Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 18 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 papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamations under—
- Speech Therapists Act 1979
- Medical Act and Other Acts Amendment Act 1981
- Food Act 1981
- Forestry Act 1959-1981

Orders in Council under—
- Racing and Betting Act 1980-1982
- Ambulance Services Act 1967-1975
- Land Act 1962-1981
- Land Act 1962-1982
- Fauna Conservation Act 1974-1979
- Forestry Act 1959-1981 and the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975-1976
- Grammar Schools Act 1975 and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act 1923-1979
- Rural Training Schools Act of 1965 and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act 1923-1979

Regulations under—
- Public Service Act 1922-1978
- Physiotherapists Act 1964-1981
- Pharmacy Act 1976-1981
- Chiropodists Act 1969-1975
- Food Act 1981

Statutes under—
- University of Queensland Act 1965-1981
- Griffith University Act 1971-1980
- James Cook University of North Queensland Act 1970-1981

By-laws under—
- Speech Therapists Act 1979
- Psychologists Act 1977
- Dental Act 1971-1973
- Nursing Act 1976-1979
- Optometrists Act 1974
- Chiropractic Manipulative Therapists Act 1979
- Pharmacy Act 1976-1978
- Occupational Therapists Act 1979

Report of the Queensland Turf Club for the year ended 30 June 1982

DEATH OF MR E. C. O'DONNELL

Motion of Condolence

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (11.4 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 Eugene Christopher O'Donnell, Esquire, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.

2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman 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."

Yesterday honourable members would have been saddened to hear of the recent passing of Mr O'Donnell, a former Opposition spokesman on lands, who spent many years serving the people of Queensland. Hughie O'Donnell, as we knew him, was born in Bathurst, New South Wales, in 1913 and was educated at St Laurence's College, Brisbane.

Prior to entering Parliament, he was a schoolteacher, finally becoming head teacher of the Capella State School in Central Queensland. He entered Parliament on 1 July 1961, following the Barcoo by-election held because of the death of Mr Davis, MLA. He was well known for his concern for the ordinary working man in the West. Having taught their children, he was aware of the special problems experienced by people in that region.

He was a loyal member of the Australian Labor Party, Queensland branch, and held various and important positions within its structure. In the Parliament, he was the Opposition spokesman on land matters and, upon his retirement from the House, I recall that the then Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Sullivan) remarked that the Opposition would be hard put to find a more knowledgeable spokesman in that area.

Mr O'Donnell retired from his seat, then named Belyando, in 1974 because of ill health. He is survived by his wife, Emily, and a son and daughter. Hughie O'Donnell was an articulate debater on the floor of the House and a man whose efforts made a worthwhile contribution to the well-being of the people of his electorate and Queensland generally.

I held Hughie O'Donnell in high regard; so, on behalf of the Government, and I am sure all members of the House, I extend condolences to the family of the late Eugene O'Donnell.

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (11.7 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the Premier to pay tribute to the memory of Mr O'Donnell, who was a highly respected member of the Parliament. He was in the House when I entered Parliament in 1972, and he was very friendly to members of Parliament on both sides of the House.

His knowledge of rural matters, to which the Premier referred, was highly respected in the Parliament. Indeed, he was always an excellent debater who made people sit up and listen to what he had to say. As the Premier also said, Mr O'Donnell had a great respect for people, especially country people, and I well recall his speeches on education, health and lands as they applied to country people. They were delivered with great dignity and compassion and, most importantly, with great determination and dedication.

Mr O'Donnell was highly respected by members of both sides of the Parliament, and such respect is not achieved by all members of Parliament. He was respected as a man who paid tribute when it was deserved but also as one who could engage in bitter debate when that was called for. At no time did he lose his respect for those who were in opposition to him or for those who did not share his view. I also remind the House that Mr O'Donnell represented people irrespective of their politics, and that is a rare quality in politics today.

For those reasons, I second the motion and join with the Premier in expressing to Mr O'Donnell's wife and family my deepest sympathy at this time.

Mr CASEY (Mackay—Leader of the Opposition) (11.9 a.m.): I support the Premier and the Deputy Premier in the motion of condolence to the family of the late Hughie O'Donnell, especially because he was, as was mentioned by both of them, a very well respected and, in some sectors, revered member of Parliament, as well as being a very fine Labor man.

