure for local government and town planning and country water supply and sewerage, the Government looks after its own very well.

The Queensland Government allocates more to superannuation schemes on a per capital basis than any other State.

Queensland needs a new direction and it is clear that the present Government is incapable of providing it.

If we do not adopt economic policies which effectively encourage growth and job creation we will continue to decline. There was not one word from the Treasurer on job-creation programs. He merely said that they were there. I should like to know what they are. None have been provided in this State. All he does is produce bodgie figures. Higher investment levels are needed. If the private sector cannot or will not invest, the Government has to do so. We know how the Queensland Government hoards moneys obtained from statutory authorities which have an income and how it taxes people in areas in which there is no direct income.

Whether it is Government or private investment is not important. It is important to have investment in industries with good prospects or those that are economically sound and that the infrastructure provided is economically justifiable. The Government has invested in some fly-by-night schemes. Every year mad-cap investment schemes are backed, and mining projects are supported by the Government, which guaranteed a large sum of money for Greenvale Nickel. The Government has to promote growth and investment, but it will not do that by hoarding money and investing it on the money market.

Dr Edwards: Do you say that the Government should withdraw from Greenvale?

Mr D'ARCY: No.

The Government has not acted in a fair and equitable way. It should not have been involved in that project in the first place, but the Government cannot get out of it now. The Government's hoarding of money is a misallocation of the highest order. However, misallocation is a normal practice in Queensland. At Tarong, \$400m was wasted. The people of Queensland will not forget what happened because they are paying for it through increased electricity charges. The Treasurer does not consider that to be a tax. When pensioners receive their electricity bills they see that the charges have increased. The Government does not believe that that is a form of tax. The Government boasts about its resources, while the people of Queensland suffer under high taxes in the form of increased electricity charges. That is only one matter. As I said, \$400m in excess of the recommended amount was spent on the Tarong Power Station. The taxpayers of

Queensland will pay for that. The \$2,000m Winchester South deal was entered into by the Government on dubious and unexplained grounds, while the Alcoa project has been shelved indefinitely. Honourable members will recall the EDI share fiasco. One disaster has followed another.

New policies, new initiatives and new economic programs are needed in Queensland. The State's employment policies have been a disaster. The Works Department is one of the biggest disaster areas of all. It is time that a Budget was introduced which the people of Queensland can understand. Even the Treasurer cannot understand his own Budget. He cannot explain its details. It is a document of deceit. It should be one of explanation, but it offers no explanation. When the Budget is introduced the leader writes in "The Courier-Mail"—that great doormat of the Government—comment—

Mr Innes: Which year?

Mr D'ARCY: Every year. On 18 September 1981, the Treasurer was reported as saying—

"This should allow economic growth and development of the State to proceed at a greater rate."

Dr Edwards: That is true.

Mr D'ARCY: I do not believe it to be so at the present time. Does the Treasurer predict more interest rate rises? I do not think that he knows what interest rates are being charged at present. Yesterday, in "The Courier-Mail" the Treasurer, with his usual rhetoric, said that interest rates would fall by 2 per cent. Can he explain to me how they can be reduced by 2 per cent? He cannot! Every day the Metropolitan Permanent Building Society advertises in that same newspaper about its "sweet sixteen", which is 16 per cent interest for investors. It is obvious that the average person will have to pay higher interest rates in Queensland. The policies of the Queensland Government and the Fraser Government have forced up interest rates, which, in turn, are driving people out of their homes.

To return to the Treasurer's Budgets—in referring to a previous Budget the "Telegraph" said that "prospects seem bright and almost limitless for our rapidly developing State". That cannot be said this year. The building industry is declining on the Gold Coast and on the Sunshine Coast, where previously a great deal of high-rise development took place. Whereas previously people in other States were induced to rush to Queensland, these days that is not happening. Money is being drained out of this State. Queensland is still only a branch office State, as it always has been. Contrary to the protestations of this Government, Australia's financial organisations are centralising in Sydney and Melbourne and Queensland is losing out. Certainly some people are coming to Queensland at present, but the Government could not even force Utah to come to Queensland until recently. MIM was forced here by a Labor Government, and that is the only large company that remains in Queensland.

Every year the same old comments are made about the Treasurer's Budget. It is a farce. Why? Because the Budget is a document of deceit. It does not tell the people that they will have to pay \$8.50 to renew a driver's licence; nor does it tell them that boat registration fees, car registration fees, local authority rates and taxes, electricity tariffs and harbour dues are rising. The Budget makes no mention of the other charges that the Government imposes surreptitiously.

Anyone who studies the Treasurer's so-called balanced Budgets realises that they are documents of deceit in more ways than one. Each year the figures published in the Budget are fairly close to the Treasurer's estimates. No wonder he claims he is bringing down a balanced Budget.

Recently a state of emergency was declared because the Premier and his Cabinet did not want to honour their obligations. They wanted to lie their way out of a situation in which they had promised a shorter working week. One must ask the Treasurer and the Liberal Party where they stood on the matter of the state of emergency. The Liberals, as members of the Cabinet, must accept responsibility for the declaration of the state of emergency.

Let me deal with railway revenue. For the 11 months till May 1982 the railways earned \$440m. They were expected to earn \$501m. The Treasurer said that it was expected that in June the railways would earn \$40m. A shortfall of approximately \$20m will occur in Railway Department revenue. The Premier was told by his financial guru that it

would cost approximately \$20m to implement a 38-hour week. It was obvious that the money had to come from the railways and from other areas in which the workers would be affected. What did the Government do? It ratted on the workers and broke its promise. But that is what is to be expected from this Government. It went back on a promise that it made and cowed about. Every time the Government hits one person—the average Queenslander. We want a Budget that we can understand, not one of deceit.

Government Members interjected.

Mr D'ARCY: When I say "we": I mean the people of Queensland. Opposition members can understand it. The Budget is one of deceit. It covers things up.

This year the Government will earn big money from interest rates. It is estimated that it will receive \$135m by way of interest. One wonders where the Treasurer can find money for certain undertakings. Nobody has explained where the Minister for Works and Housing, who is asleep—

Mr WHARTON: I rise to a point of order. I am not asleep; I am trying to listen to the honourable member and to understand him. I cannot understand him, but at least I can understand the Budget.

Mr D'ARCY: Perhaps the Minister will explain where he obtained the money for the restoration of Parliament House, the cost of which is alleged to be three times the original budgeted cost. Where did the Premier find the money to purchase a new jet aircraft? Where did he find the money to pay for the trip of the Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs? On occasions, ministerial expenses are hundreds of thousands of dollars over the estimates, but nobody worries about that. The Treasurer just writes a cheque for them. He has a little fund. This year he will receive more than \$200m in interest on that fund. That money is rolling around in the money market. To 11 May of this year, the Government had received \$188m in interest on money invested in the short-term money market.

Recently the member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras) talked about the welfare services in Queensland. This Government has the lowest expenditure per capita on welfare services of any State in Australia. That situation has existed virtually since the Government has been in office. The Government is not using to the best advantage the money that it receives. We do not want a merchant bank; we want to be able to provide services to the people of Queensland.

That great rag "The Courier-Mail" conducted a campaign about our roads. It referred to the problems with drink-driving, with vehicles and with just about everything. Of course, it did not blame the Government for the problems on our roads. The Government maintains a net-work of roads that is archaic. The roads should have been replaced years ago. Every so often we see the colossus from the South Coast get on his high horse and blame the Federal Government for the state of our roads. This Government blames the Federal Government for everything. The roads in this State are disgraceful, and that is one of the areas in which the Treasurer is not supplying funds.

Recently Sir Robert Sparkes said that the class-size issue was a political one brought about by the political parents and citizens associations and the political Queensland Teachers Union.

Dr Edwards: He was pretty right.

Mr D'ARCY: Was he? That shows the Treasurer's priority for education. There is no priority for education. The National and Liberal Parties of this State do not give any priority to the children of this State and their education. They do not believe that the children of this State are a resource. The children of this State are the greatest resource that we have, and that is why this Government will not give any priority to them. That is why money is not spent in the essential areas of education. This Government has the lowest per capita expenditure on education of any State in Australia. It will not provide specialist teachers or decent class sizes. It is an absolute disgrace.

What happens when specialists are needed in certain areas? When specialists are required in the casino industry, the tourist industry, or the hospitality industry, they have to be brought from interstate or overseas because that is where they are trained. The Minister for Employment and Labour Relations (Sir William Knox) says, "We need skilled migrants

from overseas." What is wrong with Queensland children? Why does Queensland have the highest rate of youth unemployment in Australia? It is because this Government will not train them in the education system. It is an absolute disgrace.

We have proved that the Government is hoarding money; it is not spending it. It raises taxes so that it can provide services, but it will not spend the money. As I have said, the Government has spent \$18m on restoring Parliament House, although the original estimate was only \$6m. It will purchase a new plane for the Premier at the drop of a hat. The Government taxes Queenslanders through the back door. It hits them hard but it supplies the worst services of any State in Australia. Then Ministers have the audacity to go into print and say, "We have the greatest State in Australia. We created it." Anyone would think that the Premier and the Treasurer actually shovelled the coal into the holes in the Bowen Basin. When this myth is perpetuated by the media, such as "The Courier-Mail" one wonders what is going on. Thank goodness there is a competitor for "The Courier-Mail" at long last. We might see some action now.

Employment opportunities can be expanded in the tourist industry because it is a service industry.

The Treasurer spoke about the railways. Look at what has happened. The men are asking for a 38-hour week. What has happened with productivity? Blue-collar workers achieved the 40-hour week many years ago. Look at the technological changes that have occurred since then, with the way the Railway Department is organised and the tonnage that is now being hauled—yet the Government won't consider a 38-hour week. Productivity has increased. We will not let the Government lie to the Parliament and to the people of Queensland.

Job-creation programs can be engendered in the tourist industry, but what do we get from the Government? Rhetoric such as we heard from the Treasurer today. There are no job-creation programs in this State. The Government puts no money into them. Instead it hoards its money, organising only the wealthy multinationals. The Government watches things that they are building and says, "Great, isn't it? Look at what is happening in this State." Who cares about the people of Queensland? Who cares about people in my electorate, for example, who had their house knocked down?

Dr Edwards: They couldn't find you.

Mr D'ARCY: They did not have much trouble finding me.

Every week in that area there are massive Housing Commission problems. People of Queensland are being virtually thrown out of their homes as a result of the policies of this Government. Housing, tourism, welfare and education all come under critical analysis at a time such as this when budgetary considerations are being made. It must be realised that the economic situation in Queensland today requires initiative and leadership—something we have not had. All we have had from this Government has been words.

I was pleased to read that the Queensland Government is to establish a developing authority. That is something that we in the Opposition have been pressing for over many years. It has been impossible for small councils, harbour boards and minor statutory authorities set up by this Government—and there are too many in this State—to succeed in the borrowing centres of this State and nation. It was a shame to see shire clerks, mayors and chairmen traipsing around the financial institutions of Australia. It is to be hoped that the Treasurer goes far enough in setting up a developing authority. Judging by his past performance, we do not think he will go far enough. It will be a half-baked scheme that will benefit only a few. It ought to be a scheme that puts people back to work, allows job-creation programs and allows a more effective borrowing medium for institutions such as councils and statutory bodies so that they can get on with their work and be able to employ people in areas in which they should be employing them.

I shall now deal with the CER agreement with New Zealand. The Government through its officers has participated in talks on various areas of that agreement. However, what has really occurred is that through the CER New Zealand has really got the better of us.

Dr Edwards: It isn't signed yet.

Mr D'ARCY: I don't know where the Treasurer has been over the last two years. Perhaps he has been under a cabbage. This has been going on for two years, and he hadn't even bleated about the negotiations until the other day, after I had made a few comments, when he joined the timber people and made a comment. The New Zealand Minister for

Agriculture was here, but the Government did not want him to be seen by the Press. He was hidden. Since 1980, after the NAFTA agreement, negotiations have been going on with Ministers in the New Zealand Government.

Dr Edwards: They are still going on.

Mr D'ARCY: It has reached the stage where heads of agreement were signed by Prime Minister Muldoon and Prime Minister Fraser a few months ago, with the final agreement supposedly being signed in August—this month. The Treasurer is about to find that out. He has just found out that such a thing as CER exists. Of course, the agreement has been fully drawn up. Now he is starting to bleat about it, but it is a bit late.

The people most affected are those who normally support the Government, the people in small country areas—the dairy farmers and producers of cheese, timber, fruit and vegetables. In the short term, they will be the most affected by the agreement. Not only does the New Zealand grower have the advantage of the New Zealand dollar against the Australian dollar—though, heaven knows, that is falling at the moment—but he also is in the position that internal agreements with the New Zealand Government on such matters as export incentives will not be phased out. We rely almost entirely on tariff agreements.

The Treasurer knows that in the short term it will be a disaster for small businessmen. I admit that in the long term the agreement will be of advantage to the big producers in Australia. Those companies have been able to predict the future and have already been able to afford to establish themselves under other names in New Zealand. Companies such as ACI have established themselves under other names in New Zealand. They are the ones that will gain an advantage. No wonder the Government supported the agreement! No wonder Doug Anthony has broken his neck to get the agreement signed!

The way things are proceeding, I have no doubt that the agreement will be signed, because there has not been a word from the Queensland Government. The Premier said, "We will wait and see." Are we to wait until after it has been signed? It comes into effect on 1 January 1983. What has the Government done? Has a secret deal been done behind closed doors to get the agreement withdrawn?

It is time that the people of Queensland and Australians in general were informed of the full implications of that agreement, because it is more far-reaching than any other agreement. In fact, in the long term it will make New Zealand the seventh Australian State and a full trading partner. It will gain all that in addition to the dollar advantage, and it will not phase out many of its own incentive schemes for many years. In fact, if the New Zealand people in some areas have their way, the schemes will never be phased out.

I am amazed that newspapers such as "The Courier-Mail" have not given the matter any coverage. No wonder people do not know what is going on. However, for the last two years in New Zealand the lead-up to this agreement has been on the front page of every newspaper. However, suddenly the Government has realised that a closer economic relations agreement between Australia and New Zealand is about to come into force. It should be delayed and the Government should take an active part in achieving that delay.

Australians will be disadvantaged. At a time when Queensland cannot possibly stand greater unemployment, the agreement will create further unemployment. The full implications will be felt in country areas first and later in the small business areas such as boat building and furniture manufacture. Of course, the timber industry will be very seriously affected. Australians in general, and Queenslanders in particular, should do something about the CER agreement. The Federal Leader of the Opposition (Mr Bill Hayden) has spoken out against it.

The casino determination presented to the last session of Parliament caused a great deal of heartbreak for the Government. Serious and perturbing rumours exist in the community at present that the licence to Jennings Industries Ltd could be scrapped. I hope that is not true.

Dr Edwards: That is totally inaccurate, and you know it.

Mr D'ARCY: I hope it is, but it is what many people in the know are saying. The Treasurer had enough trouble with his National Party colleagues in awarding the casino licence. He was not able to award the tender to Federal Hotels, which should have been the operator.

Dr EDWARDS: I rise to a point of order. In no way is that statement the truth. I ask the honourable member to withdraw it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! The Treasurer has asked the honourable member to withdraw the words.

Mr D'ARCY: I withdraw the words, but I am not quite sure what I am supposed to withdraw.

Dr EDWARDS: The honourable member alleged that I could not get Federal Hotels to be the operator of the casino. That is totally inaccurate. My recommendation to Cabinet was adopted totally by it. My recommendation did not include Federal Hotels as an operator.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Treasurer has explained to the honourable member for Woodridge what he wishes withdrawn, and I ask the honourable member to withdraw the words.

Mr D'ARCY: I withdraw the words.

It is a fact of life that the third applicant for a casino licence was Jennings Industries Ltd on behalf of Federal Hotels. Federal Hotels has a proven record in Australia; it contains no crime or corruption. Although it is an Australian company that operates entirely within Australia, it appears that the Treasurer and the Government have asked for overseas operators, as they did with Genting for the northern casino. That is most unsatisfactory, because even in the New Jersey area there is serious crime and corruption in casinos.

The same sort of situation will arise here if Dr Edwards invites people with that type of background into this State, yet that is obviously what the Government is intent on doing. The Government's handling of the casino situation has been an absolute fiasco, and if it continues in the same vein the Treasurer will be responsible for having invited the criminal element into this State and be responsible for the corruption that will follow. It should be remembered that the Gold Coast casino will be the biggest in Australia and will be the one where, according to most experts, we will see the highest level of crime and corruption. It is an area that the Government will not be able to police properly. Surely the Government should have awarded the contract to an operator who was above reproach, one who had a proven record in this State. But that has not occurred. An operator with a proven record throughout Australia was rejected and an operator whose background is not known in Queensland was awarded the contract.

Dr Edwards: Who is that?

Mr D'ARCY: I do not think the Treasurer knows. The problem we face is that the Treasurer does not have a clue about what he has actually done.

Another problem facing South-east Queensland—again a broken Government promise—is the development of The Spit. I have seen the Government get into some tangles and messes in its time, but this one must rate as one of the most complicated messes of all time. To an outsider it is quite obvious what has happened. Keith Williams did a deal with the Premier. He obviously said, "Give me carte blanche on development and this Southport stabilisation will not cost you a penny. I will fix it." It is obvious that that is what occurred. He fixed it all right! He produced madcap development schemes that were not politically or publicly acceptable. Even the National Party member for Southport had to speak out against them. We are now dealing with the third scheme to be put up. This Government set up the Gold Coast Waterways Authority to handle the development of The Spit and The Broadwater. It was also going to stabilise the bar.

Let me tell the good members of this House the current situation. Members have heard a lot of ruckus, but the real situation is that no development has taken place. The authority has not come up with one acceptable plan, so there is still no stabilisation of the bar. No breakwater has been built. Not one acceptable design has been produced. The authority has referred to a design costing \$30m-odd, and that money was supposed to be raised through the development of The Spit and The Broadwater. But this has not occurred. The authority is not talking to the right people. Several groups are involved. I believe that at this stage the only answer to the problem is to sack the Gold Coast Waterways Authority and make the Department of Harbours and Marine foot the bill for the construction of the breakwater and then ascertain what development can take place.

Dr Lockwood interjected.

Mr D'ARCY: Does the honourable member realise that in four months' time sewerage effluent from the Coombabah treatment works will be discharged not outside The Boardwater but into The Broadwater? I had to explain that to the member for Southport a moment ago. The big pipes one sees as one drives into Southport are to be laid across to the other side of The Broadwater but inside the bar, and the sewerage effluent pumped out there. The pipes were supposed to be laid along the breakwater but, of course, the breakwater has not been built. Its construction was an election promise, and the Premier and the Government cannot get out of it. In 1970 a number of Ministers raced down to Southport and said, "We will fix the bar. We will fix deep water for you and fix The Broadwater." That was 12 years ago now. When he was leader of the Liberal Party, Sir William Knox broke his leg when he went out to look at the bar.

That is how long ago the promises were made. But the Government has done nothing about them. What will happen if the Gold Coast Waterways Authority goes ahead with its current \$30m plan? Do members know the maximum amount that the proposed development will bring in? I do not think that that would be acceptable to the protagonists in that area. My estimate and the estimate of a few knowledgeable councillors and people in the area is \$8m. Where will the other \$20m come from? The waterways authority cannot find it.

It will be another of the Government's broken promises. It will be another fiasco in South-east Queensland. It will be another fiasco in the tourist industry. The Government fails to promote that industry. It does not understand the importance of the tourist industry. The Gold Coast is the biggest tourist centre in Queensland. It is another matter in which the Government must take the initiative. Unless it does we will have another fiasco, with nothing done and nothing built. I do not believe in this Government because it has failed the people of the Gold Coast, Queensland and Australia. All people in Australia, not merely those living on the Gold Coast, want this development. It is vital.

Before long, sewage will be pumped into The Broadwater and nothing will be done by the Government. It is disgraceful, and it is time that the Government took the initiative and did something. Meetings have been held. A situation of stagnation will be reached. The Government will continue to claim at the next election that it will be done. There will be promises, promises, promises, and promising is something that the Government is very good at.

I turn now to the recent French nuclear tests at Mururoa Atoll. The great newspapers in this State did not mention that a 20-kt neutron bomb was detonated underground on Mururoa Atoll. It has been proved beyond doubt that there is leakage from the atoll into the Pacific Ocean when such tests are conducted. Two tests were conducted in one week. The latest bomb was exploded at one minute past 3, Brisbane time, on 2 July.

Previously French vulcanologists visited the area. They were the same vulcanologists who visited the area prior to the first underground test in 1976. Harold Tarieff said that they were opposed to the tests and that he believed an international investigation should take place. There is seepage from the atoll into the food sources in the Pacific Ocean. The insidious poisoning of the Pacific Ocean should be of great concern to Queensland because of its vast coastline, yet there has not been one murmur.

On the contrary, the Premier is breaking his neck to have nuclear power-stations established in Queensland. He could not wait to get back to Queensland to fly over the deck of the "Truxton" and so give the full approval of the Government to the Americans developing nuclear armaments.

A crazy situation exists in the world today. Nothing has been done about it in this State. It is time that the nuclear debate was taken up in this Parliament by the people who are concerned. As Jean Rostand the biologist has said on many occasions, there is a high probability of radiation causing cancer. We should do something about it. We should speak out against these tests. Australia played a leading role in preventing France from continuing atmospheric tests in the Pacific area. All testing should be stopped.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr D'ARCY: A member said that France has a socialist Government. I do not care about that. No Government has the right to jeopardise the future generations of this world. According to surveys, some children believe that they will be involved in a nuclear war and that many of them will not reach adulthood. That should make us realise the seriousness of the nuclear scourge that is upon us.

The Parliament should take action when these tests take place. The Opposition took some positive steps when Wilfred Bertile was in Brisbane leading the French delegation. We presented him with a letter signed by all members of the Opposition. He discussed the problem with us. We have also made protests—

Mr Hansen: We will not be selling uranium to them, either.

Mr D'ARCY: That is right. The problems of the nuclear debate belong to every one of us. It is one that we should take seriously if we are elected to safeguard the people. The Queensland Government should examine its budgetary commitments and not just go along with the useless rhetoric that the Treasurer mouths. The Treasurer should undertake a course of study in an attempt to understand the basis of economics.

The Premier and the Treasurer made fools of themselves in front of the Japanese. On one occasion the Treasurer was corrected by one of his officers. He knew more about the Queensland economy than the Treasurer. Initiatives should be taken to correct the situation that exists. Queensland is a wealthy and resourceful State. It is time that the Government took initiatives instead of mouthing rhetoric. Jobs should be created for the young people of this State. People in the educational field should be used as a resource. We might then see some real progress with the Government caring about the people who live in the State. People must feed their children, and buy homes and motor vehicles. They do not want to find themselves in a situation in which they are unable to feed their families and are forced out of their homes. The standard of living in this State is dropping dramatically.

Mr MOORE (Windsor) (5.32 p.m.): The remarks made by the Treasurer are spot on. I heard the biggest amount of drivel that I have ever heard in my life from the so-called Opposition spokesman on Treasury matters. To say that members of the public do not understand the Budgets that the Treasurer has introduced is an indication of abysmal ignorance.

I congratulate the Government on achieving 25 years of magnificent administration of this State. The Government began slowly and in a quiet way. For 40 years the ALP said there was great potential, but nothing was done by that Government. When the present Government won office 25 years ago I was working in the railways. I saw apprentices crying because they thought dreadful things were going to happen to them. To one of them I said, "Calm down, brother. Everything will be all right, Don't worry." After a month everyone saw that there was virtually no change. The Government did not go about making sudden changes. The Government did not want to create turmoil and strife. It had been out of office and it needed to find its feet gradually. It discovered from the business people what the State needed. Progress has been made to a stage where Queensland is no longer regarded as the Cinderella State. It is a State that every other State envies. We see the Wrans and the Cains—

A Government Member: The Dunstons.

Mr MOORE: I am not talking about pansies.

They stand up and they posture. Referring to Wran, somebody will say, "This fellow is a world-beater." When the public servants asked for pay increases, he granted them. He got himself into a hell of a lot of strife. Because he cannot pay his way, he is imposing all sorts of taxes on the people of New South Wales.

Blind Freddy can see that balancing a State Budget is no different from balancing a household budget. No-one can afford to spend more than he earns. Instead of talking about reducing taxes, the people should be talking about reducing spending. If Government spending is reduced, there will be no need to have the high taxes. It is stupid to talk the other way around. If people were prepared to accept less money being spent here and there, the Treasury would not need to impose so many taxes. That applies in both the State and Federal spheres.

It has been claimed that inflation is a problem, and it is. However, in this computer age there is no reason why all of a person's possessions—his house, his car and money in the bank—could not increase in value at the same rate as that of inflation. We have the facilities to do that if we so desire.

Basically the whole system is one of barter. It is a matter of so many cabbages for so many shirts. Inflation cannot occur in a barter system. It is only when a person cannot cart a whole lot of pumpkins around with him and therefore needs another means of exchange, such as money, that problems arise. Things go wrong when the Federal Treasury can print money because of an inflow of foreign capital. When an equivalent amount of money is printed the nation gets into strife.

It is appropriate to talk of money matters in this debate, but it was not my intention to do so. I shall leave that to the Budget debate. My main reason for speaking was to refer to the "Melbidir" trip by two Ministers. I accompanied them for a few days.

I wonder why the Press has been absolutely untruthful and unkind in its references to the trip. The publishers of "The Sunday Mail" cannot sell their rag, because they have so much competition from the television media. They are giving away gold bars to people who buy the paper. They said, "There is no news. TV has it all. What can we do?" When they saw that Mr Tomkins was going on a trip, they said, "Let us invent something. Let us call it a fishing trip. We will sow the seeds of doubt. The Minister will have to come back and deny it. We will sell a few more of our newspapers by making the politicians look bad." The publishers do not do themselves or the public a service by inventing news.

I have been in Parliament for 13 years. I fight the Opposition when I can, but I cannot say that I have seen many members on either side who sit on their backside and loaf. Although I do not favour the ALP's policies, I must say in all truth that while I have been here I have not seen any loafers in this Parliament. I do not agree with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—I think he is half a pot-smoker and all sorts of things—but that has nothing to do with it. I concede that he works reasonably hard for his constituents.

To return to the trip, we left Brisbane on the Sunday evening, spent that night in Cairns and next day flew to Bamaga, where the Government vessel "Melbidir" was to be waiting. It arrived in port a little late. However, we had other work to do. We visited the school, and we looked at the sewerage scheme, which is costing a small fortune, and at other work. We also presented a flag.

Mr Prest: You are telling a story.

Mr MOORE: The honourable member will get the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; there will be no story.

It has been claimed that the "Melbidir" was empty. I have been on the ship on about 10 occasions, and on this occasion it was more heavily laden, I think, than it was on any other occasion. It picked us up at Red Island Point on Bamaga. Because the tide was a little low, the ship stirred up the mud and we could not depart on schedule. We had to remain there until the high tide.

Mr Hooper: You said the boat was loaded. Were any of the occupants loaded?

Mr MOORE: With what?

Mr Hooper: I leave it to your imagination.

Mr MOORE: I have no imagination. I am telling the truth. Because the ship could not leave, we were immediately 12 hours behind schedule.

Mr D'Arcy: Did you take the local member?

Mr MOORE: Which local member?

Mr D'Arcy: The local member for Cook.

Mr MOORE: Nobody has heard of him. He was not even invited to the Bamaga show, so the honourable member should not talk about him.

Mr D'Arcy: Why did you take the free-loaders?

Mr MOORE: What free-loaders?

Mr D'Arcy: The foreigners.

Mr MOORE: I shall get around to the so-called free-loaders. I am not going to hide anything.

The skipper pulled up anchor at 6 o'clock in the morning.

Mr Hooper: Can you summarise it?

Mr MOORE: I am not going to summarise anything because too many lies have been told about this trip.

We then went to Yorke Island. It is about nine hours steaming from Bamaga to Yorke Island. As the skipper pulled up anchor at 6 o'clock in the morning, the engines had been operating well before then. Although we got to Yorke Island before dark, the skipper had been on duty for more than eight hours. If we had left at the scheduled time of 1 o'clock in the afternoon, there is no way in the world that he could have got to Yorke Island before dark. It would have meant that he would have anchored in the lee of an island, and it would not have been an inhabited island, because there are just none there.

The skipper is the person who decides where he will anchor. No Premier would be so stupid as to say to the skipper of a ship, "You will do as I say." The skipper has his ticket hanging on what he does. If a Premier said that, the skipper would say, "My ticket is hanging on this. With due respect, sir, I will have to anchor where I can." He would anchor in the lee of an island. Next morning at daylight he would pull up anchor and steam away. We heard the stupid talk about visiting uninhabited islands. No Premier would instruct the skipper of the "Melbidir" how to sail his ship.

The only vessels that travel in the Torres Strait at night are those with pilots on board, and they keep to the main channel that is well marked. It is all daylight travel for vessels such as the "Melbidir" that operate in hazardous waters with reefs. Captain Douglas is not stupid. He knows what he is doing and he runs the ship his way.

There was nothing unscheduled about the trip. As I said, I have been on the vessel many times and this trip was no different from any other trip, except that there was more cargo. The "Melbidir" always carries cargo, but I was a little worried about the cargo on this occasion because the whole deck was loaded with petrol and diesel drums.

The petrol was in four-gallon drums. Because of the way in which it was packed, one drum upon another, there was nowhere to put the dinghies other than on top of the petrol. When the seas were a bit rough, we could hear the cans moving because of the weight of the dinghies. It was a rather dangerous situation.

However, that is not the point. The vessel was loaded with potatoes, bags of rice, onions and a vast quantity of four-gallon tins of flour. It was absolutely full of gear. When the vessel arrived at an island, the dinghies were lowered and the crew unloaded the supplies.

Let it be remembered that the skipper pulls up anchor at 6 o'clock in the morning. By 2 o'clock in the afternoon he has done his day's work. There is only one skipper on the ship. If he anchors at 2 o'clock, he has done his day's work. If it is at an uninhabited island, then so be it. However, because he is not a bad fellow, he will give the extra time and go as far as he can. If he happens to stop at an uninhabited island, well and good. He attempts to get to an island where the crew can unload the supplies.

What does the Minister do? All he does is work in with the schedule. He finds out beforehand where the "Melbidir" is going and says, "Righto. I haven't been to such-and-such an island." On board he goes. When he gets to the island, he goes to meet the chairman and the people on the island. He talks to them about their problems, if there are any—and there aren't any.

The question has been asked, "Why have the free-loaders?" Fools continually say in the Press how disenchanted the people are, how unhappy they are, how much malnutrition there is and how much child mortality there is, when there is none; so we take along some independent people.

Let me talk about some members of the Opposition who have been on the boat, to my knowledge. There was Ray Jones, Perc Tucker, Merv Thackeray, Ray Bousen, Jack Aiken, Lou Jensen—

Mr Hooper: How long ago was this?

Mr MOORE: Never mind. The Opposition is questioning our motives. There was Fred Bromley, too. It might be history; it might be ancient history; but they have all been on it. There has been all this talk about "free-loaders" On one occasion there was Archbishop Arnott, the Anglican Archbishop, and his wife. More free-loaders? When they were there and I was on board, nobody moaned about that. When Sir John Laverack went on the boat, nobody moaned about that. When Sir Henry Abel Smith went on it, nobody moaned about that. Some people from the Press have been on it—Dick Palk, Peter Trundle, and a young girl named Michelle Grattan. In addition, a Hercules aircraft full of pressmen—more than 25—went to the "Melbidir". There was no Press talk about that. There were also Peter Monckton, Hugh Lunn, Noel someone-or-other—I can't think of his name but I think he is business roundsman, or something, now—a Channel 0 reporter and his cameraman and Allen Callaghan. They are just fellows I can think of from memory.

The Press did an absolutely dirty disservice. They made no mention of all their free-loaders who went on the "Melbidir" and paid nothing.

Mr Tenni: They free-load here.

Mr MOORE: They free-load everywhere, but I do not want to go into that. They go on the "Melbidir" and they do not pay. But nobody pays on the "Melbidir" The schoolteachers do not pay; the nurses do not pay; the carpenter going to the islands does not pay.

A Government Member: The Islanders don't pay.

Mr MOORE: The Islanders do not pay.

Mr Davis: And the "Melbidir" doesn't pay.

Mr MOORE: Of course it does not pay. When the ALP's lackeys and henchmen—George Mye and others—fly over on the helicopter as though it were an aerial taxi—all paid for by the Federal Government—it does not pay. The hovercraft the ALP put up there did not pay. It was a complete frost.

Mr Tenni: It cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Mr MOORE: Exactly, so honourable members opposite should not speak about non-payment. Of course, the railways do not pay. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was running anything, God knows, it could not pay!

The reason no payment is made is that the chairmen and the councils run the islands. They decide who is allowed on the islands. They do not want unwanted people arriving there. People cannot say, "I have paid my fare; I am entitled to go on board." It is a Government vessel and unless people are invited by the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement or have a genuine reason to visit the islands, then they cannot go on board. Nobody pays to go on board that vessel, and I want that made quite clear.

Mr D'Arcy: The people of Queensland pay.

Mr MOORE: Of course the people of Queensland pay. They pay the honourable member's salary. Nothing is free. We know that they pay, but they also pay for "The Courier-Mail". The cost of hiring that helicopter is loaded onto the price of every "Courier-Mail" We have challenged the overlords of "The Courier-Mail" to reveal their superannuation scheme and their lurks and perks, but they have refused to do so. The taxpayer, who is the purchaser of "The Courier-Mail" pays for all that, too. So nothing is free. Until this week that newspaper had a monopoly, but now we have another tabloid.

Mr Booth: Thank God for that.

Mr MOORE: "Thank God for that" he says! We don't even have it in Parliament House. What is wrong? "The Courier-Mail" and the "Telegraph" are available but the new "Daily Sun" is not. Why not? I was seriously thinking of cancelling "The Courier-Mail" but it is larger and better to wrap up my suit to take to the dry-cleaners.

An article in "The Courier-Mail" stupidly asked why we did not hire a helicopter—which costs \$400 an hour—to visit those islands. To begin with, a helicopter to carry a reasonable number of people would cost a fortune, certainly much more than that figure. To hire a small helicopter such as one used to round up stock costs approximately \$400 an hour. Do those who write for "The Courier-Mail" think that they can land at Murray,

Darnley, Yam, Boigu, Saibai, Mabuig or any other islands and have the chairmen and the members of the councils talk with them? Many of those islands are far apart. The impracticality of hiring a helicopter is that when a party such as ours arrives on an island, nobody is organised. They won't be organised. When they were asked what time they would be ready they said, "2 o'clock." We had to ask them, "2 o'clock island time?" and they agreed with that. However, 2 o'clock island time could be three hours after that. We had to sit there and wait and wait. We talked to various people and then very gradually others came around, and two or three hours later the meeting could be commenced. After the meeting, we departed. Imagine what a waste of money it would be to have a helicopter sitting there at \$400 an hour for all that time. That would be absolutely stupid. The Press would not have a clue. They do not go there enough, just as the public at large does not go there enough.

Mr Booth: There is no place for free-loaders.

Mr MOORE: We should have more free-loaders.

The people on the islands in the Torres Strait are as happy as Larry. When we spoke to them they did not want any changes made. We spoke of deeds of grant in trust and they said, "What the hell are they?" We explained the meaning of a deed of grant in trust. They said, "Why are you making the change? Why aren't you just leaving it as it is, as a reserve?" We said, "Well, other people sort of fancy that you want a change." They said, "No, we don't want a change." We said, "Well, there is pressure on the Government and if we don't make some moves to do something we will be in trouble. But don't worry about it, you won't notice any difference. It is the Government's island, but it is your island and it will always be your island as long as you, your children, your grandchildren and your great grandchildren have need of it. The deed of grant is there, held in trust by your councils. The deed of grant is just giving you your island saying, 'This is yours and your council will look after it while people are there.'" That is the sort of thing we said to them. They said, "That is all right."

I have been asked, "Why go there so many times? You have been there 10 times." When a person first goes there the people do not even know him. It is very hard to become acquainted with them. The second time he knows one or two of them. Because I have been there so many times, I can talk to any of them. I know what is going on. There is no malnutrition or child mortality. Everybody is healthy. I was asked, "How many pregnant women did you take back on the 'Melbidir'?" We provide a helicopter or a light aircraft so that no woman in an advanced stage of pregnancy has to roll around on a ship in bad weather.

Bulldozers, tractors and other heavy gear cannot be carried by aircraft. A Government vessel is needed to keep these islands inhabited by Torres Strait Islanders who know the area intimately. They know whenever a stranger enters the area. If the islands were uninhabited the Army would be needed to prevent their being occupied by South East Asians. Although it costs us a fortune to run the islands they still afford a cheap and useful method of security. The islanders keep in radio contact. Immediately a stranger enters the area they contact Thursday Island. If it is a matter of any moment, action is taken. There is nothing wrong with the system.

Mr Tenni: Mr Casey said that they needed all sorts of things, that they were left out of everything.

Mr MOORE: I don't know what Casey saw, but I have spoken to community members at Murray, Darnley, Stephen, Yorke, Yam, Coconut, Sue, Mabuig, Badu, Moa, Boigu, Dauan, Saibai, Bamaga, Lockhart River, Edward River, Kowanyama, Mornington Island, Hopevale, Bloomfield, Yarrabah and others. That cannot be done in five minutes, or even in a day. I have a rapport with them all, and there is nothing wrong.