I was in the House with Mr O'Donnell for five years before ill health brought about his retirement in 1974. With his knowledge and ability, and with the support of his electorate, he could have continued in this place for as long as he desired.

Even prior to becoming a member of Parliament Hughie O'Donnell was a legend in the West and Central West of Queensland where he worked, and amongst the people he knew so well. The electorate of Barcoo, which he represented when he first entered

Parliament, was as traditional a Labor seat as one could find enywhere in Australia. It encompassed what was then, and still is, the spiritual home of the Labor Party—the very birthplace of the Labor Party. It included the townships of Blackall and Barcaldine, around which in the 1880s the great shearer's strike created the movement out of which was born the great Australian Labor Party.

As I sad, Hughie was a legend, and so was the electorate he represented. The people in that area simply loved Hughie. Only recently I visited most of those areas, particularly those further west, and people who remembered him still spoke very highly of him and asked whether I saw a lot of him. Fortunately, I did have rather a lengthy conversation with Hughie recently, and I was very pleased to hear how he kept himself up to date with everything that was happening in this Parliament. While he was a member there was a redistribution and his electorate changed, but he still retained the seat. His new electorate extended east into the coal-mining areas, and I think even the town of Collinsville became part of his electorate, and that was a long way from where he began his parliamentary career. He was a schoolteacher in Capella for many years and travelled widely in the Barcoo area helping his predecessor, Mr Davis. He was very well known by all his constituents, not just Labor supporters.

I was in my early 20s when I first met Hughie through the councils of the Labor Party. I think it was in that area rather than in this Parliament that he is best remembered, particularly for the way he constantly campaigned through the hard country and rural areas on behalf of the Labor Party. Hughie was a counsel without peer around the table of the Labor-in-Politics Conventions at which the policies of the party were formulated. Indeed, it can be said that most of the Labor Party's land policies were formulated by him, and even now most of its platform on land matters is a tribute to Hughie O'Donnell. He was the wise counsel and guide for anyone who wanted to discuss land matters. For many years he helped guide legislative amendments through this Chamber in relation to land and primary industry matters. Because of his great love and knowledge of the land he acquired a great knowledge of primary industry, even though he had been a school teacher virtually all his life.

His funeral will be held at 1.30 p.m. today, and I will be absent from the Chamber to attend it. I will be conveying condolences to his widow and family. Hughie O'Donnell is mourned by me not only as a great loss to the Labor Party and the Labor movement but also as a very close personal friend.

Mr LESTER (Peak Downs) (11.13 a.m.): On behalf of the people of Central Queensland who knew Hughie O'Donnell, I pass on their condolences to his family. I met Hughie on 1 June 1965 at Clermont. It was a bitterly cold morning and I was pulling bread out of the oven in my bakery. He came in to have a yarn, but I think he really wanted to stay to keep warm. We built up a substantial and firm friendship over the years.

Hughie was a particularly efficient member. I can remember giving him two jobs. One related to a personal matter, and the other to a young lad from the town who had to travel to Brisbane. I doubted whether the people he was going to see would meet him at the station, so I called Hughie and told him that I was a bit concerned about the welfare of this young lad. I told him that the lad had never seen the sea. No-one else was there, but Hughie turned up to meet him on the platform. He gave him money and accommodation, and did much to help him follow a straight course in life. That was typical of the things he did which were never reported in the Press and people did not know about.

Hughie was a legend in many country towns where he often sat outside the local newsagency. The news soon spread around town when Mr O'Donnell was there, and while he was there many people would have a yarn with him.

Although Hughie was a member of the Opposition, I remember him as a man who never ran down the Government. On one occasion when the late Sir Douglas Tooth visited Moranbah to look into the establishment of a hospital, some people really took to him in no uncertain way. Hughie defended the Minister and got quite a blistering from his own people for doing so. He told them very bluntly to behave themselves and to treat a Minister of the Crown with the respect to which he was entitled.

In 1972 I ran against Hughie O'Donnell for election to Parliament. He just beat me. The election campaign was particularly clean. It was conducted without one derogatory remark by either of us. "Hansard" supports that claim, because I remember reading a

speech by Hughie in which he said that elections can be run cleanly. He was referring to that election campaign, which was hard and tough, but without an ounce of vindictiveness from either candidate. It is a pity that our example cannot be emulated for ever.

On behalf of all my constituents I extend sincere condolences to his family.

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (11.17 a.m.): I join with other members in supporting this motion of condolence to the family of the late Hughie O'Donnell. Before Hughie retired he shifted to Cannon Hill not very far from where I live today. Anyone who doubted his love of the West need only drive past his home in Richmond Road, Cannon Hill, to see that he named his house "Barcoo" Hughie often said, "I am going home to 'Barcoo'." I sometimes thought that he was going to Barcoo but in fact he was going home.

After retiring from Parliament Hughie still went to town every Friday night to meet his mates. When I saw him at the bus stop and asked him if he wanted a lift to town he would say to me, "I have my set arrangements in the way I go and meet different people on my way into town."

Yesterday I went to see Janette, Terry and Mrs O'Donnell. Unfortunately Mrs O'Donnell was not home. I was told that Hughie went very quickly. He walked into the bathroom and they heard him collapse, but by the time they rang the doctor Hughie had passed on. It is nice to know that he did not suffer.

Hughie, more than anything else to me, was a typical western Queensland schoolteacher. Those honourable members who sat here with him know that he used to correct our English as we were speaking. He was always well dressed and carried himself straight and true. I am sure that thousands of lads in central-western Queensland were taught by Hughie O'Donnell to stand straight, speak out plainly and be men.

The mark of a man is the knowledge by people that, when he passes from this earth, he has left behind others who have benefited by his presence. People could learn only good from Hughie.

I am sure that many people from Cannon Hill and many others from the Central West would like to be attending the Blessed Oliver Plunkett Church this afternoon when we pay our last respects to Hughie. I am sure that his wife Emily, Janette and Terry will be proud of the words spoken today about Hughie by his fellow members of Parliament.

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Commerce and Industry) (11.20 a.m.): I associate myself with the motion of condolence to the widow of Hughie O'Donnell and her family. I was pleased to hear the expressions of sympathy by various members in this Chamber on the motion very sincerely moved by the Premier and seconded by the Deputy Premier.

The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition mentioned that Hughie O'Donnell was the Opposition spokesman on land matters and, later, the spokesman on primary industry matters. At the time, I was Minister for Lands. I had a very warm affection for Hughie. Although we did not always agree on everything, he was a real gentleman through and through and he had a great knowledge of land administration.

Hughie O'Donnell lived most of his life in country areas. He was a very dedicated schoolteacher. During his service, he learned about the difficulties and the problems of men, women and families associated with pastoral industries. His contact with those people contributed to his great knowledge. The Labor Party was fortunate to have a member of the calibre of Hughie O'Donnell. Whenever I travelled to areas in which Hughie had been, people asked about him very kindly and spoke very highly of him.

Since Hughie left Parliament, it has been my privilege to meet with him on occasions; I was always happy to meet him. It was pleasing to hear the member for Lytton say that Hughie's passing came very suddenly and that he did not suffer.

I associate myself with the motion of condolence expressing the sympathy of the Parliament to Mrs O'Donnell and members of her family.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gold Coast Nursing Home

Hon. B. D. AUSTIN (Wavell—Minister for Health) (11.22 a.m.): Following notification that there was an outbreak of diarrhoea affecting approximately 50 patients at the Gold Coast Nursing Home, an inspection was made on 14 July by the following departmental officers—

Dr A. T. C. Bourke—Acting Director, Public Health
Sr P. Holmes—Senior Sister, Health and Medical
Sr M. Chapman—Public Health Nurse
Mrs J. Breakey—Adviser in Nutrition and Dietetics
Mrs N. Isaacs—Assistant Adviser in Nutrition and Dietetics
Inspector D. Gould—Health Inspector.

Some two hours after the inspection commenced, Mr Wittman, who stated that he was too busy to attend previously, was interviewed. To a direct question as to who was responsible for the food and for the domestic staff, Mr Wittman replied that it was the matron's responsibility. The question was repeated and the same answer was given.

When informed of that statement, the matron stated that it was the first time that she had heard of it. Some considerable time was spent in explaining dietary requirements to the matron.