This trip was no different from any other. If anything, it was more beneficial inasmuch as we carried more cargo. The Minister did not defend himself properly. He should have taken out a couple of the Press fellows and loosened a few front teeth. If they did not deserve a mouthful of loose teeth I have never seen anyone who did. There was absolutely no truth in their remarks.

They talked about fishing! After any one has been on the go for 12 hours and the day is done—and it is still daylight at half past 6—why should he not go fishing? I was not present; I was back at the Liberal Party convention. Those fellows flew in a

helicopter over the dinghy at 6.30 p.m. and then wrote for the paper, "Minister fishing!" Why should he not be able to fish at 6.30 p.m. if there is nothing else to do? It was not a fishing trip. The only fish that were caught were three or four small fish and a Chinaman fish that the crew ate.

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

Mr MOORE: Before the recess for dinner I heard an interjection about free-loaders on the trip. The reference was to Sir Edward Lyons, the manager of the National Bank and Mr Harold Lowes. I was asked to justify their being on the tour. There were two or three spare berths. Perhaps we could have invited some members of the Opposition. Possibly we should have invited a member of the Press. On other occasions when it has been known that there would be two or three spare berths, Opposition members have been invited. I think, too, that John Citizen should be asked to go along.

Mr Scott: Are you going to provide electricity and a better water supply up there?

Mr MOORE: They have electricity up there.

Mr Scott: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MOORE: The honourable member for Cook does not know. I do not know the capacity of the powerhouse at Bamaga.

Mr Casey: What about Badu Island and Saibai Island?

Mr MOORE: They have small electricity plants. However, there is a small problem in relation to maintenance. I think that Stephen Island has a power plant with a capacity of 11 kVA or 13 kVA. Problems arose and only 2 or 3 kVA were available. But that plant does not supply electricity for cooking. It would not be advisable to provide diesel generation when the people there can chop a bit of wood and light a fire.

Mr Casey: Don't you think they are entitled to it as much as the people in Windsor?

Mr MOORE: It costs 50c a unit to produce it.

Mr Casey: So it does in Normanton and Burketown.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will not tolerate persistent interjections.

Mr MOORE: The Leader of the Opposition knows that he is talking a lot of tripe. That is the type of irrational thinking that comes from ALP members.

The same thing was said at one time about Doomadgee. The people at that mission asked why they should not have electricity for electric stoves. I said that the cost of transporting diesel to Doomadgee and providing a plant was too high. The people there already had power for lighting and their usual needs. It would not be feasible to provide an additional 5 or 7 kW to each house, particularly when the Queensland taxpayers meet all the expense. If Opposition members want to discuss the Aboriginal and Islander settlements I will be happy to do so. I have done it in the past.

The Press reporters claimed that they had looked through "Hansard" and that, after having been up there so often, I had not made one speech about the area. It is about time they had a good look at "Hansard" If they want to write lies about me, that is up to them, but let them make a proper search of "Hansard" and they will see that there is not an ounce of truth in their statements.

Let me return to the interjection about free-loaders. Fellows like Casey and others who are interjecting and one of the reporters claim that everything in the Aboriginal and Islander settlements is bad.

A person does not get to know the people by going there once. I have been there 10 times and I have spoken to many of them. Everybody is happy, healthy and well fed. Everybody's needs are catered for. Everything is paid for by the taxpayer. No complaints whatsoever have been made.

When I spoke to the residents about protests at the Commonwealth Games, I was told that they did not want any protests. They said that they wanted to be left alone and that they did not want any changes made. I was informed that alcohol is a problem. So we get back to the so-called free-loaders. The Minister, the committee and other members travelled to the Aboriginal and Islander settlements and returned with an honest report.

The member for Cook is a meek little mouse when he is outside the House. He is also dishonest. His dishonesty is a type of political chicanery. It is designed to play up to an audience. He does not really mean it.

The manager of the National Bank, Sir Edward Lyons and other responsible citizens visit those settlements and see the situation for themselves. It is necessary to say, "If you do not believe me, ask the manager of the National Bank." What axe has he got to grind? Why would he be defending the Government?

Mr Casey: Who would want to talk to the chairman of the TAB about the Torres Strait? There is not even a racecourse up there.

Mr MOORE: Of course, there isn't.

Mr Casey: There is one branch of the bank up there. I bet he would not even know to whom it had loaned money.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I give the Leader of the Opposition a final warning.

Mr MOORE: The fact that there is one TAB branch and one bank on Thursday Island is incidental. Those gentlemen went there to make observations. Their statements have been doubted. The manager of the National Bank and Sir Edward Lyons were there. One day they will say, "I was there. I saw it. What the Minister is saying is correct." The sad part is that they did not take a member of the Press. He would hardly be able to lie if he had seen it with his own eyes. Why would Harold Lowes go along?

Mr Casey: Because he's your mate.

Mr MOORE: That is one reason. When Harold Lowes was a member of Parliament he was a supporter of Aborigines, and he still is. He successfully defended Denis Walker. His heart is for them; he likes them. He wondered about the accuracy of the statements that had been made about the Aborigines. I said, "If there is a spare berth, try to come along." He did. Vic Sullivan was given one hell of a roasting because he went along.

Mr Scott: You have always loved "The Courier-Mail".

Mr MOORE: I do not mind "The Courier-Mail"; it is good to wrap the chips in. Really, there is nothing wrong with the newspaper; it is just that it highlighted this one little incident.

Vic Sullivan had every right to go along. He is the third-top man in Cabinet and he has to make decisions. The only way to arrive at informed decisions is to see what is going on. No matter what anyone else says about Torres Strait, Vic Sullivan has been there and he has seen for himself.

If half a dozen fellows visited Torres Strait and if each one wrote a book, the books would be different. If all I had done was read reports about Torres Strait and the Islander settlements, I would not know the truth, because fellows such as the honourable member for Cook would write a lot of garbage, as would anyone else who viewed Torres Strait with a jaundiced eye. Different people see things differently. At least Vic Sullivan is able to say, "I was there, I spoke to the people, I asked questions and I was given answers." There is every good reason why the other strangers went along. There is no reason why Vic Sullivan, or any other Minister, should not have gone along.

As I said before, the Anglican archbishop, the Governor and his wife and many other people have visited the strait because of their interest in it and its people. They had more to do than lie around seasick on board a vessel that will roll on wet grass.

Mr Scott: Who is the bishop now?

Mr MOORE: I wouldn't have a clue; I am a Presbyterian. However, that does not stop me wanting to see St John's Cathedral completed. The stonemasons who are presently working on Parliament House could be put to work on removing the fibro front of St John's and finishing the work. I will have that done before I am finished—but that is another issue.

Mr Casey: Were the prefabricated houses still in their packing-cases on the beach at Yam Island?

Mr MOORE: No.

(Time expired.)

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (7.28 p.m.): I am pleased to participate in this debate. There is no denying that Queensland, together with other States and countries, is in the grip of a recession. It has been claimed that these days are the worst since those of the Depression of the early 1930s. The Treasurer said that Queensland is one of the fortunate States and that it is not hit as badly as other States. I suppose I could be forgiven for agreeing with him, because I come from a part of the State in which great progress is still being made in the construction field.

I am fortunate to live in the Gladstone area, where, as was mentioned yesterday by the Governor, Queensland Alumina Limited is embarking upon a \$200m expansion and Boyne Smelter Limited is about to officially open its project on Boyne Island. It produced its first aluminium in February this year. In the very near future that company will have to decide whether it will take up the option to use more power and carry on with the second stage of the smelter. I hope that before that decision has to be made the economy of Queensland and of the world as a whole picks up. After all, Queensland exports many millions of tonnes of coal to other parts of the world. Alumina is being produced from bauxite and exported to other countries, and the smelter at Boyne Island is producing aluminium. If the present recession in the minerals industry continues, Queensland could be hit very hard and perhaps it will be one of the last to pull out of the recession.

I am concerned about the level of interest rates in Queensland. Interest rates have a big bearing on what is happening not only in the towns in my electorate but also in Queensland as a whole. I am concerned about the effect that high interest rates are having on local government. Recently the Premier returned from the Premiers' Conference and stated that Queensland had been robbed of \$150m by the Federal Government. Although the Commonwealth Grants Commission said that Queensland was entitled to that money, it did not receive it. At the same time, the Premier and the Treasurer went overseas to borrow money. If Queensland had received from the Federal Government that \$150m to which it was entitled, it would not have needed to embark on that borrowing program, or at least the need would have been reduced.

Dr Edwards: No.

Mr PREST: The Treasurer says that that would not have been the case. Well, I think that Queensland would have been better off if it had received that additional \$150m from the Federal Government; it would not have needed to go to Japan or to some other country to borrow money so that it could carry on with its work.

One of the local authorities that concerns me at present, and which should concern everybody, is the Mt Morgan Shire Council. This year Mt Morgan celebrated its centenary. Although that town has done so much for the economy of not only Queensland but also Australia, it still does not have a water supply. The local authority in Mt Morgan, which has been unable to borrow money to provide a water supply for the town, is now carting water from Rockhampton. The mayor of Rockhampton has said that Rockhampton will supply the amount of water that Mt Morgan requires. As I say, that town is 100 years old and it has really put Central Queensland on the map.

Today I heard the Minister for Mines and Energy say that Mt Morgan is dying, that it has just about had its day. That has been said for years, but Mt Morgan is still producing minerals from the ground. I am certain that if the price of gold increases to the level that it reached 12 months ago, Mt Morgan will flourish again. When people say that somebody should be putting money back into Mt Morgan they are told, "It is just about dead; let us forget about it. Let the people die of thirst."

The mining company in Mt Morgan should make a major contribution to the provision of a permanent water supply for the town. The residents of Mt Morgan are entitled to be provided with an adequate water supply. If the company that has bled the town for so long and taken so much out of it is not prepared to contribute towards the provision of a water supply, the Government of Queensland should take action to provide a water supply for the people of Mt Morgan.

I am quite certain that Mt Morgan will never die. Maybe the minerals will run out at some stage, but I am quite certain that people who do not want to live in Rockhampton will continue to reside in Mt Morgan. These people are entitled to

water, which is essential for human beings and also for animals. No-one can live without water. As I have said, Mt Morgan is 100 years old but still does not have an adequate water supply.

About two years ago the Government cut subsidies on projects that had been subsidised for the previous 50 years. That resulted in increased responsibility for raising finance to allow the continuation of those public works. I have with me an article that appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 27 July this year, stating that the State Government had abandoned local government and allowed it to face massive problems in maintaining work levels. That related to the Ipswich City Council, and the Treasurer himself comes from the Ipswich area. The statement was made by the finance committee chairman, Alderman Tully. He said in his Budget speech that reduced Government support and record high interest rates were having a devastating effect on councils. He said that it was time for an urgent review of State Government policies towards local government. No-one could disagree with him on that. He said that, unless immediate action was taken, the ability of that council to maintain employment levels and to carry out the work expected by the community would be seriously threatened.

However, it does not stop at the Ipswich City Council. It applies to every local authority within the State of Queensland. Various local authorities have supported the Queensland Local Government Association's campaign to have the State Government's subsidy level reinstated to the previous figure.

However, honourable members should be even more concerned today, having received a telegram signed by the Mayor of Townsville, Mike Reynolds, which read—

"I would urge your strong support in local government's fight to retain State Government subsidies at their present levels. The loss to Townsville City Council alone this financial year is \$605,000 and this loss will have a detrimental effect on the growth and development of North Queensland. I urge you to make representations to all Cabinet Ministers so that development will not be seriously retarded in North Queensland."

It appears that he knows more about it than we do and that he has heard somewhere along the grapevine that the subsidy level of today could be cut even further. I sincerely hope that that is not so. When the subsidies were cut two years ago, that had a tremendous effect on local government rates and charges. When money has to be borrowed to carry on that work at present interest rates of 17.5 per cent, or even higher, local authorities have to increase rates a great deal above the CPI or inflation level.

A few councils have already brought down their budgets. The Miriamvale Shire Council has increased its rates by 12.5 per cent. The Maroochy Shire has increased its rates by 13.7 per cent. Earlier today the Treasurer said that local authorities in Queensland were increasing their rates in accordance with the rate of inflation. Although inflation is running at about 10 per cent, we read that two councils have lifted their rates by 15 per cent. I cannot understand that, as I know that Ipswich was much lower than Redcliffe, which had an increase of somewhere in the vicinity of 14.6 per cent. We know that many local authorities have not yet brought down their budgets, mainly because the officers and the people elected to local government are fiddling with their budgetary figures. They are cutting out certain works.

I know quite well that local authorities will experience great hardship. Because of the cut in the works programs, they will have to reduce their work-force accordingly. By January next year many local authorities will be forced to dismiss their work-force. That has been brought about by high interest rates and the cut in Government subsidies. I ask the Treasurer in his coming Budget not to reduce the subsidies to local authorities. In fact, I believe they should be increased to the level at which they were two years ago or to an even higher level.

The rates in my area were tipped to increase by 25 per cent, but the council denied that. However, when the Gladstone City Council brought down its budget, it was not really proud that its increase was 16 per cent but was very pleased that the budget could be brought down in record time. Instead of waiting until September or October for the rates to be paid, the council was able to issue its notices in July so the ratepayers, instead of having 12 months elapse from the payment of the last rates had to produce the money within nine months.

Although the Gladstone City Council claimed that its rate increase was 16 per cent, I am quite certain that it has hoodwinked the public because the general rate increased from 3.467c in the dollar to 4.31c, an increase of 24.31 per cent. However, the water rate, the garbage rate, the cleansing rate and all those other service charges increased by a set amount. On South End Island, a small island just off the coast, the council does not provide any services other than to dig a pit every year or every second year in which the residents have to bury their own night soil and garbage. The residents also have to catch their own rainwater. The council provides no officers at all to do anything for those residents. However, they still have to pay up. In August 1980 the rates were \$94.80. A revaluation in 1981 caused those rates to increase to \$198.02, an increase of 108.4 per cent. Those people are now asked to pay \$270.60, an increase of a further 36.9 per cent and an overall increase since 1980 of 185.2 per cent. Most of the people on South End Island are elderly or pensioners of some description. Some of the residences are used as week-end holiday homes.

In my own street a pensioner has been asked to pay rates of \$1,001. The Government gives a pensioner discount of 20 per cent to a maximum rate of \$600, which makes a \$120 concession. The city council matches that with a 30 per cent rate remission to a maximum rate of \$600, which gives a concession of a further \$180. Although that pensioner's rates this year increased by \$150, she received no further concession from the State Government or the council; she had to find that extra money from her pension. The increased rate imposed by the council exceeds the increase granted to her by the Commonwealth Department of Social Security. The pension has been increased by 8 or 9 per cent, but the general rate has increased by 20.31 per cent.

Mr Koch is a pensioner who lives opposite me. This year, after discount, his rates were \$471.70 whereas last year he paid \$357.20, an increase of \$113.87. My rates have increased, too. The mayor of Gladstone calls me one of the lucky fat cats.

Dr Edwards: Is he a member of your party?

Mr PREST: No, he is a member of the National Party. My rates went up from \$742.60 to \$871.20. As the mayor said, I am one of the lucky ones because I should be able to afford to pay that.

But I am not worrying about myself; I am worrying about those people whom the Treasurer says he is concerned about. After repeatedly requesting the State Government to fall in line with other State Governments in giving subsidy assistance or rate remissions to pensioners, I was very pleased when the Treasurer made an announcement to that effect last year. But what do we find now? A council that is unable to read the guide-lines!

The Gladstone City Council is unable to interpret what the Treasurer meant when he said that he would leave it entirely to the council to set the closing date for applications. The Treasury said, "As long as the council is happy and willing to pay, we will go along with that." But this council has interpreted that to mean that pensioners must apply before 30 June—that is, before the end of the present financial year—if they want to get the Government rate remission.

I said that the closing date was unfair. People said that I did not know what I was talking about until Jim Webber, the mayor of Rockhampton, set a different closing date. Nevertheless the Gladstone City Council was still not satisfied and wrote to the Treasury seeking a definition of the pensioner subsidy scheme, particularly in relation to the closing date.

Dr Edwards: They can set the date to suit themselves.

Mr PREST: That is so, but this council is denying pensioners the Government subsidy to which the Treasurer said they were entitled, just because someone on the council cannot interpret the definitions as they were printed. So if someone becomes eligible for a pension after 30 June, not forgetting that it can take from six to eight weeks to have a pension granted, or if a person is not granted the pension before 30 June and then receives a benefit card, he then has to wait for 12 months—

Mr Kaus interjected.

Mr PREST: I quite agree with the honourable member, but as I go on I will tell members about the Gladstone town clerk. I am certain members have heard about him before.

The guide-lines set down by the Treasury state—

“It is most important to the correct, uniform and equitable administration of the scheme that all people involved in administering it have a clear understanding of the category of people that the scheme purports to help and further explanation of the way in which the definition should be applied is given later in the paper.

A further point is that the scheme is not aimed at providing an incentive for prompt payment and hence there is no provision for the subsidy to lapse if the ratepayer falls into arrears or does not pay by a specified time.”

But when the council advertised, it stated—

“Conditional upon payment: The subsidy is credited only after full payment of all rates and charges levied for the current year. (In cases where rates are paid in instalments, the remission will be credited upon the last payment being made.)”

The council is telling people that the subsidy will not be granted if they do not pay their rates before the end of the financial year. However, the guide-lines are totally different. They continue—

“It is, however, intended that the subsidy relate only to rates and charges actually paid by pensioners—that is to say, if the pensioner defaults completely or if for any reason the rates are recovered by means other than by payment from the pensioner while he/she remains in ownership of the property, then the subsidy is not available.”

I interpret that to mean that, should the pensioner fail to pay the rates and should the council decide to sell up the pensioner's property and it is bought by someone who knows the pensioner is in trouble, the subsidy does not apply. I agree with that. But the council is not allowing that subsidy if the rates are not paid within 12 months.

In addition, if the pensioner does not have the ability to pay the rates, the matter is placed in the hands of a solicitor, and if the pensioner does his utmost and pays an additional \$100 a month out of his pension, he virtually signs his own death warrant because he will have to starve himself to pay the rates. Then the council withdraws the action and the solicitor charges \$450. That \$450 is then added to the rates. So, after battling and struggling to pay off the additional \$100 a month, the pensioner finds that, at the end of three years, he owes not \$1,700 but \$2,200. That is a nice sort of situation! That shows the type of administration that we have in my town.

After the Gladstone City Council sought that definition, it decided that pensioners would be given a second chance of obtaining the benefit. It decided that applications would close on 30 June, and if a pensioner were not a pensioner at that time but became a pensioner between 1 July and 31 December, he could have another bite at the cherry and apply for the benefit for the last six months of the financial year. However, if he had paid his rates there was no saying that he would get the subsidy. If he had not paid them, interest would be added.