The inspecting nurses commented, inter alia, that "the nursing home was anything but clean throughout" and that the new matron, who had been at the home for eight days, had "admitted that she had only seen about half the patients"

The health inspector found evidence of human faecal deposits in the vicinity of the barbecue grill and commented, "This evidence supported a complaint that some of the residents were using the fenced recreation area to defaecate. This could be overcome by increased staff supervision including the escorting to the toilets of patients in this area".

The report from the dietitians states, "The kitchen staff appear dedicated and well intentioned but the total amount of food provided for the residents is inadequate"

On 19 July a letter was forwarded to the licensee, the manager and the matron together with dietary requirements that were stated to be the minimum amount considered necessary.

A follow-up visit was made on 29 July by Sr Holmes and Mrs Isaacs.

As there had been little improvement in the situation, particularly in relation to the food supplied, the licensee was instructed on 4 August to show cause why the licence should not be suspended or cancelled.

A letter of complaint dated 19 July was received from the honourable member for Southport, wherein he recommended that action be taken against the management for criminal negligence. In reply, he was advised that his letter would be forwarded to the Minister for Police, as such action was outside my jurisdiction.

Should the licensee fail to show sufficient reason why this licence should not be suspended or cancelled, my departmental officers will give every assistance in placing patients in alternative accommodation.

I seek leave to have the documents relating to this matter incorporated in "Hansard"

(Leave granted.)

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid on the table the following documents—

19th July, 1982

The Licensee,
Gold Coast Nursing Home,
40 William Street,
Southport. Q. 4215

Dear Sir,

Following a recent outbreak of Gastroenteritis in the Gold Coast Nursing Home an investigation was undertaken by officers of this Department who are specialists in their particular fields.

Your attention is drawn to the following requirements of this Department which do not necessarily stem from the outbreak.

1. The Manager and Matron maintain continual surveillance in the food preparation, storage and servery areas and the handling of food, using as a guide the thirty (30) simple rules for the prevention of food poisoning which were drawn up by Dr. G. T. C. Bourke and G. Goodman. A copy of these rules were sent to the Matron by Sister Holmes prior to inspection.

2. Until large sealed containers designed for the storage of food are obtained by the management only dried food should be stored in the containers presently used for this purpose.

Food, whether wet or dry, should be stored only in vermin-proof containers which have been designed specifically for that purpose.

3. Ensure that no individuals who are employed in the laundry, toilets or sanitary persuits be engaged in, even on a temporary basis, in the handling, preparation or serving of food.

4. Consideration be given to the relocation of the refuse containers away from food delivery area.

5. In storage areas ensure all food is covered to reduce the risk of contamination.

6. All food should be stored on shelving approximately thirty (30) centimetres above the floor.

7. Ensure that no chemicals such as vermin sprays and cleaners or items such as soap can be stored in a food store room.

8. An untidy tip of grass clippings, pruned vegetation and empty cans of "Pal" dog food and a disused washing machine should be removed from the area adjacent to the car park.

9. Provide suitable storage for timber stacked near boundary fence separating property from Loder Creek.

10. Provide effective drainage of laundry effluent.

11. Ensure clothing is not stored in food areas.

12. Repair and/or replace defective kitchen sterilizer as the operating temperature is 57.5°C.

13. Repair defective flooring, benches and sinks.

14. Ensure that there is adequate staff supervision of patients in the fenced recreation area, to prevent defaecation in the vegetation-covered part of that area.

15. Items in need of attention immediately:

1. Repair all cracked panes of glass. One such pane in the Dining Area is a definite patient hazard.

2. Attend to depressed areas on the floors and all cracked and torn vinyl.

3. Ensure at all times that the Nursing Home is kept clean. This refers mainly to high dusting and cobwebbing, ablution areas and toilets and floors.

4. Repair all loose hand rails.

5. Ensure at all times hand rails are not impeded. Pot plants should never be placed under and on hand rails.

6. At all times keys for locked doors in the Nursing Home must be on the premises.

7. Exit routes must in no way be impeded.

8. Bricks and such like must never be left on the floors or ground around the Nursing Home as this is a dangerous trip hazard.

9. Store rooms in the Nursing Home are for items that are being used in the Nursing Home. All other items must be stored elsewhere.

The quantity and quality of food to be given to patients is attached as an indication of the minimum amount considered necessary and is submitted both for information and compliance.

Yours faithfully,

B/c The Manager,
Gold Coast Nursing Home,
Southport. Q. 4215
For your information.
Director-General
19.7.82

(P. G. Livingstone)
Director-General of Health
and Medical Services.

Dietary Requirements

1. That the total amount of food served to patients be increased such that cooked weight serve size is at least the amount on the attached paper. If ordering food 125 gm raw weight per person meat (excluding fat and bone) is to be allowed. (Chicken with bone needs to be 250 gm raw weight per person.) Where eggs are used one egg per person must be allowed.

2. That where the reference recipe book "Standard Recipes for 50" is used the amounts need to be adjusted by a factor of 9/5 to provide food for 90 persons.

3. That all residents should receive at least one piece of fresh fruit per day. This may be given whole or as part of a dessert, or occasionally as 2-4 oz pure fruit juice. The fruit can be given whole where residents can manage it or as fresh fruit salad, pears, banana, pawpaw, rockmelon, etc. with custard, junket, creamed rice, icecream etc.

4. That dessert size increase. The amount of icecream is satisfactory if it is served with fruit as well.

That fresh whole milk be used in tea, on breakfast cereals and in milk and egg dishes e.g. scrambled eggs. Skim milk powder may be used in other cooking.

5. That the procedures for cooking vegetables be altered to allow maximal retention of nutrients.

Place approximately 2-3 cm boiling water in saucepan and bring back to the boil on heated stove coil. Add vegetables and bring up to the boil again. Reduce heat and cook 10-15 minutes.

To reduce the cooking time of vegetables such as potato or pumpkin cut into 1 cm sliced rather than quarters since this reduces the thickness.

It is important to time the heating of water and cooking of vegetables so that a plan can be made to begin the procedure so that vegetables are just cooked in time for service.

6. That care be taken to supply adequate amounts of meat to those on a vitamised diet. Since the vitamiser appears to hold enough food for three it is essential that it include three serves of meat.

7. That a complete menu be available. (There was no evidence of food being available for the evening meal and the cook did not know what the late cook was to cook.)

8. That all diabetics have cheese added to their biscuits for supper since the time between tea and breakfast is so great.

9. That where liquid nasogastric feeds are supplied they are supplied to provide adequate nourishment as follows:

Patients requiring nasogastric tube feedings as their sole source of nutrition should obtain a daily minimum of—

two litres of fluid;
65 gms protein; and
6 300-8,400 kJoules (1 500-2·000 Calories);
R.D.A.'s of vitamins, minerals and trace elements.

To obtain these requirements the following may be used—

Dry Ingredient Products:

Complan Powder: 500 gms powder made up to two litres with water will provide:

2 000 mls feeding
9 200 kJ (2 200 Cals)
82 gms protein

Ensure Powder: 500 gms made up to 2 000 mls with water.

2 000 mls of feed
80 gms protein
9 200 kJ (2 200 Cals)

Prepacked Liquid Feed:

Isocal: 6 cans provides approximately—

2 100 mls
68 gms protein
8 800 kJ or 2 100 Calories

Bolus Feeding:

(1) Complete nasogastric feeding should follow a regime such as:

Day 1: ¼ strength
Day 2: ½ strength
Day 3: ¾ strength
Day 4 and thereafter: Full strength

This reduces the incidence of diarrhoea.

(2) Feeding should be dripped as slowly as possible through the nasogastric tube as 4-6 bolus feeds each day to minimise diarrhoea caused by osmotic overload.

(3) Sustagen, Complan and Ensure may be used as palatable high protein drinks. However, Sustagen is not considered to be suitable for nasogastric tube feeding.

Preparation of Feedings:

(1) For maximum hygiene feedings should be prepared in volumes only as required. Prepared feedings should be kept in the refrigerator and discarded after twenty four (24) hours.

(2) Formula powder should be kept in air tight jars or cans to maintain hygiene and nutritional value.

10. That a system be devised so that food is not held hot for ½ hour for the majority of residents. This may require some staff reorganisation or batch cooking at different times, but it is possible and necessary.