The Treasurer should do something to local authorities such as that. The guide-lines say that the Government is trying to provide equality to pensioners throughout Queensland. Pensioners are deserving people. I am pleased with what the Government is doing. However, although 20 per cent is a starting point, I should like to see it increased to 25 or 30 per cent.

The definitions sent out by the Treasury are being interpreted by persons who are not acting in the best interests of the people. They are taking away from pensioners something that they fought hard to gain from the Government.

The Gladstone City Council's general charges rose by 24.31 per cent. The mayor and the town clerk say that that is not true, but anyone who can do a little arithmetic knows that 3.467c and 4.31c is a 24.31 per cent increase. Of course, they state that there is some variation and that some people have gone higher and others have gone lower because of the valuation. That is folly. The valuation took place last year. Whether it was \$2,000 valuation last year and the same this year, or \$20,000, I am referring to the percentage in the dollar. The percentage increase will be the same. That figure is 24.31 per cent.

Last year the Gladstone City Council, a group that called themselves the Gladstone Rate Action Group, and I confronted Government Ministers about the hardships faced by Gladstone because of the development that is taking place. Last year the Government

said that it would spend \$50m in Gladstone. At the moment the Government is spending that money. It also said that it would make available to the Gladstone City Council a \$5m interest-free loan for a period of three years. After that time interest would accrue and redemption payments would have to be made. The reason for granting that loan was to give some relief to the ratepayers of Gladstone who were unable to pay more rates and who had come to the end of their tether. It was supposed to be relief to those people for three to five years. They were told that the increase in population would have to help pay for the infrastructure that was to be provided for them. Nevertheless, the council accepted a \$1m loan and spent it on special purposes, such as water supply, including the construction of a reservoir. The council increased its rate charges accordingly. \$1m was transferred from revenue to a trust account so that it would bear interest. The council has completely nullified the action taken by the State Government to provide relief. \$1m was placed in a trust account with the hope of obtaining 15 per cent or 16 per cent interest on that money. In five years' time, if the council keeps on borrowing and increasing rate charges by another 20 per cent, it will be able to repay those loans before the interest accrues. Unfortunately, the council has ignored the wishes of the Government.

We said that it was impossible for the ratepayers of Gladstone to pay for future infrastructure and that Government assistance was needed. We were receiving assistance. However, the council has decided to set up a trust account. That should not have happened. The council is taking from the pensioners that little extra money they should have been able to use. The council is using that money for its own purposes. That is one reason for the increase in rate charges. The council employs an accountant and deputy accountant who receive between \$30,000 and \$38,000 per annum. In order to bring down the budget this year a consultant accountant from Townsville had to be employed at \$50 an hour. I have been told that it cost the council \$10,000 for his services. He assisted the Gladstone City Council accountant, the deputy accountant, the town clerk, the deputy town clerk, the engineer and others to bring down a budget. Mr Davies had to be brought to Gladstone from Townsville. Imagine the added cost.

Mr Burns: It's a scandal.

Mr PREST: It is a scandal. It is quite obvious that he must be a friend of someone's.

To make matters worse, QAL had to give to the Gladstone City Council for projects that were stipulated by the council and the Government the sum of \$2.5m. That sum was in relation to road-works on the Benaraby road and Philip Street. When the council called tenders for the first job it found that there was a shortfall of \$700,000 between its estimate and the tender price. It had allowed \$800,000, and the tender was for \$1.5m. The council said, "That is too bad. The money will have to come from the ratepayers' pockets." The money should have come from QAL. Once a council puts a case to a company such as QAL it cannot go back and have another bite at the cherry.

Of course, that was simply another mistake made by the town clerk. I estimate that the shortfall will be more than \$700,000, because I believe that the council failed to make allowance for the resumption of properties to widen the road and for the median strip down the middle of the road. I would suggest that the shortfall will be in excess of \$1m. And who has to pay? The ratepayer. The council will merely say, "Let us increase the rates and give the town clerk a pat on the back for the work that he is doing."

The town clerk is the very man who is mentioned in the 1978 Auditor-General's report. He is Mr Roy Swenson.

Mr Booth: Is he a friend of yours?

Mr PREST: No, he is not a friend of mine. If I went around with him I would be up for consorting.

In the audit report on the Gladstone City Council, dated June 1978, under the heading "Summary of audit findings", this appears—

"It is the function of the Town Clerk, as the chief executive officer of the Council, to be responsible for the accurate assessment and levy of revenue, the

safekeeping and accounting for moneys received, expended or on hand, the correctness and propriety of payments made and generally to conduct the affairs of the office with efficiency and economy."

The auditor said—

"It is my considered opinion that these responsibilities have not been carried out."

That man got off scot-free. He is still the town clerk and he is still making million-dollar estimates. He walks around as if he were Cock Robin.

The city council had said, "If we are elected we will have something done about the Auditor-General's report."

At the local government conference in Rockhampton the Minister for Local Government, Mr Hinze, was reported as saying that he would pull the rug from under council employees who refused to realise that they were servants of the people. He said that council employees and administrative staff are the servants of the people and if they did not wake up to themselves he would pull the rug out from under them. Mr Hinze has had plenty of time to pull the rug out from under this bird. He had the opportunity when the auditor submitted his report in 1978, and he has it again now.

How would an ordinary private enterprise business operate if on a \$1.5m contract it found that its head official had underestimated by 100 per cent? Such a firm would be out of business within one day. The town clerk should be out of the Gladstone City Council. The quicker the council can get rid of him the quicker it will be able to function in a legitimate manner. I do not blame the aldermen, who are newly elected every three years. Unfortunately, the town clerk seems to have a spell over them. It appears that he can do no wrong.

At a recent council meeting the mayor of Gladstone said that the council would not be obtaining personalised number-plates, at a cost of \$100 each, for Gladstone City Council vehicles. It would cost \$10,000 to buy personalised number-plates. Within three days the top brass in the council were driving around in new vehicles with personalised number-plates. Who was worried about what the elected mayor and aldermen said? The town clerk or the town engineer said, "We will run the town the way that we want."

In 1975, when Swenson was mayor, he refused to allow a works foreman to drive a council vehicle to his home on Boyne Island. The foreman had to leave the vehicle in the council yard and get home the best way he could. Now that Swenson is the town clerk, he drives a council vehicle, with no council insignia on the side of it, to Tannum Sands, not one day a week but every day of the week. He uses that vehicle for his own use. Is it any wonder that the people of Gladstone are being charged so much for their rates? I could go on and on.

We have been crying to both the State Government and the Federal Government for assistance for Gladstone, and we were starting to see a little bit of daylight. But now that position is being eroded because the town clerk is using the money in whatever way he sees fit. The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police and the Treasurer should look at this matter.

Unfortunately, the actions of the present council in Gladstone could have a great bearing on future councils in Gladstone. If the council can invest millions of dollars in a trust account, how can people go to the Government and say, "We are broke. We want more assistance from you"? How can people seek assistance when millions of dollars have been set aside and are gaining interest?

The present council in Gladstone is undermining the people of Gladstone. What it is doing is wrong. I sincerely hope that those responsible for this matter in the Treasury and in the Department of Local Government will take action to stop that type of administration.

(Time expired.)

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (8.7 p.m.): I wish first to pay a tribute to the Treasurer for the part that he has played in managing the economy of this State.

Mr Moore: And his staff.

Mr BOOTH: Yes, but he has been a good leader.

Anyone can introduce a budget, but the real test is whether the budget can be balanced. Apparently that is not happening in the city of Gladstone. It did not happen in Australia when the Whitlam Government was in power. That Government would bring in a Budget and then gallop off in all directions and say, "We have a slight deficit." There were so many noughts on the end of the deficit figure that it was difficult to count them.

Mr Moore: They had a money tree and they printed money.

Mr BOOTH: The Whitlam Government did not have a money tree; it thought that it had a money tree. Unfortunately, that will happen in Queensland if ever the electors make the foolish mistake of electing a Labor Government.

It is not my intention to continue in that vein. I shall deal with the economy. Mineral development, of which we all should be very proud, has occurred in Queensland. It has certainly contributed a great deal to Queensland's economy. Nevertheless, with any mineral development there comes a day when the last shovelful of ore or the last gallon of oil is taken from the ground. We should not be so carried away with mineral development that we forget primary production.

Mr Vaughan: You are right there.

Mr BOOTH: I am dead right. There will come a day, not in my lifetime but in the lifetime of my children, when the last shovelful of minerals will be taken from the ground and we will have to fall back on the natural resource of primary production.

If the soil is well looked after and conserved, it can produce for thousands of years, as has been proven in Europe and elsewhere. Perhaps we have to learn that in Australia if we are to use our land to the fullest extent. However, Queensland is fortunate to have a Minister for Primary Industries who is aware of the necessity for adequate legislation and finance to conserve our soil.

Mr Davis: What is being done about soil erosion on the Darling Downs?

Mr BOOTH: I am talking about that. I think we are controlling soil erosion on the Darling Downs, but we should be receiving Federal aid. It is ridiculous in a country such as Australia, where primary production is still our greatest export asset—and will be in time to come when the last shovelful of coal or barrel of oil has been extracted—that some of our resources should not be directed towards maximising our primary production. I do not doubt that the Queensland Treasurer has done his utmost to get as much finance as possible for soil conservation. However, it has not been quite enough.

Mr Burns: What caused the erosion?

Mr BOOTH: That is an all-embracing question. I would not be able to answer it totally, but I would say that a breakdown in soil structure is one of the causes.

Mr Burns: Over-farming?

Mr BOOTH: It could be, yes. Many people in the country think we would be better with much less cultivation. I am not of the opinion that we have reached that stage. I think that we will reach that stage, but we have not reached it yet.

Mr Kruger: In some areas you have over-reached it.

Mr BOOTH: The problem is that once chemicals are used we open up a Pandora's box. We do not know what effect the continuous use of chemicals has. Secondly, bearing in mind the cost of chemicals, crops cannot be grown as a viable economic proposition with their use. Therefore, we have to cultivate, even though it may be regarded as over-cultivation. I think that we can cultivate, but we have to have physical structures such as banks and levees to keep back the water in times of flood—certainly not this year—when there is above-average rainfall.

I am worried about closer economic relations with New Zealand. They could have far-reaching effects on our dairy industry, our prime beef industry and also the fat lamb industry. They may also have an effect on vegetables and small crops, although I am not as well versed in those industries.

Mr Burns: The fishing industry, too.

Mr BOOTH: Yes, they could have. The Federal Government has to realise that the wage structure is much different in New Zealand. Until their wage structure catches up with that in Australia, the matter of closer economic ties should be deferred. That will be difficult, but we should be making noises to that effect. It is quite ridiculous to suggest that where a wage structure is as far behind Australia's as New Zealand's is, we can compete with them on normal terms. Many people have put a great deal of money into dairying; they have put a lot of money into fencing for fat lambs and they have put a lot of money into irrigation for prime beef. It seems wrong that they may be disadvantaged by the closer economic ties presently being spoken about.

I spoke earlier about soil conservation. Water conservation, of course, goes hand in hand with soil conservation. We should be endeavouring to do more in that regard. The authorities are carried away with big water conservation schemes. I do not think they are viable. Smaller schemes are better. We should be looking at some of our smaller creeks. In my electorate we have two or three creeks that could be dammed and made efficient storages. If we could provide water for 60 or 70 farms, and all of the water was utilised each year, there would be a quicker turnover of the water. We should impound the water from the Great Dividing Range, where rainfall is higher. Whilst I have been in Parliament, I have attempted to get up-to-date surveys of those schemes. They were surveyed many years ago but I am a little dubious about the reliability of the surveys carried out 80, 90 or 100 years ago.

Surveys should be made to check the viability of smaller structures. The quantity of water that they hold may not be large; but if they can be refilled often enough and the water can be utilised each year to grow crops, I am sure that many people in those areas will obtain a better return.

The same could be said of many other streams and structures in other electorates, so I am not attempting to set myself up as an expert in that regard. I ask the Treasurer to consider smaller schemes as a viable alternative in the future.

There has been much talk about the diversion of the Clarence River into the Condamine River, which runs through my electorate. A report published by the New South Wales Government states that at present it is far too expensive to divert water from the Clarence River. Because agreement has to be reached between the Governments of Queensland and New South Wales, diversions from the Clarence River are difficult to get under way. Such a scheme must also be studied closely in an endeavour to ascertain whether the costs mentioned in the report are newly calculated or whether they are simply an updating of costs calculated 40 years ago, which is what I think they are.

When I spoke of smaller schemes, I was thinking particularly of the interests of the smaller towns and smaller areas in my electorate. One of the things that worry me in relation to smaller towns is what is called the rationalisation of the meat industry. If ever a frightening report was published, it is the one released by the six major meat companies in Queensland that want to impose a levy—they say it is to be paid by the meat processors—of \$4.75 per head. That is a load of rubbish. The processor cannot pay it; it must come out of the producer's pocket. When he goes to a saleyard and his stock are put over the scales, instead of 9 or 10 buyers being at the side of the yard, there will be only one or two. Therefore, in effect, the producer will pay for his own destruction.

Nobody can convince me that it is better and cheaper to cart livestock 300 or 400 miles to the coast for slaughter. If they can be slaughtered in the country and only half the weight has to be transported, surely that must be more economical. I will not have a bar of any of the new-fangled economic ideas that some abattoirs should be closed and that their closure should be paid for. I prefer to allow the economy to take its own course. If a meatworks cannot pay its way, either because it is inefficient or because it is worn out, then it should close. That is the normal economic process, and I will go along with that.

I make a similar comment about the dairying industry. To cart milk to the coast to be processed is absolutely ridiculous if it can be processed in the country to get rid of the water before it is transported. That will mean cartage of only 13 per cent of the weight of raw milk. The country dairy co-operatives are trading very well. The Warwick co-operative, with which I was associated, has traded well in the past and continues to trade well. Some men have put a great deal of work into that establishment. Why should pressure be put on to them to rationalise? I will not go along with that.

I wish to mention subsidies for local government. Unlike the member for Port Curtis (Mr Prest), who spoke before me, I have excellent relations with the local government men in my area who work their hearts out and do their best. They are a little upset that the subsidies have been cut, but it does not appear possible to provide the same amount of funding as was provided previously. However, I make a plea to the Treasurer to look at some special circumstances. Some years ago the township of Killarney in my electorate decided on the introduction of septic systems. However, in wet weather those systems do not work as well as had been expected. It would cost a lot of money to sewer a township like that, and the council could need some help. I believe we should be looking at schemes to help townships with special needs. I am not picking out Killarney. There must be plenty of other towns that need special help, and in the area of water supply and sewerage we should be able to assist a town that needs special help.

Communications are vital to my electorate and a great many other country electorates, and in most of them the road system is the most important means of communication. Unless we develop an excellent road system and maintain it we will not get very far. It is false economy to cut back on road construction if that can be avoided. There might be times when we just cannot avoid it, but I believe we should try to keep road construction going to the best of our ability, because once we allow too much of our road system to deteriorate to the stage that it has to be continually patched most of the money available for roads will go into patching and repairing instead of into new construction.

I understand the problem that high interest rates have caused the Treasurer, and I sympathise with him. I thought the rates might go up, but I did not think they would ever go up to the extent they did. I made some economic decisions on my own behalf because I did not think interest rates would go as high as they did, but I was wrong. Other people obviously thought the same, and they were in fair company.

It is good to see that interest rates are coming down in the USA, and I hope that they will come down in other parts of the world because the only way we can continue to develop Queensland as we have in the past is by having money available at a reasonable price. I realise that whatever is paid in interest rates is the price of money, but nevertheless at the moment there appears to be a dog chasing its tail aspect in interest rates, because immediately they go up another 1 per cent the sharp operators then place advertisements in the newspapers saying, "We will pay 16 per cent today instead of the 15 per cent we paid yesterday." I do not see how interest rates can be reduced until somewhere along the road the Government says, "They can go that high and no higher." I have been pleased to see interest rates showing some sign of coming down. That is the first sign of sanity in the world lately. Of course, interest rates elsewhere in the world are not as high as they are in the USA or Australia, and there may be some reasons for that that we are not prepared to accept.

High interest rates stop young people getting a go on the land and hinder the development of farms. A farmer might own a farm worth a fair bit of money, but he has to find a lot of cash to carry on. Unfortunately, he has to borrow that cash at current interest rates which means that he might have to cut back on irrigation or perhaps even soil conservation. He might have been educated sufficiently to know that he should conserve his soil, but if he cannot pay the current high interest rates he might have to take a bit of a punt. That is understandable, because there is an old saying in primary industry that a bank manager will back someone as long as he keeps on having a lash. As long as a farmer keeps planting a crop and keeps having a go a bank manager will usually back him. But if he cannot pay the high interest rates, some other things have to go by the board. A farmer might be tempted to let soil conservation go in the hope that he would catch up next year, but a serious situation could develop if erosion got out of hand.

I commend the Minister for Primary Industries for the amount of assistance he has given in advising farmers about soil conservation. Although this advice might not have reached as many farmers as we would like, the Minister has still done very well in that regard.

I believe the Treasurer has managed the economy well. While he is in the chair the economy is in good hands. The Government has a proud record in the development of this State. My main reason for rising tonight was to draw attention to the fact that some day mineral development in this State will be finished, the last shovelful of mineral will have gone, and the only natural resources remaining to us will be primary products. I hope that we never forget that fact.

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (8.25 p.m.): The honourable member for Warwick spoke at length about interest rates. I could not agree with him more. It is one of the most pressing problems facing the ordinary Queenslander.

In the last couple of years a family moved next door to me. They paid a deposit on the house and had to pay it off in the usual way. They have now had to sell out and leave because they could not keep up the payments. The man was a hard worker. He slaved in his yard and worked on his home all that time. He had to trade down from what was not a flash home to a cheaper home.

I do not want to be political but I well remember Malcolm Fraser's promise after getting into power in 1977 that he would reduce interest rates by 2 per cent. When I see the number of families and young people who come to me seeking Housing Commission homes or rental homes to give them a start in life, I wonder what chance they have of owning their own home in future. I wonder whether local people who read about how many people are coming here, how rich the State is and how wonderful it is are getting any benefit.

The last booklet put out on the "Australian National Accounts" shows the income per head of mean population for each State in Australia. Queensland is the lowest. Queensland is consistently the lowest. Although the State might be rich and although we might sell a lot of coal and produce a lot of wheat, somewhere along the line, as the Treasurer said today, the benefit is not getting to the little bloke at the bottom.

It is all right to say that he has free hospitals. He has. Free hospitals were round a long time before the massive coal-mines were developed. They were round before World War II. Shortly after the war, they received a big boost from Chifley.