11. That a method of keeping food hot during service and during transport to other areas be devised so that plates are warm, food kept warm and covered.

12. That the storage of food be improved such that:

satisfactory storage bins replace the garbage bins;

all food be covered and bins have lids on;

all dry food ingredients, fruit and vegetables be stored 16 cm (6") off the floor;

all food containers be clearly labelled with the contents;

kitchen staff have storage for their clothes away from the food store;

that that late cook be able to gain access to a store for brooms etc. so that they are not stored in with food;

that all margarine be stored in the refrigerator and only the small amount required for use during that day be out in the kitchen and that this be covered.

13. That faulty equipment be attended to:—

Stove top coils working must be improved.

The second oven needs repair.

The freezer door of the domestic sized refrigerator needs repair.

The gaps above and below the screen door to the exterior must be closed.

The dishwasher should be reviewed for its adequacy for the task required of it.

14. That larger bibs be used for the patients in the corale so they are adequately covered.

15. That meals be served to patients in such a way that used plates are not held near the clean uneaten food.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr CASEY (Mackay—Leader of the Opposition): I seek leave to move that so much of the Standing Orders as is necessary be suspended so as to allow me to move for the rescinding of this Government's irrational and provocative decisions that are the major cause of the widening industrial disputation in Queensland today.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is leave granted? I think the "Ayes" have it.

Mr CASEY: Mr Speaker——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Did the honourable gentleman call for a division?

Mr CASEY: No. You called the "Ayes".

Dr EDWARDS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I draw to your attention the fact that the Leader of the Opposition called "Divide" and we have asked for a division to occur.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There has been some confusion on the matter. No direct indication came through to the Chair as to the way in which members intended to vote. I have called for a division on the question.

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

Ayes, 25

Blake	Jones	Vaughan
Burns	Mackenroth	Warburton
Casey	McLean	Wilson
D'Arcy	Milliner	Wright
Davis	Prest	Yewdale
Eaton	Scott	
Fouras	Shaw	*Tellers:*
Gibbs, R. J.	Smith	Hansen
Hooper	Underwood	Kruger

Noes, 52

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

Resolved in the negative.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Funding of State Schools; Class Sizes

From Mrs Nelson (101 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will restore the education share of the Budget, employ sufficient teachers so that class sizes do not exceed the select committee recommendation and provide sufficient funds for necessary school building and maintenance.

State Service Superannuation Scheme

From Mrs Nelson (502 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will remove all discrimination from the State Service Superannuation Scheme.

Boondall State School

From Mr Warburton (145 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take early action to reduce class sizes and improve the physical environment at the Boondall State School.

Petitions received.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

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

1. ### Water Supply for Mt Morgan

Mr Prest asked the Premier—

(1) Is he aware that Mt Morgan, a town which celebrated its centenary this year, still does not have a water supply?

(2) What action has been taken with regard to a feasibility study into source of supply, cost and method of funding, etc., to provide a permanent water supply to Mt Morgan?

(3) If a decision has been made, has a date been set for the construction to commence, what is that date and what is the anticipated completion date?

(4) If no action has been taken, why has (a) this matter not been given priority consideration and (b) no action been taken?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) Mt Morgan does have a water supply and has had one for a good many years. I would point out to the honourable member that the responsibility for water supply is one for the Mt Morgan Shire Council. I can also say that the Government has supported the council by way of water supply subsidies from time to time. A feasibility study has been undertaken into the augmentation of supply and its findings are currently under consideration by the Government. In the meantime, the Government has underwritten the cost of transporting water by way of a subsidy to the Mt Morgan Shire Council. The Government will do its best to assist.

2. ### Motor Vehicle Registration Fees

Mr Prest asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police—

(1) How much—with reference to the increase in motor vehicle registration fees—of the increase has been allocated to road construction?

(2) How much has been allocated to administration?

(3) What is the total revenue from motor vehicle registration fees in 1981-82?

(4) How much or what percentage is now allocated for road construction?

(5) How much or what percentage is now allocated to administration?