The Government says that Queensland has the lowest taxes in Australia. That does not mean much to a man who is not earning any money, to a pensioner who does not pay any tax in any State, to the disabled who cannot get a house and to the kids who have been thrown out of their homes.

Mr Warburton: Or to the 6.2 per cent unemployed.

Mr BURNS: That is right.

Sooner or later, if the Government does not pay for it, private enterprise or the citizen must pick up the tab. I saw a statement to that effect from a Minister this week. Sooner or later the Government will have to decide whether it can continue to neglect some of the areas in which we all expect money to be spent. I cite education and things such as class sizes. I cite housing. The shortage of housing is the worst social problem we have. I have never had so many people coming to my office seeking homes. It is obvious that the problem must be faced up to.

I do not know—I will have to wait and see because I cannot be critical of schemes before they are implemented—but it seems to me, judging by what I have heard from two or three people who have come to my office, that the new \$100m housing scheme will not be of much help.

Mr Wharton: The ALP, through the unions, has priced houses out of the reach of people.

Mr BURNS: That is rubbish. The Minister knows that the ALP has nothing to do with it. It has been out of government in this State since 1957. It was not the ALP that made promises about housing and interest rates and dishonoured those promises. The last people who can be criticised in this regard are the members of the Labor Party.

One way of assisting is to reduce the cost of big government in this State. Sack 17 of the 18 Ministers. They always do what Mr Bjelke-Petersen wants them to do. Queensland does not need an 18-man Cabinet. It needs only one Minister—the Premier.

Take, for example, the foreign ownership of land register. The National party has a meeting and its policy is to register the foreign ownership of land. The Liberal Party has a conference and its policy is to register the foreign ownership of land. When Mr Bjelke-Petersen is overseas—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! The honourable member for Lytton will refer to the Premier by his correct title.

Mr BURNS: When the Premier was overseas, Cabinet met and decided to register foreign ownership of land. When the Premier came back, he decided, as he told us today, that it is not on.

Dr Edwards: That is not what he said.

Mr BURNS: What did he say? Tell me what he said. The Treasurer can tell me later. We will wait and see whether the Government is able to introduce it. The party policies do not count; the whole of the Liberal Party does not count; and the National Party does not count. When the Premier returns, he will say, "It's not on. You are not going to do it." The Cabinet Ministers are not required. They are rejected immediately by this one man band.

That can truthfully be said about a number of other matters. For example, today the Deputy Premier answered my statement in relation to Iwasaki. He is reported in the Press this morning as saying that I leaked the letter. The letter was posted in the last fortnight to the Livingstone Shire Council. The letter was sent from the Co-ordinator-General to the Livingstone Shire Council asking for an opinion on that scheme. They met on 21 July.

At the week-end the Premier said that it was a generous offer and that it had been discussed with Mr Iwasaki for over 16 months, and that if Iwasaki raised it with him again he would take it to Cabinet. He had seen the plans and it was better than anything we had in this country. The Treasurer said that it had not gone past the Co-ordinator-General. Don't give me that rubbish! Would anybody believe that the Co-ordinator-General, who is not known for a massive backbone at any time, would be prepared to reject a scheme out of hand from Iwasaki, the favourite son of the Premier and the man who was able to skate on dozens of occasions that he was able to bypass Cabinet Ministers and public servants when the Iwasaki scheme was under way? Iwasaki said, "Don't worry about it. I will see the Premier and he will fix it." The Premier rang the public servants and told them to fix it. Does anybody believe that the Co-ordinator-General would reject such a proposal? The ABC rang Mr Warren, Mr Iwasaki's current representative in Rockhampton, and he said, "We have not been rejected yet." However, the Deputy Premier is reported in the Press this morning as saying that they were.

Dr Edwards: You wait and see what happens.

Mr BURNS: We will wait and see what happens. I hope that it is rejected. The reason why I leaked the letter was to make certain that everybody in this country knew that another secret deal was going on.

The member for Warwick has just resumed his seat. In the last month part of the Leslie Homestead, which belonged to the original settlers on the Darling Downs, was sold to Japanese interests for \$1.3 m. 2 800 acres of prime black agricultural soil on the Darling Downs was sold, but not a word about that appeared in the Press.

The Premier says that Queensland will not have a foreign land ownership register. I would put my money on the Premier before I would put it on the Treasurer. Before the last election I remember the Premier's saying that the Treasurer's post was under threat. He said that the Deputy Premier may lose the racing portfolio. Is the Treasurer still the Minister in charge of racing? No! I think the Premier won. Then I read where the Premier said, "I'm telling you it's my choice. I'm having my way on this." To whom was the Premier referring? Sir Edward Lyons, and his appointment to the TAB. The Premier's statement to the Press was, "I'm having my own way on this. It is my choice." That was the Premier's statement to the Press.

Why do we waste \$850,000 on the salaries of 17 Cabinet Ministers and millions of dollars for Press secretaries, drivers, offiders, and staff? That money could be used on housing in my area. Something could be done about class sizes. The Wynnum North library could be constructed with some of that money.

We then read, "Doumany faced the sack: Joh" The Premier is reported as saying, "I made it clear to him I wouldn't have him in Cabinet if he did not sign the minute appointing the Chief Justice." We do not need Mr Doumany as the Justice Minister because the Premier made the decision for him. If Mr Doumany did not sign the minute, he would be out. I think that there were a few other Liberal Ministers who said that they would not sign the minute. However, they did not last very long. When I attend the courts I do not see the Treasurer's nominee there. The person I see there is the Premier's nominee. The courts have been interfered with—make no bones about that. The National Party made

the decisions, not the Liberal Party. The report concerning the new pretender to the throne states, "Ahern sacking 'blow to integrity'". When the Minister for Primary Industries went to Canberra to negotiate the boundaries of the Great Barrier Reef with the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council and agreed to a compromise with the Commonwealth, the Premier sacked him from the council. The Premier said, "You are not there any more." So the Government does not need Mr Ahern, either.

Mr Scott: Would you put some money on who is likely to be the next Minister for Tourism?

Mr BURNS: I have not even got to the Minister for Tourism yet.

Do honourable members remember when the Police Commissioner announced that an inquiry would be conducted into an incident in which a young girl was hit with a baton in the street? Before the Police Commissioner appeared on television the Premier was on the telephone saying that there would be no inquiry. There never was one. Why does Queensland need a Police Commissioner? Why does it need a Police Minister? Those gentlemen do not make decisions; they do what they are told.

Do honourable members recall the circular sent out by the Education Department to schools saying that 2,4,5-T should not be used in or near schoolgrounds? The Premier said, "I have been using it for years, and it has not done anything to me." He ordered the Education Department to cancel the circular. The circular went out one day, another one went out the next day, and schools now use 2,4,5-T. The Premier does not worry about the Minister for Environment or the Minister for Health or the Minister for Education. He makes the decisions. Here it is in the headlines: "Joh says: We'll sack teachers" and "No way on class sizes". Why does the Government need Mr Gunn? What about the \$68,000 a year that is spent on his Press secretary and staff? The money could be saved and put to better use for the benefit of people who need help.

What does the Premier care about the Minister for Mines and the Minister for Environment? In defending his decision on Moreton Island, the Premier said, "Moreton Island will be rehabilitated after the mining people have been there in such a way that you won't recognise it." My God!

Mr Shaw: At least he was truthful.

Mr BURNS: Yes, at least he was truthful.

But no action was taken by any of the Ministers. Mr Tomkins made a little stand; he did so again this morning. He had talked about perpetual leases for Aboriginal reserves. The Premier said that it was only a personal opinion expressed by Mr Tomkins, and Mr Tomkins backed away.

The Premier then threatened to fire 25 000 railwaymen and replace them with volunteers. What happened to the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations during the railway strike? I did not see him come forward in the controversy over the 38-hour week and in the recent state of emergency. I do, however, remember the Treasurer's statement in which he said, "It was made clear to the unions that the Government's position was a 38-hour week with discussions regarding implementation which could include offsets."

Dr Edwards: Tell the full story this time.

Mr BURNS: I am reading it. The report says that it was made clear to the unions that the Government's position was a 38-hour week with discussions regarding implementation. So the Government is going to discuss it.

Dr Edwards: Keep going.

Mr BURNS: I will. At first the Treasurer agreed that the Government would discuss how to implement it and that the implementation could include offsets—"could", not "would" or "have to". There was none of this subsequent business that it "must"; just "could" Those are the Treasurer's words, not mine; it is his Press release, not mine.

The other Ministers who attended the meeting were Mr Sullivan, Sir William Knox, Mr Lane and Mr Wharton.

In the newspaper I read, "Joh:—It's a 38-hour week or nothing". There is no mention of a 40-hour week. Why are not the security men downstairs entitled to a 38-hour week when their mates are working a 36½-hour week? Why are not they entitled to honest, decent negotiations on the issue? Why are not decent Queensland workers who have worked in an industry for years for this Government entitled to conditions similar to those enjoyed by other people in the same industry? They are not pace-setters; they are the last men down. The Government made the promise, and now it is turning away from it.

I believe that honest working men and women went home and said, "The Government has agreed to a 38-hour week." A reading of the Government's statements in the Press would make anyone believe just that. Since then the Government has tried to change its position and has moved away. It did not say that the workers must negotiate offsets; it never said that once.

Dr Edwards: That is not correct.

Mr BURNS: I have read the Treasurer's statement. He did not deny it afterwards, nor did any of his ministerial colleagues who were with him.

The Treasurer talks about the need to save money. A lot of money could be saved in the functions of local authorities. Every time the Brisbane City Council tries to amend the town plan, the Liberal committee in this Parliament holds it up. About 90 sets of amendments to the town plan are being delayed at present. That delay is costing organisations such as the Boy Scouts a lot of money.

People on the Sunshine Coast voted in a democratic election on the question of high rise and they elected a team that was against high-rise development. The Minister for Local Government stepped in and told them that they had to allow certain developers to construct high-rise buildings. An article in the Press, under the heading "Hinze moves to protect developers", states—

"The Local Government Minister, Mr Hinze, will recommend to State Cabinet that they legislate to protect developers from by-law amendments by local authorities."

Why?

Mr Prest: He was introducing them.

Mr BURNS: That is right. Why would he want to protect developers from by-laws introduced by democratically elected councillors, who went to the people and fought council elections on that issue?

The Government does not need councils. When the Gold Coast City Council would not do what the Government wanted, it replaced the council. When Clem Jones was going fairly well as Lord Mayor of Brisbane, the Government changed the system. It said, "Oh, the people should not have a democratically elected Lord Mayor. They should not have one elected by the people. He has to be elected by the aldermen. That is the fairest way." But what is the Government going to do now? It is going to return to the democratic election of a mayor.

Dr Edwards: Ask Roy Harvey what he thinks.

Mr BURNS: I believe in the democratic election of a mayor. I said in the old Legislative Assembly Chamber, and I repeat it here, that the mayor should be elected by the people. That was the system that operated when Clem Jones was mayor. The Government tried to rort the system to get rid of Clem. It could not get rid of him. Now the Government will try to rort the system again to get somebody else elected as the mayor of Brisbane.

It seems to me that I have proved my case. We do not need Cabinet Ministers. All the Ministers are part of a one-man band. What the Premier wants, the Premier gets.

I shall now talk about the Port of Brisbane Authority. Along came a developer by the name of Bob Hope. What he has been doing to the Port of Brisbane Authority is no joke.

Mr Vaughan: Houston Oil.

Mr BURNS: I shall tell the honourable member about Houston Oil. Bob Hope is a liar. He went on television and radio and said that Prospect Marine was a private company. I have gone through the documentation and found that Prospect Marine is far from being a private company. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of a company called

HOAST Coal Pty Ltd, "HOAST" being Houston Oil Australia. HOAST Coal was incorporated in Queensland on 19 November 1979. It changed its name to Sambin Pty Ltd on 2 April 1980 and had a capital of \$500,000. The shareholders are Humphrey, Kelly, Houston Oil Aust. and Hope. HOAST Coal is an affiliate of Houston Oil incorporated in the United States of America, which was registered in Australia as a foreign company on 13 June 1974.

That foreign company went to the port of Brisbane and asked the Port of Brisbane Authority for a large area of land fronting deep water on the Brisbane River, and on both sides of the boat passage. The Port of Brisbane Authority said to the company, "Look, that is not a suitable spot. We want that deep water. We have spent a lot of money down here so that we can bring big ships into that location. We will give you 80 ha of land on the other side of the road. You will have to spend \$500,000 in dredging. We will put \$400,000 into a road so that you can have a completely separate access road to that area there. You will have waterfront land and everything you want. We will do everything to help you."

After those negotiations Bob Hope wrote a letter to the Port of Brisbane Authority and agreed in writing that he would accept that proposal. Then he met the Premier and the Premier said, "Don't let that mob stand over you. You can have what you like." He then got a large area of land on the waterfront, on both sides of the boat passage. It has been said that Max Hodges was running around squealing, but the fellow who told me about this matter gave me a different story. He said that when the Port of Brisbane Authority started to play up, the Premier said, "We will go back to the Cabinet and give you more. We will take the land away from the Port of Brisbane Authority. We will give it to the Co-ordinator-General in my department. We will take all of the boat passage, all of the land on the river fronting deep water, along White Island itself, back along the main road as far as Crab Creek where the road, sewerage, water and electricity are all controlled."

When the port of Brisbane was being developed, we in this Parliament spent years arguing that the boat passage should be kept for the Brisbane boating people. At one stage there was talk about \$7m for a bridge. Houston Oil and Mineral, through HOAST Coal and Prospect Marine, and through Bob Hope, will have complete control of that area. Now the Minister for Northern Development and Maritime Services (Mr Bird) says, "That's not right. They will have all the water, but there will be a bit left for you and me to move through."

I am saying here and now that no marine authority, no grain authority, no coal authority and no port handling authority agrees with that proposal. One wonders why the Cabinet Ministers accepted it. Hope said in "The Courier-Mail" and on television that he saw the Premier and the Premier said that it was OK. All the Cabinet Ministers must have said it was OK, because they all changed the decision of the port authority. They all rejected the advice of their experts. One wonders exactly how that happened.

Mr Warburton: They might have signed undated letters of resignation.

Mr BURNS: They could have, too.

I want to tell the story of John Sinclair and Johannes Bjelke-Petersen. It is just five years since John Sinclair sued Johannes Bjelke-Petersen for defamation. Since that time the Premier has participated in three Cabinet decisions—and the Cabinet went along with them—to transfer Sinclair within the Public Service to positions for which Sinclair had not applied. In two instances, Cabinet approved the creation of completely new administrative research positions in Brisbane and had John Sinclair appointed to those positions from his role as an adult education officer living outside Brisbane. On both occasions John Sinclair was personally disadvantaged by the abrupt and unprecedented moves, and on both occasions the moves resulted in transferring one of the State's most experienced and active professional adult educators to a new appointment which had little contact with or relevance to the work of adult educators.

In the first of these unsolicited moves in July 1977, Cabinet abolished John Sinclair's position in Maryborough, at the same time as Cabinet moved to indemnify the Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, against any financial risk arising from defamation costs. Although the coincidence of these two events has been clearly established by separate Cabinet admissions, it has yet to be conclusively established that the Cabinet moves were related. This could be done by seeing the respective minutes, and I hope to get them shortly. Even if it is not established, the Cabinet made the moves in the one decision.

The facts are, firstly, that the Premier was put in a position of great advantage by Cabinet, being able to defend his case to the death and to hell with the costs. It is also significant that the Premier was able to pick his own lawyers outside the Crown Law Office, which should handle the defence if it is at public cost. That is done in other States when the defence is at public cost. So the Premier was moving against his adversary in law in only a thinly veiled disguise for pursuing a vendetta which was officially sub judice. Even the Queensland Parliament was not allowed to discuss the whole of the Cedar Bay incident because some police had taken out writs for defamation and the matter was declared sub judice.

Although the coincidence of the writ and Sinclair's position being abolished point to a prima facie case of interfering with natural justice, the matter might be overlooked if it were not for subsequent events.

Mr Moore: Was it set down for hearing?

Mr BURNS: It has been heard. I am telling honourable members what has happened since Sinclair took advantage of his natural right as a citizen to sue someone whom he thought had defamed him. Immediately after that happened, Sinclair was transferred around the State to positions for which he did not apply. In some cases he was promoted to positions that no-one was allowed to appeal against. The Cabinet agreed to all of these things, and I suggest that there is something sinister in them.

In the second move, Sinclair was promoted. However, he was promoted into a position for which he had not applied. Instead of being promoted to the Maryborough or Bundaberg positions that were vacant, he was moved to Ipswich. The promotion was inevitable because of a Public Service Board ruling in an open appeal that Sinclair had previously prosecuted. The chairman of the board ruled that Sinclair's talents were not being adequately used.

Sinclair accepted the move to Ipswich in September 1978 and soon settled into the position. Once again, he was actively involved as an organiser of adult education classes. It is interesting that Johannes Bjelke-Petersen's counsel in the Supreme Court used that unsolicited promotional appointment as a reason why the Premier should pay minimum damages if the case went against him.

In this instance a person receives a promotion for which he did not apply, is transferred and then in court the Premier's counsel says that that creates a defence and is a reason why the damages should be reduced. At that time Sinclair was responsible for the largest adult education program in the State. During the years 1979, 1980 and 1981, he was officer in charge, extension programs, at the Ipswich College of TAFE, with extensive secondary evening classes, over a third of the State's adult literacy programs, enough activities to provide the basis of the 1982 program for the Sunshine Coast College of TAFE and a variety of other programs in gaols and throughout the community generally.

Despite the considerable reorganisation of the program at the Ipswich College and the redefinition of Sinclair's role, in July 1982 he was actively involved in a new program when on 15 July, at the first Executive Council meeting following the Premier's return from Denmark and following the High Court ruling, the Cabinet adopted the same procedure that it used in 1977. It created a brand new position in Brisbane and again transferred Sinclair into the position, ignoring all the normal Public Service procedures, which consist of advertising the position to attract the best candidates, only filling the position with a person who has applied, and ensuring that the position is open to appeal so that the best possible applicant gets the appointment. However, the position was not advertised, Sinclair was given the position when he had not applied, and the position was not open to appeal.

Although one or two of the unsolicited appointments of John Sinclair might be dismissed as coincidence, the third move destroys any credibility in the notion that the Premier has not been directly involved in trying to persecute and victimise John Sinclair for having the temerity to seek legal redress for what four different Supreme Court Judges have acknowledged to be defamation, and/or because of the position he has taken on Fraser Island, which is contrary to the Premier's views.

The facts are that John Sinclair has been appointed to different unsolicited appointments three times in five years. Such appointments are rare, and it is unprecedented that that unusual procedure should be used against Sinclair three times and that all those occasions were after Sinclair sued the Premier. On two occasions Sinclair was appointed to positions

in Brisbane especially created for him by Cabinet that were never advertised or even declared open to any other applicants. On each occasion when Mr Sinclair was transferred he was given extremely short notice—less than two weeks. In the case of the unsolicited, abrupt moves from adult education, the failure to allow adequate notice is without precedent. For example, the recent move of John Sinclair proves that there is one rule for him and another for other similar Public Service officers.

Dr Edwards: I ask that that document from which the honourable member is reading be tabled.

Mr BURNS: These are my notes. The Press already has a copy of it, so the Treasurer's Press officer will already have it.

My point is that John Sinclair has been badly treated. John Sinclair was the man who stood up for Fraser Island because he believed in it. He is a former member of the National Party; he is not a member of the Labor Party or a supporter of the Labor Party. John Sinclair decided that Fraser Island should be defended. He opposed the views of the people in the community in which he lived and stood up for what he believed in. No-one should be denied that right. When he felt that he was defamed, he took legal action. No-one should be denied that right. But because he is a public servant, he has been subjected to a number of transfers and what I consider to be rough deals. If the Cabinet has the authority that it says it has, it should take a stand on his behalf and on behalf of the many other people who have been sadly disadvantaged by the actions of the Premier. It is time that the Cabinet gave the people of Queensland a fair go.

The reason that the Premier goes to the excesses that he does is that he knows he can get away with them and that the Cabinet will not take him on. Cabinet solidarity is all very well and it is all right for the Liberals to say that the National Party has 11 in the Cabinet and it has only seven, but the plain facts of the matter are that the Premier continually gets away with things that no other Premier in any other parliamentary democracy in the world could get away with. It is time that something was done about that. The Premier cannot be blamed. Any man, like a spoilt kid, who thinks he can get away with it, will do so. It is up to the Cabinet itself.

During every election campaign we hear statements from the Liberal Party and others distancing themselves from the Premier's decisions. They cannot do that. They either believe in them and support them or they do not. They voted for them in Cabinet so they should then support them all the way. If they do not do that then at election-time they ought to come out and say, "We are not going to distance ourselves from the National Party. We have been their friends and supporters and voted for them all the way through." It is two-faced —

Dr Edwards: What about a few of the deals you have done, too?

Mr BURNS: I have never done a deal. Any time the Treasurer likes to table a deal I have done, he can go for his life.

Dr Edwards interjected.

Mr BURNS: Any old time the Treasurer likes. I have no authority to do deals, nor do I have to do deals. I make no deals for my party—I cannot in this State. But let me say to the Treasurer that when he comes snivelling looking for preferences at the next election—I do not believe that the Labor Party should give preferences to the Liberal Party again —

Dr Edwards: You knew what I was talking about straight away.

Mr BURNS: Yes, because you come snivelling asking me and I told you then that I couldn't give them to you, and I can't give them to you now.

Dr EDWARDS: I rise to a point of order. On no occasion have I ever spoken to the honourable member about preferences, and I ask him to withdraw and apologise.

Mr BURNS: I am sorry, but you will have to throw me out because I won't withdraw or apologise to the worm ever.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order!

Mr BURNS: I am on my way.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am asking the honourable member to withdraw the words.

Mr BURNS: I won't.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Then I ask the honourable member to withdraw from the Chamber.

Mr BURNS: With due respect to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I know my position as far as you are concerned. I will not withdraw those words, and I expect to be treated in the way the House has to treat someone —

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I must report to the Leader of the House that the honourable member for Lytton has refused to obey an order from the Chair. It is in the hands of the Minister in charge of the House now to impose a penalty that he thinks is fitting.

Mr Moore: Are you naming him?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will deal with him under Standing Order 123A.

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House) (8.56 p.m.): I suggest that the honourable member, as he indicated himself, should leave the Chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member for Lytton withdrew from the Chamber.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (8.57 p.m.): We have been treated to an interesting contrast in styles from the speakers from the Opposition tonight. At least when the honourable member for Lytton changes his subjects one understands and follows, even though one does not necessarily believe or accept the arguments he has put forward. When the Opposition spokesman on Treasury matters changes subjects it is almost impossible to keep up with him. It is impossible to keep up with any of the apparent arguments that he seeks to maintain.

In relation to the honourable member for Lytton, to deal with a completely hypothetical case—that is the mental exercise of assuming that the Labor Party will ever be on this side of the House—what one does know is that there would be 19 Cabinet Ministers because it would have to find a special place for its special projects officer.

Tonight we were treated to an absolute gem by the honourable member for Woodridge, who, one assumes, is the principal Opposition spokesman on Treasury matters. It seemed to be a diatribe against "The Courier-Mail" which was interspersed with some whingeing and bellyaching about a grab-bag of issues which were about as confused and convoluted as a kitten in a ball of wool, but not quite as colourful. He talked about the average Australian. What does the average Australian say about an incompetent and stupid person? "He wouldn't know what day it is." Even the average incompetent does not set out to prove it, let alone as effectively as did the honourable member for Woodridge in quoting from the paper of yesterday's date, "Wednesday, 4 August" When he was not raving about his absence from the pages of "The Courier-Mail", poorly dressed up as scarifying comments on the quality of that newspaper, he treated us to an expose of the dangers of the random selection of people to be spokesmen for the Opposition.

He seemed to constantly denigrate Queensland in comparison with other States, particularly Victoria and New South Wales. He used phrases such as, "on the slide" and "on the skids" They are phrases that I do not think would have any favourable impact on any resident in Queensland.

Look at the comparisons. Look at the statistics he invents. The reality is that Queensland is the lowest taxed State. He seemed to suggest that other States made a greater contribution, for instance, that New South Wales made a greater contribution in minerals than Queensland. If he had bothered to read the study paper put out by the Parliamentary Library research officers rather than pick up an occasional phrase from "The National Times" he would have found that, according to the last complete year of statistics, which was 1979-1980, our total mining products amounted to 25.7 per cent of the national total compared with 22 per cent for New South Wales. The latest available figures from the occasional publications of the Bureau of Statistics show that, at June 1982, only if construction materials, sand, gravel and crushed stone are added—and one would obviously assume them to be far greater in a State that has three times the population—can New South Wales crawl past Queensland's total by a mere \$300,000. In fact, for metallic minerals,

oil, gas, coal and other metallic minerals, Queensland exceeds New South Wales by some \$100,000m. If we look at some primary and raw statistics of the type that any Treasury spokesman should know, we find that the basis of the Opposition spokesman's thesis and argument is demonstrably untrue and demonstrably false. Nothing he said did anything to overcome that impression.

If the Labor States of Victoria and New South Wales are so attractive, why do people leave those States and come to Queensland? No matter how he argues or tries to avoid it, that is the reality. No matter how much he argues about Joh Bjelke-Petersen and the coalition Government the reality is that our population is being increased by internal Australian migration. Victorians and New South Welshmen come to this State in increasing numbers.

Mr Scott: Do you think that might be due to propaganda?

Mr INNES: I think it might be due to the realities. They are the economic realities of the type that the honourable member for Woodridge fails to understand.

To take a very simple demonstration of the difference—a person pays something between \$100,000 and \$150,000 for an average home within 20 miles of the centre of Sydney. In Brisbane and on the Gold Coast, which are the most expensive areas of Queensland, an average home would cost about \$50,000 to \$60,000. No-one is saying that that is an average that all people can attain. No-one is saying that there should not be provision for others to be financed into housing at a cheaper level. The reality is that the cost of living, in factors as vital as housing, is enormously reduced in this State. And it is a decentralised State. In coastal towns the average cost of home goes down.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Dr Edwards personally assured me that it was your devastating flair that attracts most people.

Mr INNES: I do not think that the honourable member got that from the Treasurer. It might be his own observation, as he comes from a neighbouring electorate. Modesty would force me to decline.

The reality is that we are the lowest tax State, that the cost of living, if we take into account the vital factors of housing as well as the provision of the basic commodities of living, is lower in this State, that the opportunity for employment is higher in this State and that the increase in unemployment in other States is proportionately greater than that in Queensland. If the honourable member for Carnarvon had taken part in this debate he could have given some very interesting, first-hand experience of living across the border in a Labor State.

Some of his unfortunate constituents are provided with power from New South Wales. In their latest power charge notice there has been an increase of 60 per cent by a State that cannot guarantee power supplies. The policies of the Queensland Government have ensured that we will have power for up to eight years ahead. At the rate of progress of the building of new power-stations, that will continue to be the case.

Let us examine the situation in Victoria. In two months of government Mr Cain has turned as many somersaults as a gymnast training for the Olympics. First of all, it was the somersault on the issue of nuclear-powered, possibly nuclear-armed American warships, and then it was a somersault on death duties. He proposed a tax of 33 per cent on estates of more than \$200,000. An average worker who had worked for a lifetime and built a house, or had bought a house in Coburg or Carlton, a working-class suburb, 25 or 30 years ago and was coming into retirement, and put a house and a modest superannuation together, was faced with a situation in which he would pay 33 per cent of his estate to the State Treasury. It was ludicrous. It was a typical manifestation of the socialist Government that believes in attacking any formation of capital, be it private or corporate. Of course, the realities were there. The increase in the movement of the dynamic part of his community, the corporate people and the people with ideas and initiatives was such that he could not wear it politically, and he had to reverse his decision.

Let us examine the simple illustrations that the honourable member for Woodridge used. In the very few ideas that seemed to be lost in the diatribe, he suggested that there should be an increase in expenditure on capital works. As I understand the Treasurer's speech in the House today, that is what he said. He believed that it was time and he believed that it was necessary to make expenditure on capital works.

It was used in the terms of an employment scheme. What was the illustration used by the honourable member for Woodridge in regard to an employment scheme? He referred to casinos. One suspects that it was an indication of his own personal proclivities—

Mr D'Arcy: It was a tourist centre.

Mr INNES: The member for Woodridge tidied it up at the end. The first thing was a casino; the second was hospitality, and he returned to casinos not once, not twice, but three times. In his limited imagination all he could think of was the training for croupiers. I am sure that the unemployed people in the electorate of the member for Woodridge would be delighted to know that he has a vision of them being trained as croupiers and staff of the new casinos.

I will go further. Never having raised a bleat in this House and never having asked a question or made a speech in this House against the renovation of the old Parliament House in the last three to four years, he rubbished what he regarded as a poor attempt to misuse funds which could be better used for employment. The Parliament House project is one that uses tradesmen. It is a triumph and a tribute to the skills of the tradesmen of Queensland, and Works Department day-labour tradesmen to boot. It is a tribute to tilers, carpenters, labourers, stonemasons, bricklayers and electricians. Workers in those service trades have been employed on that building carrying out painstaking, labour-intensive work—work that I would have thought the Labor Party would want to see carried out in any employment scheme or any scheme undertaken as part of capital works. The project is using the average Queenslander on the tools.

Mr D'Arcy interjected.

Mr INNES: As the honourable member should know, tradesmen are being taught old skills, current skills and new skills. On that building tradesmen are being taught skills that were being lost. I should think that that is totally in line with Labor's wishes.

Mr D'Arcy: When that project is finished what industry will be created?

Mr INNES: I understand that other major works programs are in hand. The State now has a reservoir of trained people who can go into labour-intensive areas. Certainly other capital works areas are labour-intensive. The last thing that we want to see is a million dollar machine driven by one man. In any employment-creating scheme it is far better to have half a million men, each working with one tool.

The statistics on which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition based his meanderings and ramblings are fallacious. The illustrations that he cited are equally as spurious. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition subjected the House to the most ill-thought-out, meandering and irrelevant speech that it has been our misfortune to hear for many years.

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (9.13 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate, which has been a most interesting one. I am a little disappointed that, as the honourable member for Sherwood indicated, in the early stages there was not more informed debate on the economic situation.

The honourable member for Woodridge, who led the debate for the Opposition, continued to play his well-known role as a prophet of doom. He continued to make quite outlandish statements based on his scant knowledge of economics. Some of his statements are quite inconsistent with the facts.

He claimed, for example, that Queensland is on the slide and that there are cash balances that can be used for funding capital works. His statements indicate his total lack of knowledge of the financing of Government programs. He tried to claim that the hospital system was funded by the Commonwealth. In this financial year Commonwealth funding for our hospital system will be a mere \$93m, which is about one-quarter of the total cost of the Queensland hospital system.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition went on to indicate that the Government should continue to introduce processing programs in Queensland. That has been Government policy. I should imagine that he has received an invitation to the opening of the Comalco project at Gladstone, at which the last stage of the processing program is being implemented

with the opening of a smelter in the very near future. The Government's policy right from the beginning has been to undertake processing programs, and the Comalco project is an indication of the implementation of the Government's policy.

The honourable member went on to claim that the Government has done nothing about creating jobs. I remind him that last year of all the jobs created in Australia 49 per cent were created in Queensland.

Mr D'Arcy: That is a false statistic and you know it.

Dr EDWARDS: In saying that the honourable member is making allegations against the Commonwealth Statistician.

Mr D'Arcy: I can go the other way.

Dr EDWARDS: The honourable member is well known for twisting figures to suit himself. The figures that I have quoted are figures released by the Commonwealth Statistician.

He made other allegations about job opportunities. I make it quite clear that if it were not for the number of people migrating to this State, there would be no unemployment or job shortages in Queensland. The large number of people coming to this State are taking up the jobs that are being created within industries in the State.

The honourable member referred to some of the economic decisions in Queensland, particularly Greenvale. I hope that the honourable member for Townsville South (Mr Wilson) takes note of that criticism of the Greenvale program. In fact, the honourable member for Woodridge said—"Hansard" will bear me out—that Greenvale should never have been started. I know that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Casey) would not agree with that remark because he was outspoken on continuing the Greenvale program when it was in difficulty some years ago.

Mr Casey: I did say at the time when the initial legislation was going through the House that they were going about it the wrong way.

Mr D'Arcy: That is what I said.

Dr EDWARDS: That is not what the member for Woodridge said at all. It is easy for the Leader of the Opposition to say some of the things he is now saying about Greenvale.

Mr Casey: No, I said it at the time.

Dr EDWARDS: The Leader of the Opposition may be brighter than I think he is. That would probably be the first forecast he has made that has proved to be correct. This Government has honoured its responsibility regarding the Greenvale project. Indeed, when I visit Greenvale I know the response that I receive from the workers there.

The member for Woodridge referred to the 38-hour week campaign. The honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns), who has departed from the Chamber, also referred to that campaign, and I shall have more to say about him in a moment. It is important that I make it clear that at no stage did the Government make a commitment on the 38-hour week. For the member for Woodridge to say that I, at a meeting with other Ministers and the unions, made a commitment on the 38-hour week is totally inaccurate.

I remind him of the position at that time. A strike was in progress and the unions requested to see me and other senior Ministers. We saw them within a few hours and indicated to them that we would reopen negotiations the next day if their members returned to work and lifted all bans. My colleague the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) was involved in those discussions. The unions agreed. In fact, we issued a joint statement indicating that they would remove all bans and return to the negotiating table. We started the negotiations the next day. Those negotiations have continued from 28 April until the present time.

The Government's view is clear: It does not believe that the negotiations have produced an adequate quid pro quo for the introduction of a 38-hour week. The introduction of a 38-hour week would be too much for our economy to stand at this time. It would be an unwise move in the present economic position.

Mr Lane: The Opposition's policy is a 35-hour week.

Dr EDWARDS: I know that. The Leader of the Opposition has made his position clear on the 38-hour week campaign. It is Labor's policy to reduce the working week to 35 hours. Because of the demands for shorter hours—

Mr D'Arcy: You should have done it years ago.

Dr EDWARDS: It is all very well for the member for Woodridge to talk. He has never done a day's work, let alone 35 hours' work in a week.

Let me get back to some facts. It must be realised that at present the economy cannot stand the pushes for higher wages and shorter working hours. A 38-hour week should be introduced only on the basis of 38 hours' pay—not on the basis of two hours' overtime, as has been suggested on a number of occasions.

I turn now to the comments of the honourable member for Woodridge about CER. He knows full well that this Government has been negotiating with the Commonwealth Government for some 12 months to make its position quite clear. Despite what the honourable member said, an agreement has not been made. Tentative heads of agreement have been signed to allow negotiations to take place. As recently as a week ago further discussions took place about some concern that this Government has expressed. It is interesting to note that I made a statement on this matter in Caloundra one morning and that afternoon the honourable member for Woodridge called a Press conference to make a public statement on the matter. That was some hours after I had made the statement in Caloundra, when I brought to the attention of the timber industry problems that the Government saw.

Mr D'Arcy: I made statements months before that.

Dr EDWARDS: That is another dream of the honourable member for Woodridge.

Let me return to the casino legislation. I have made the position clear on that. At no stage has the Government been critical of Federal Hotels. We indicated our belief that it was unwise for one operator to have control of all casinos in Australia. We made it very clear that we would ask Jennings to operate it themselves. That has been welcomed by Jennings and by most people, other than the member for Woodridge. At some time he might explain to the Parliament his knowledge of the matter and his relationship with Federal Hotels.

The honourable member for Windsor (Mr Moore) made mention of the 25 years of coalition Government. It is about time that more emphasis was placed in the records of this Parliament on the activities of the Government over that period. The honourable member has followed with great interest the Government's activity in the history of this State.

The member for Port Curtis (Mr Prest) commented on interest rates and the \$130 m we would have saved in overseas borrowings had the Grants Commission recommendations been acted upon. He does not understand that they are two entirely different things. The overseas borrowing program is an infrastructure program. It provides an opportunity for buyer credit programs and so forth, allowing us to undertake projects through offshore borrowings, thus saving funds for loan programs in this State. Throughout Australia there is difficulty in filling those. He made mention of the pensioner subsidy scheme. It is obvious that he is not in love with his local council. That is a matter for him to resolve. He would know more about that problem than anyone else. If he is prepared to give us the information about the \$5 m loan, we would be prepared to see what could be done. On the limited information he provided tonight, it seems to be an unethical use of the money by the council. However, if he were to raise the matter with us, we would be prepared to have a further look at it.

The honourable member for Warwick made a very good speech on rural production. This Government's view is very clear. We believe that the rural industries are the backbone of this country. Too much emphasis is placed by the media and others in the community on the so-called resources boom. Our greatest resource is primary production, which still contributes 25 per cent of our gross national income at an export level. It is about time that the people of Australia recognised the importance of our rural industries and continued to support their upgrading, as this Government has done for many years. I share the views he expressed. He made some very interesting comments about smaller water conservation schemes. He is aware that the Government is prepared to look at them. Indeed, we are hoping that a submission will come to Cabinet in the very near future.

Some members mentioned the local government subsidy scheme. It is time that I clarified the matter once and for all. The Queensland Government's contribution to local authority was the highest in Australia. We have fulfilled our obligation—

Mr D'Arcy: That is mainly because you make them undertake more services than do the other States.

Dr EDWARDS: That is not correct at all.

Mr D'Arcy: You haven't told the truth.

Dr EDWARDS: That is not correct at all.

Mr D'Arcy: You haven't told it all night.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Woodridge under Standing Order 123A.

Dr EDWARDS: I feel sorry for him, Mr Speaker. He is an embarrassment to his own party. The more he opens his mouth, the bigger embarrassment he becomes.

This Government's contribution to the local government subsidy scheme over the years has been the highest in Australia. We believe it is time for the Government to make sure that its resources are used in the best possible way to finance Government activities and services. It is interesting that the local government that has criticised this Government most—my own council in the city of Ipswich—raised its rates by only 11 per cent this year and has not cut back its works program in any way. It is significant that it has been able to do that with the new local government subsidy scheme.

Today, my friend the honourable member for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge) drew to my attention the fact that the Gold Coast City Council has never charged a sewerage connection fee. Suddenly, when the subsidy scheme is altered, it claims that the Government is to blame, yet it is about the only council in Queensland that has never charged for sewerage connections.

If the Gold Coast City Council had been honourable in its intent on the subsidy scheme, it would have spent the money it received from the sale of land to pay off some of the debts it claimed it had, rather than commence, out of revenue, a scheme to build a cultural centre that may or may not have been needed.

The facts should be made very clear. The money is being used for political ends. Local authorities in this State have been well cared for by the Government. I do not say that some areas do not have needs. On a number of occasions the Government has said that in time it will look at all programs where there are special needs and, if possible, will try to assist.

I have never been as amazed at the honourable member for Lytton as I was this evening. He always makes personal attacks. His implication against me is of little significance; I do not pay any regard to his comments.

However, his continual implication against the Premier and the way in which the Government is run was despicable and irresponsible. I say very clearly that we are indeed a team and it is about time the member for Lytton recognised that Cabinet works as a team. The team makes the decisions and it is proper that the Premier announce those decisions. The Premier wins some battles and loses some. As a member of the team, and as a leader should, he has a responsibility to carry out those decisions in the proper manner. That team spirit will continue.

That a man should enter this House, act so irresponsibly and for political purposes attack people personally under the privilege of Parliament is unfortunate. I despise that action. It is unfortunate that the honourable member is not in the House. If he makes a statement that does not conform to the standards of the House, he must suffer the punishment that is meted out. His personal attacks on me over a long period are of little significance to me. He can say what he likes; I do not consider him to be one of my friends.

The honourable member for Sherwood made a very good speech on the current economic position in Queensland, the population trend and productive employment. He made it very clear that the Opposition misunderstood the economics of the State and the benefits enjoyed by Queenslanders. I appreciate his comments.

Queensland is obviously the envy of every other State and the Opposition is jealous of the Government's good position. The response the Government has had from the electorate speaks for itself. Opposition members can say what they like about the gerrymander and other things, but no other coalition Government in Australia has been able to achieve our vote at the last election. No other party in the history of Australia has received the support that the Gallup polls indicate this Government is receiving. That speaks for itself.

If 1 600 people are coming here each week because of the climate, why didn't they come 25 years ago when Labor was in power? They are coming here now because they know that Queensland has a good Government, that is a good place in which to live and that their families can grow up in security. That is why they are coming to Queensland. The Opposition knows full well that Labor's election in New South Wales and Victoria will increase the number of people coming here. The Premier said recently that he is dying to go to Melbourne so that he can show the people there the quickest way to get to the best State in Australia.

I thank honourable members for their contributions. I regret that the honourable member for Lytton saw fit to make statements in this place that brought discredit to both himself and the House.

Motion (Dr Edwards) agreed to.

Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Miller, Ithaca) in the chair

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Dr Edwards, read a third time.

TRAFFIC ACT

Proposed Disallowance of Regulations

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I refer to a general business notice of motion concerning a proposed disallowance of regulations under the Traffic Act which appeared on the Business Paper on the last day of the first session of this Parliament. Section 28A of the Acts Interpretation Act states that the power of the Legislative Assembly to pass a resolution disallowing a regulation shall not be affected by the prorogation of the Parliament or the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly and the calculation of days upon which the Legislative Assembly has sat shall be made as if there had been no prorogation or dissolution. I understand that by agreement this motion is to be discussed now and, accordingly, I call upon the honourable member for Brisbane Central to move the motion.

Mr DAVIS (Brisbane Central) (9.32 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That parts 38A, 44A, 68, 108A and 109 of the Traffic Regulations 1962 under the Traffic Act 1949-1980 and tabled in the House on 18 March 1982 be disallowed.”

These regulations are a fairly good example of the way in which the Government runs this State. Two or three days before the conclusion of the March session I gave notice that I intended to move for the disallowance of amendments to the Traffic Regulations. Honourable members will recall that during that session the Minister for Transport amended the Traffic Act itself, but in fact the amendments to the Traffic Regulations were probably more important than those to the Traffic Act.

The Opposition has perhaps got itself into a bind here, because if the motion is passed and the regulations are disallowed we will find ourselves in a very interesting situation. The amendments to the Traffic Regulations show to me and to my party the ridiculous and farcical manner in which this Government and the Minister for Transport have operated.

It is obvious that the Minister for Transport reads “The Courier-Mail” and watches the visual media and then decides that something has to be done about road safety. After seeing these amendments to the Traffic Regulations, I wonder whether there is any rhyme or reason in the way in which the Minister and his advisers approach road safety.

The amendment to Traffic Regulation 108A is a classic example of overkill. The regulation states—

“On and from 1st April, 1982, where a provisional license to drive a motor cycle is issued, that license shall restrict the driver to driving a motor cycle with engine capacity not exceeding 250 ml.”

I will be interested to hear the Minister explain why that regulation was introduced. I believe it was because of some suggestion in the community that motor-cyclists should have graded licences.

I shall shortly read some extracts from publications that suggest that a 250 cc motor cycle is capable of obtaining high speeds.

Mr Shaw: Over 100 mph.

Mr DAVIS: That is right. That might be fair enough, and one could say that graded licences may save lives; but I will take it further. If the regulations that were tabled contained nothing else, the Opposition would still have to oppose them because of the way in which Ministers handle road safety. The amendment has not been well thought out.

In addition to the part of the regulations that I read, there is a provision that if a person has previously held a licence for more than 12 months, the first part of the regulation does not apply to him. A motor vehicle driver may never have ridden a motor cycle but he can obtain a motor cycle licence without being covered by the first part of the regulation. It is a classic example of inferior regulations. Further regulations are to be tabled and they will probably be opposed. As I said, the media seems to be having the say in road safety.

A publication reads—

“The 250 cc law does not stop this. An 18-year old person . can buy a 250 cc motor cycle that is capable of 160 km/h and has a faster rate of acceleration than many 750 cc bikes. It is race competitive, yet it is legally and readily available to learners. Further, it is less stable, has less rubber on the road and less brakes than the larger machines. In short, it is less safe than many 500 cc bikes.”

Mr Moore: It is lighter to hold up.

Mr DAVIS: I should like to know the last time the honourable member rode a motor cycle.

Mr Vaughan: He is a bad enough car driver.

Mr DAVIS: That is right. Anyone would be well advised to keep well and truly clear of the honourable member for Windsor when he is driving his Austin.

Mr Moore: I rode a Harley.

Mr DAVIS: He had a Harley Davidson. He is going back 50 years.

We may not have had any objection if the Minister had given some reasons why the Government introduced these regulations. Regulation after regulation is tabled in this Chamber. The many Orders in Council and regulations tabled by the Minister for Health are a classic example. His confederate is the Minister for Transport.

I should like the Minister for Transport to explain the reason for the introduction of another regulation. I imagine that the rural community or the rural lobby has suggested the introduction of regulation 86A under which the rider of a horse is given preference over a motorist. That is a classic example. I should like the Minister for Transport to explain why that has been put forward. Is it because the trendies in Brookfield have asked the honourable member for Mt Coot-tha (Mr Lickiss) and his friends to introduce these regulations, or is it because the racehorses in the electorate of Merthyr have pushed for the amendment?

While I am on this subject, I point out that another of the special regulations—

Mr Austin: Why don't you get on to the subject? You have not been on it yet.

Mr DAVIS: I would like to debate with the Minister for Health the appointment of trendy people to hospital boards.

I would like the Minister for Transport to explain how he worked out that the use of lights on high beam in built-up areas is of benefit to road safety. That is another example of the manner in which the Minister for Transport has introduced these regulations. The regulations are ill-defined and ill-considered. If the Minister continues to introduce regulations such as these, he will be faced with opposition.

I would like him to tell the Chamber how he goes about changing the regulations. The regulations certainly could not be the result of the Minister's ideas, because he was formerly a policeman. If he had ever directed traffic, he would know that the regulations are unsuitable in modern traffic conditions. The Road Safety Council meets very rarely. I should like the Minister to tell the House how he obtains the brilliant ideas for changes to the regulations. Does he sit around and ask his advisers, "What do you think we should do to change the regulations?" After reading "The Courier-Mail" or the "Daily Sun" does he say, "We have a problem on our hands. What do you reckon, Mick, will we make it 90 mph, 80 mph, 60 mph, or what do you think is a fair thing?" Up goes the coin, down it comes, and he says, "We will make it 90 mph for trucks." Does the same thing apply to motor cycles?

(Time expired.)

Mr HANSEN (Maryborough) (9.42 p.m.): In seconding the motion for the disallowance of the regulations, I welcome the opportunity to speak to it. I realise that it is necessary to introduce many of the regulations, but some of them should not be introduced without discussion and scrutiny in the House.

Mr Lane: Are you in favour of them or against them?

Mr HANSEN: I am in favour of some of them and against others. I cannot give a blanket answer.

Mr Lane: You will tell us as you go along?

Mr HANSEN: Of course I will. I have only five minutes in which to do that.

The regulation providing for giving way to restive horses is a commonsense approach, in the same way as steam gives way to sail.

I ask the Minister to inform the House what motor cycle groups have been consulted about the limitation of licences. There should be some limitation of licences. A limitation already exists in the form of a provisional licence.

Mr Lane: Thank you for your support.

Mr HANSEN: I am not referring to the type of limitation to which the Minister is referring.

Mr Lane: That is why we have "Hansard", so that you cannot go back on your word.

Mr HANSEN: I agree with the type of limitation that says that a person within a short period of being granted a licence should be controlled in what he is doing. If he loses some points, he loses his licence. That system has operated in the granting of provisional licences. However, the Government is saying that a person cannot ride this bike or that bike.

Mr Lane: What is your proposition?

Mr HANSEN: I claim that limiting a rider to a 250 cc motor cycle is not a satisfactory way of dealing with the situation. When a limitation is imposed—

Mr Lane: What is your proposition?

Mr HANSEN: If the Minister kept his mouth shut and his ears open, he would hear it.

Mr Lane interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Minister to contain himself. I find myself in a most invidious position. Under the present circumstances if I were to ask the Minister to leave the Chamber it would be wrong. Nevertheless, I may be prompted to do so.

Mr HANSEN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I simply ask the Minister what prompted the regulation that provides that a person who has held a licence for 12 months—it might be a licence to drive a motor car—can ride any type of motor bike but a person who is being given a licence for the first time is limited to a small bike. People come in all sizes—small

sizes and large sizes. A big man on a small bike is more unbalanced than a big man on a big bike. A classic example is the Minister himself. When he demonstrated the moped to his fellow Government members he fell off and tore the knee out of his trousers.

Mr Lane: Why didn't you come down here?

Mr HANSEN: I was not invited.

Mr Lane: Why don't you read your mail?

Mr HANSEN: There was no invitation in the mail; the Minister did not send one.

Mr Lane: You throw your mail in the waste-paper basket.

Mr HANSEN: It is obvious that the Minister does not want to listen to me. He has no answer. When I asked him what advice he received from motor-cyclists, he mentioned some person who was a member of the road safety committee and who claimed to have been a champion motor-cyclist in his time. I do not think he was Lionel van Pragg, but he was probably of the same vintage. In those days small motor cycles were underpowered. These days, light motor cycles are not underpowered. On the contrary, they are overpowered. Because they have less rubber on the road they are less stable. I am sure that most members find that when they are driving out on the highway and are passed by a semi-trailer or a bus they are hit by a rush of wind. A motor-cyclist riding a small bike could, in such circumstances, lose control of his bike.

(Time expired.)

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise) (9.49 p.m.): In speaking in support of the regulations, I express surprise at the vehement opposition that has been forthcoming from Labor Party ranks tonight. I also voice my concern at the implied criticism of the Queensland Road Safety Council, which is a fine organisation that does very good work throughout the State. I am extremely disappointed that the honourable member for Brisbane Central saw fit once again to shoot a barb at the Queensland Road Safety Council. I strongly support the Minister on his promulgation of regulations that I believe are both practicable and for the benefit of all road users. Without wishing to debate the effect of driver education, I would say that it does prepare young people for operating vehicles on the road. Not even the loudest critics here tonight would suggest that a young person can, unprepared, take control of a motor vehicle and go straight into the traffic system. However, the question tonight is not whether driver education should be continued; rather is it how it could be improved. The Minister, to his credit, has taken some positive steps by way of these regulations.

I refer firstly to the introduction of a basic test on traffic law for the learner driver. The test has been structured to highlight those areas of driving in which the young inexperienced learner could encounter difficulties.

Honourable members who have spoken in this debate have referred to the new regulation concerning the grading of motor cycle licences. The member for Brisbane Central mentioned this matter and was quite critical of this rather major initiative that has been taken by the Minister. With regard to the regulation relating to the grading of motor cycle licences—experience interstate and overseas continues to show over representation by young, inexperienced riders on high-capacity motor cycles in the casualty lists.

Mr Shaw: You quote me some figures.

Mr BORBIDGE: Yes, I shall quote the honourable member some figures. The situation was confirmed in Queensland by the case study commissioned by the Queensland Road Safety Council into motor cycle fatalities in 1975-76, which was prepared by W. T. Beggs and V. Siskind from the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine of the University of Queensland. Their report found that motor cycle riders face 18 times the relative fatality risks of other road users. This alarming statistic alone surely supports the need for special legislation in this area.

Mr Shaw interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: If the honourable member listens, I shall give him some more figures and he might learn something. It does not appear as though he is sufficiently informed about the subject tonight.

The report shows that the 16-20 years age group in Queensland accounts for 56 per cent of all motor cycle fatalities. The age group 21-25 years accounts for a further 24 per cent of fatalities. Sixty-one per cent of the fatalities involve people who have been riding motor cycles for two years or less. A further disturbing aspect of this report is that of those killed in motor cycle accidents, 36 per cent were either unlicensed or riding only on a learner's permit. The Minister has stated that high motor cycle accident probability is associated with motor cycles with an engine capacity above 250 mL, and I support that statement. Road safety studies show that although machines of over 500 mL represent only 10 per cent of the motor cycles on register, they represent 42 per cent of the motor cycle fatalities.

Victoria has a graded motor cycle licence system. The Road Safety and Traffic Authority in Victoria has carefully evaluated the introduction of the graded motor cycle licence scheme. Data for 1980 indicates that the accident rate for first-year probationary licence holders has fallen by 47 per cent, from 45 per 1 000 to 24 per 1 000. I suggest to Opposition members that they are the figures and statistics at which we should be looking.

I support the Minister for having the foresight to introduce these regulations, and I express disappointment that his action has not received the unanimous support of the House.

Mr SMITH (Townsville West) (9.53 p.m.): My objections to the regulations are very limited. In fact, they are confined solely to the absolute nature of the 250 cc limit. In many instances that limit would be inappropriate.

Mr Austin: Are you for or against it?

Mr SMITH: I am in favour of saving life. Any responsible person would have to be in favour of saving life. Twenty-nine of the last 42 fatalities that have occurred on the roads in this State have involved motor cycles. I suggest to the Minister that there are many ways in which to approach this matter.

Mr Lane: What is your proposition?

Mr SMITH: My proposition is that the matter should be considered from a power to weight ratio point of view. I would not expect the Minister to know much about that. The last occasion on which I saw the Minister on a motor bike he fell off. We are talking about a serious matter. We are trying to save lives. I am trying to be serious and to put to the Minister that when he simply talks about motor cycles—

Mr Lane: What is your proposition?

Mr SMITH: I have told the Minister what my proposition is.

Mr Hansen: He is not even listening.

Mr SMITH: No, he is not. A 250 cc motor cycle today can come in many forms. It may be an appropriate motor cycle for an inexperienced rider. It is also capable of being ridden at 200 miles an hour. It can be turbo-charged and it can be just as powerful as a 1 000 cc motor cycle.

The Minister should reconsider this matter and be more flexible. Education programs should be instituted so that the great majority of riders may be aware of the machine that is appropriate to their requirements. It is not simply a matter of saying, "Thou shalt have this. Thou shalt not have something else." The problem ought to be looked into more deeply. I support some limitation of the maximum size of motor cycles on the road. I cannot see why 1 000 cc motor cycles should be used generally by young people. However, that does not alter the proposition that I put to the Minister, namely, that the arbitrary method being used to discriminate against young riders is totally inappropriate and requires further revision.

Mr PRENTICE (Toowong) (9.56 p.m.): The Opposition's antics tonight represent nothing more than a shabby attempt to score political points on a deadly serious subject. With the exception of the last speech from the Opposition, that is all we have had. This is a serious topic. It is not a matter of talking about big people or little people and the size of the bikes that they ride. It is a matter of how we in this State can save the lives of motor-cyclists. The best way to do that is to look at the facts. The statistics show that in the year 1980-81, of the 559 people killed on Queensland roads, 90, or 16 per cent, were motor-cyclists. Of the 9 951 reported injuries, 1 581, or 15.8 per cent, related to motor cycles. Those injuries are not just scratches. They have disabled kids who will never walk properly again because of injuries to their feet and legs.

Mr Vaughan: What are you doing about it?

Mr PRENTICE: The Minister has introduced a system of graded licences. That is a step in the right direction. I do not claim—and neither would the Minister, I am sure—that it will solve the problem totally. If there are further solutions, or further ways of attacking the problem, I am sure the Minister will be pleased to hear the member's contribution, but we have heard very little so far from the Opposition tonight—very little indeed.

The new regulation has the effect of preventing inexperienced riders from riding high-powered machines. That is a step in the right direction. We have here a positive approach that will save many lives. It might be suggested that we could go further, but it is a step in the right direction. I congratulate the Minister on having the foresight to move in this direction. It is a pity that the Opposition did not take a more positive approach.

Let us look at the other matters dealt with in the regulations. Drivers' licence-testing centres operated by the Department of Transport at Zillmere, Rockhampton and the Gold Coast incorporate off-street testing facilities for motor-cyclists. Before an applicant is permitted to undertake the on-road segment of the practical riding test, he is required to demonstrate that he understands his machine and can ride competently through a series of slow-speed manoeuvres. Because riders of motor cycles are more vulnerable to injury than drivers of any other vehicles on the road, it is essential that they gain experience. This proposition is all about giving young people experience on smaller bikes before they get out on big machines and create havoc, not merely for themselves but often for other road-users.

I ask members of the Opposition to look at the proposal and accept it on its merits as a valid, honest and worthwhile attempt to do something about an appalling road toll. If they have propositions, let them put them forward in this Chamber. With the exception of the speech made by the member for Townsville West, all we have had tonight has been a series of attempts to knock this regulation on the head without any constructive proposal as to how else the problem can be tackled. The Opposition should have done much better. I congratulate the Minister on a job well done. I congratulate the Road Safety Council. I ask all members to support the regulations.

Mr SHAW (Wynnum) (10 p.m.): For a long time people have been concerned about the road toll. If we agree on one thing tonight, it is that something should be done to lessen it. Only yesterday a surgeon at the hospital told me that the Government is giving a knee-jerk reaction to this problem. One constructive action for which there is a great need is the undertaking by the Government of a proper survey to produce statistics on the actual problems involved in the road toll and what can be done to overcome them. When one delves into this matter one finds a lack of reliable figures. Some of them do not go into the problem as deeply as they should.

Mr Borbidge: I think that has been done.

Mr SHAW: The honourable member mentioned that 16 to 20-year-old people are involved in the most accidents. That is true. Of course, they travel more miles than people in any other age group, and they ride in rain and in other unpleasant conditions. People in older age groups ride motor cycles mainly as a hobby and use their cars when it is raining. There are many other reasons why young people are involved in more accidents.

The restriction on provisional licences is crazy.

Mr Lane: What is your proposition?

Mr SHAW: I have already told the Minister one. I will now tell him another. After I spoke in this House on a previous occasion the Minister eventually took up some of my points.

There is no logic in the suggestion that there is anything to be gained by restricting the size of bikes that can be ridden by people with provisional licences, particularly, as the member for Brisbane Central said, as a person who holds a motor vehicle licence can ride any size bike that he likes, even though he may never have been on a motor cycle previously.

Mr Lane: He has finally found a supporter on that side.

Mr SHAW: Not for what the Minister is doing.

The bikes that people with provisional licences will be permitted to ride are similar to those that are jumped over four or five barrels or travel down the streets on their back wheel. They are not the small, underpowered bikes that the Minister says will be safe for people with provisional licences to ride. There is no proof that that is so. The Government is responding to a newspaper campaign which, unfortunately, is not based on fact.

About 71 per cent of motor cycle accidents are the result of collisions. They are not the result of the rider losing control, which would be the case if he were riding a bike that was too powerful.

Mr Austin: That is not logical.

Mr SHAW: It is logical.

A classic example of the problem is the Minister falling off an underpowered bike and sustaining some slight injury. If he had been travelling faster, the injury would have been greater. Lessons can be learnt from that. Two conclusions can be drawn. The first is to ensure that riders have greater skill when they first ride a motor cycle. They should not be unskilled, as the Minister obviously is. The second is that riders should wear more protective clothing. Crash helmets have provided some protection. Crash bars on the bottom of bikes to protect rider's legs will do a lot more.

Mr Lane: Why didn't you come along that morning?

Mr SHAW: Because the Minister did not invite me. He is attempting to mislead the Parliament. He knows very well that I was not invited.

If the Minister were to insist that motor cycles be fitted with crash bars to protect a cyclist's legs, he would be taking as great a step forward as was taken when regulations were introduced requiring the wearing of protective headgear. The Minister for Health would be able to tell the Minister that the introduction of crash helmets resulted in a decrease in the number of deaths but an increase in the number of paraplegics.

(Time expired.)

Mr KAUS (Mansfield) (10.5 p.m.): I support the Minister for Transport in the initiatives that he has taken to amend the Traffic Regulations. They are practical amendments that will improve road safety.

I wish to refer particularly to two of the amendments. The first requires that applicants for learners' permits undertake a basic test of knowledge of the Traffic Regulations. In any week, approximately 60 learner-drivers accumulate four or more demerit points, and it is appropriate that the regulations be amended to provide for the automatic cancellation of a learner's permit at the four-point level, the same level as in the existing provisions relating to provisional licence holders.

Learners' permits are issued to first-time drivers or drivers who have had their licence cancelled and are required to be retested. It is significant that 60 per cent of show cause actions relate to persons who have previously held drivers' licences and I suspect that, in some cases, drivers are not bothering to go for a further test after their period of cancellation has expired, but are driving on learners' permits for lengthy periods.

It makes very good sense that drivers taking to the roads for the first time have at least a basic knowledge of the traffic laws in that they know the speed limits, understand the "Give way" rules, are aware that seat belts must be worn and understand the drink driving laws.

Examples of offences recorded against learner-drivers in the last seven months are:—

Case No. 1—Disobeying a red light, failing to keep left of a double line, driving unaccompanied by a licensed driver, failing to produce a learner's permit and driving a defective vehicle.

Case No. 2—In the last six months—driving defective vehicle, speeding, creating undue noise, failing to signal intention and disobeying a "Stop" sign.

Members will agree that these are not satisfactory records for learner drivers.

The concept of educating the learner-driver at the commencement of his driving career is sound and is reinforced by the development of a high school driver education program.

During 1974, there had been considerable discussion as to the suitability of defensive driving courses for people learning to drive. Although some learners have expressed the view that attendance at a defensive driving course is particularly beneficial, I am informed that the Queensland Road Safety Council is of the opinion that as the course is designed basically as a retraining program for licensed drivers, it would be too advanced for many learners. The council's view is that the defensive driving course was not designed for the learner-driver, who requires a specially designed course with emphasis on the physical aspects of driving that are not covered in depth in the defensive driving course.

In 1974, the Education Department indicated that if such a course was developed, the department would give strong consideration to its inclusion in the syllabus for State high schools, with the course being carried out by teachers who could receive initial training from Queensland Road Safety Council officers.

Thus, in 1974, the original learner-driver course commenced as a public course. During the next few years, the Road Safety Council's School Advisory Service trained volunteer teachers as qualified learner-driver course instructors, and the course was conducted by some 25 schools.

During this time changes made included: teachers conducting the course have not been trained by Queensland Road Safety Council staff; flip charts, flannel graphs and magnetic chalk boards have been replaced by overhead transparencies and additional information has been provided for teachers. Various amendments were tried but, by 1979, it was apparent that the learner-driver course, as such, required so many amendments that it was desirable for it to be completely revised.

(Time expired.)

Dr LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (10.11 p.m.): I should like to pass a few remarks on the regulation concerning horses. I remind honourable members that, in the days when public roads were first built, they were built for horse traffic. Of course, in those days, horses were well broken and the riders had great skill in controlling them.

Today, that level of skill is possessed only by the people who train racehorses and are every bit as careful as their forbears with horses in traffic. When they have to take their extremely valuable animals through traffic, they lead them on foot or from another very quiet and well-trained horse that is thoroughly used to traffic. Trainers and their staff do not want any of their horses in training injured or bolting in traffic.

Those horses are not allowed to travel on footpaths and have to use the bitumen surface of the roads. I should like encouragement to be given to pony club riders and other riders to use the grassy verge on the edge of roads, particularly out of the built-up areas. In a region where there is no made footpath they should be well away from the bitumen surface because the traffic on those roads often travels at 80 or 100 km/h or, if the driver is breaking the law, an even faster rate.

I offer a word of caution to all horse riders. They must not think that the recent amendments to the regulations will make things any safer for them. If they take the regulations as implying that they are safe to move on a road and in traffic they could suffer a series of dreadful accidents. I do not want that type of fate to befall these people.

Mr Moore: It does not make horses' shoes grip any better on hard bitumen.

Dr LOCKWOOD: Completely different shoes must be used on roads and dirt.

I caution all people who are new to riding horses or are inexperienced in riding horses not to put a horse into a position in traffic where the rider could lose control with resultant injury to himself or the horse.

In 1975 I conducted a survey of motor-cyclists in my electorate who were quite concerned about the Government's proposals to introduce a four-step motor cycle licence related to the cubic capacity of the engine. If any other honourable members took the trouble to conduct such a survey, the motor-cyclists would tell them that they are in favour of a two-step licence.

Mr Davis: How many did you speak to? Two people as you walked past?

Dr LOCKWOOD: No. I conducted the survey while the honourable member for Brisbane Central was driving taxi-cabs and not riding motor cycles. If he had taken the time to survey some motor-cyclists between the time of the Government's proposal for a four-step licence and now he would have found that the great majority are aware of the proposal.

A valid point made by the Opposition, which I made in those days and still make, is that the step should be much lower than 250 cc. A 250 cc bike can be the fastest on the road or on the track. That point was well made by the Opposition and it is quite right. I would prefer to see the step at 150 or 175 cc.

There should be only one step because the motor cyclist loses too much in trading his bike up. If he went through a four-step progression he would be losing on three separate trades. I support the one-step progression. A great deal can be said for learning on a small bike which, nevertheless, can be quite nippy. I think that the Minister for Transport and the Road Safety Council should look at the use of helmets because some accidents that have occurred are caused by carbon dioxide build-up or loss of oxygen in helmets that can be sealed with a scarf around the neck. Motorists have described motor-cyclists passing out as they veer off the road into the scrub. As a result, the motor-cyclist can be involved in a serious accident. Other problems have not yet come to the Minister's notice. On some imported 750 cc bikes the mag wheels go out of round and cause accidents.

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (10.16 p.m.), in reply: I have no doubt whatsoever that the House will agree that this motion has no substance because the debate so far has shown nothing but support for the proposition that I have put forward. Many members on both sides of the House have indicated that they are in favour of the general thrust of the propositions.

Concern has been expressed about the way in which the regulations will be implemented. As usual, the members of the Opposition are following the Whitlam tradition of wanting to have a look at them, create a task force or carry out another endless study. They will find, as Mr Whitlam did, that ultimately the Government must make decisions and stand by them. The members opposite, who are members of the Think Small Look Back Party, which I understand is their current slogan, are not used to these things.

Regulation 38A pertains to giving way to restive horses. When I considered the amendment, I had before me numerous representations from rider groups and pony clubs, drawing my attention to regulations operating in New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania, all States that at one stage or another have had members of that Think Small Look Back Party governing their State. The regulations operating in those States require the driver of a motor vehicle to take precautionary measures when confronted with a restive horse.

Increasing numbers of young riders are members of riding schools. One was killed in a collision with a vehicle at Toowoomba last April. The Government recognises that riders of animals have the same duties and rights under the traffic regulation 6 that are imposed on vehicle drivers other than those provisions which cannot apply to animals. It is also important to note that regulation 99 prohibits riding an animal on the road proper if it is practicable for the animal to be ridden on the road shoulder. However, the Government also believes it is not unreasonable that drivers should be required to consider the rider of a horse misbehaving on a road.

Speaking more specifically, regulation 38A provides for a code of conduct to be observed by the drivers when they encounter a rider on a restive horse. A restive horse is defined as one which refuses to go forward, stubbornly stands still or obstinately moves backwards or to the side when being driven or ridden.

The regulation stipulates that if a rider raises a hand and points to the restive horse, the driver of a motor vehicle—quite reasonably, I think—is required to drive his vehicle as close as possible to the left of the road and stop. If there is a reasonable likelihood that the noise of the motor or movement of the vehicle will aggravate the restiveness of the horse, the driver is required to stop the engine and not move the vehicle.

This regulation does not apply to a freeway from which animals are prohibited. Historically the Traffic Act and Regulations provide for the riding of horses and other animals on roads. For example, typical offences under the Traffic Act are: drink-riding;

dangerous or careless riding, unlawful interference with the harness or equipment attached to the animal; and racing of animals on a road. Many years ago I made an arrest on a charge of drink-riding.

Typical offences under the traffic regulations are: unlawful leading of animals; unharnessed animals drawing vehicles; use of unbroken or undomesticated animals in a built-up area; feeding animals on roads in a built-up area; and non-compliance with construction and equipment requirements for animal-drawn vehicles.

Persons in charge of horses on roadways have obligations just as some restrictions are placed on motor vehicle drivers who are in the vicinity of those animals. I am not aware of any complaints having been received by my department relating to regulation 38A. Offences against it are not ones in respect of which an on-the-spot traffic offence notice may be issued. Any proceedings would be commenced by way of complaint and summons authorised by a senior police officer.

Under the regulation that introduces a scheme of graded motor cycle licences, effective from 1 April 1982, permits to learn to ride a motor cycle for the first time and provisional motor cycle riders licences issued to riders who have not previously held a motor cycle licence contain a condition that restricts the rider to riding a motor cycle with an engine capacity of not more than 250 mL. In effect, learner riders and provisional riders are not permitted to ride a motor cycle above 250 mL during their first year of riding. Obviously a lead time was necessary for the introduction of these restricted licences.

Exempted from the restriction of 250 mL are persons who have held a driver's licence continuously for a period of more than 12 months, persons who have held an unrestricted learner's permit prior to 1 April 1982 and persons who have previously held an unrestricted provisional licence to drive a motor cycle. Exempted from the restricted learner's permit are persons who have held a driver's licence continuously for more than 12 months and persons who have held an unrestricted learner's permit prior to 1 April 1982.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr LANE: You will notice, Mr Speaker, that I do not protest when members opposite interject. I am not a cream puff or a pansy like the former Federal member for Wide Bay, who cannot seem to stand a few little faint interjections without screaming for assistance from the Chair—and getting it, too, I might add.

Honourable members will share my concern at the road toll and, in particular, at the disproportionate involvement of motor cycle riders in road accidents.

Studies indicate that high motor cycle accident probability is associated with motor cycles with an engine capacity of above 250 mL, with riders aged 25 years or less and with riders having less than two years riding experience.

As an example—the South Australian study of accident probability has indicated that motor-cyclists in the 16-to-20-year age group riding machines of 250 mL or less have an accident probability of 9.4, whereas riders of the same age group on larger machines have an accident probability of 21.8. The study also clearly indicates that inexperienced motor-cyclists on larger capacity machines are exposed to the greater risk.

The accident probability rate for a motor-cyclist with less than 12 months experience riding a machine of 250 mL or less is 7.7, whereas on a larger capacity machine the probability rate increases to 18.9.

The Advisory Committee on Road User Performance and Traffic Codes, which is an advisory committee of the Australian Transport Advisory Council, of which I am a member, recommended in its report titled "Guide-lines for Driver Licensing and Driver Improvement Programs in Australia" that learner motor-cyclists and those in their first year of full licensed riding be restricted to machines with a capacity not exceeding 250 mL.

The concept of graded licences for motor cycle riders is not unique to Queensland; it has been adopted by all other States. Obviously it is too soon to establish the benefits to be gained from the graded licence system, but the seriousness of the problem is reflected in the fact that in 1981 of a total of 594 road deaths motor cycle deaths numbered 92. Even honourable members opposite should be able to realise the significance of those figures. Whereas motor cycle deaths represented 16 per cent of total road deaths, motor cycle registrations made up only 5.4 per cent of total registrations.

Regulation 109, relating to learners' permits, was the last to which the honourable member objected. This regulation requires that all applicants for learners' permits undertake and satisfactorily complete a test of sight and hearing and a test of knowledge of the traffic law. Prior to the introduction of this regulation, the procedure to obtain a learners' permit was quite simple. The primary requirement was that a person must be 17 years of age. He had to supply details of his name, address, date and place of birth, and a personal description. The applicant was required to answer questions about any previous licences which may have been held and whether any traffic offences had been committed. Each applicant was required to pass a hearing and sight test. If the applicant suffered from any health problem or other disability that could affect his driving, a certificate from a doctor as to the effect of the disability on driving ability was necessary.

Each learner's permit is issued for 12 months and must be carried at all times when driving. It is a condition of the permit that the learner be accompanied by a person who has been licensed to drive for at least one year and, in the case of a motor cycle, under the direction of a person licensed for at least one year or carry an instructor, who is a person licensed for at least two years to ride a motor cycle.

The learning period is of particular importance for any driver. It is during that period that habits, attitudes and knowledge towards driving are formed and gained. The obtaining of a learner's permit should not be an automatic process. It should require a knowledge of the traffic laws designed for the protection of the entire community.

The new regulations propose that all applicants for learners' permits should undertake and satisfactorily complete a basic traffic regulation test as a prerequisite to the issue of a permit. This view is confirmed by the Australian Transport Advisory Council, which has endorsed such a recommendation from its appropriate advisory committee. The basic test undertaken for learners' permits comprises 10 questions concerning speed limits (two questions), "Stop" and "Give way" signs (two questions), intersections, uncontrolled junctions and T-junctions (two questions), seat-belts (one question), drink-driving (two questions), and traffic lights (one question). All questions must be correctly answered.

All States are in line with the National Code, which requires learners to undertake a test of their knowledge of the traffic regulations. It is a matter of real concern that, prior to the introduction of this regulation, records held at the Department of Transport indicated that approximately 60 holders of learners' permits were accumulating four or more demerit points each week. It is significant to note that the majority of these cancelled learners' permits were issued to drivers who were under the age of 22 years. That highlights the importance of ensuring that drivers during their period of learning have at least a basic knowledge of the more important traffic regulations.

I think that I have covered most of the points raised by honourable members. Some members have a limited capacity to grapple with issues such as these, but I do not doubt their sincerity and goodwill on the subject of road safety. It does no harm to adopt a very broad approach to the subject. I am always happy to hear suggestions from Opposition members, particularly if they can put their thoughts together in such a way that they can advance a coherent proposition. Obviously that is something that they have had difficulty in doing this evening.

Unless any honourable member has a query that he would like answered across the Chamber, I think that I will allow you, Mr Speaker, to put the question so that we can take another positive step forward in the interests of road safety and of saving lives in this great State of Queensland.

Question—That the motion (Mr Davis) be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 19

Blake	Milliner	Yewdale
Casey	Prest	
D'Arcy	Scott	
Davis	Shaw	
Eaton	Smith	<i>Tellers:</i>
Fouras	Vaughan	
Jones	Warburton	Hansen
McLean	Wilson	Kruger

Noes, 40

Ahern
 Austin
 Bertoni
 Bjelke-Petersen
 Booth
 Borbidge
 Edwards
 Elliott
 FitzGerald
 Glasson
 Greenwood
 Harper
 Hewitt
 Innes
 Jennings

Katter
 Kaus
 Lane
 Lee
 Lester
 Lickiss
 Lockwood
 McKechnie
 Menzel
 Miller
 Moore
 Muntz
 Powell
 Prentice
 Row

Scassola
 Stephan
 Sullivan
 Tenni
 Tomkins
 Turner
 Wharton
 White

Tellers:

Gygar
 Neal

Pairs:

Hooper
 Wright

Hinze
 Knox

Resolved in the negative.

The House adjourned at 10.36 p.m.