Answer:—

(1 to 5) All of the increase in registration fees which took effect in August 1981 has been allocated to road construction and maintenance. There are no additional administrative costs associated with the collection of the increased fees. The total revenue from motor vehicle registration fees in the 1981-82 financial year was $131,757,247. Expenditure of these funds was as follows:—

Permanent works	$55,351m
Road maintenance	$50,496m
Salaries	$22,033m
Contingencies	$3,877m

With regard to administrative costs, it should be pointed out that the Commonwealth Government permits the recovery of only a small proportion of such costs from road funds which it allocates to the States. The major proportion of administrative costs is therefore borne by State funds.

3. Items for Sale in Sideshow Alley, Brisbane Exhibition

Mr Prest asked the Minister for Health—

With reference to the items for sale in sideshow alley at the Brisbane Exhibition, two of which were condemned by his department in the interests of children's health—

(1) Why were such items not detected by other departmental officers when they have been for sale on the show circuit throughout Queensland prior to the Brisbane Exhibition?

(2) What action is to be taken to ensure such toys or items obtain approval and a certificate issued prior to their being sold?

Answer:—

(1) Officers of this department do visit shows in the major country centres and those visits have, in the past, resulted in the detection of unsafe toys. Several hundred articles were seized this year, as a result of such visits, prior to the Brisbane Exhibition. At present, there is no requirement for approval of toys prior to sale in Queensland.

(2) A uniform standard for toys is presently under consideration.

4. State Emergency Service

Mr Gygar asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police—

With reference to the State Emergency Service—

(1) What is the average amount spent, per capita, by local authorities in Queensland in complying with their obligations under s.26 of the State Counter-Disaster Organisation Act in each of the last three years?

(2) What amount has been spent, both in total and per capita, by the Brisbane City Council in complying with its obligations under s.26 in each of the last three years?

(3) What is the total number of persons actively involved in SES groups under the control of the BCC?

(4) Is he aware of the recent suggestion by Mr Ian Fairweather, BCC disaster controller, that SES groups should dispose of their present specially equipped vehicles and rely solely on private cars?

(5) Does he consider that such a policy will in any way improve SES readiness in Brisbane or will it only serve to further convince SES volunteers that the BCC is not interested in the SES and thereby lead to a further decline in readiness?

(6) What action does he plan to ensure that the BCC recognises and responds to its obligations under s.26 of the Act?

Answer:—

(1) It is not possible to define the per capita contribution by local authorities, and in any case an average amount would not provide a realistic figure when such items as disaster potential, economics and population base of each local authority are taken into consideration. Meaningful support is being provided by each local authority to its local State Emergency Service organisation.

(2) See (1).

(3) 1 758.

(4) No.

(5) Such a policy would not necessarily improve SES readiness. It is apparent the Brisbane City Council is interested in the readiness of its SES unit and has been progressively providing suburban training/operational headquarters buildings and other support activities. Volunteer members in the Brisbane areas should realise that both the State Government and the Brisbane City Council are making meaningful contributions to the Brisbane State Emergency Service.

(6) I am constantly reviewing the approach by all local authorities under the provisions of s.26 of the Act and the Brisbane City Council is included in these assessments.

5. Jojoba International Pty Ltd

Mr Gygar asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) Is he aware of Press reports from Great Britain that the British Government is considering legal action against the Queensland company Jojoba International under its prevention of fraud legislation?

(2) As salesmen are currently operating in Brisbane claiming $5.5m has been subscribed, what further action can be taken to warn the public regarding these get-rich-quick schemes?

Answer:—

(1) I am aware of an article in "The Sydney Morning Herald" of 10 August which correctly quoted "The Sunday Times", London, of 8 August to that effect.

(2) I wish to refer to my statement in the House on 5 August which outlined the highly speculative nature of Jojoba investment.

I would hope that Australian media will provide full coverage of my statements so that the public can be aware of the associated risks. Jojoba International and Redchamp Research Station are private companies with a paid-up capital of $2. This is a free State, but that freedom places the onus on investors to assess the risks for themselves. I can do no more than explain to them the uncertainties with respect to production of jojoba in Queensland and to the projected market prices for the community. These uncertainties are very considerable.

Some agricultural investments may be highly profitable in the short term while market demand exceeds the supply of a commodity; but there are no agricultural commodities which, in the long term, maintain the financial returns projected for jojoba. If a commodity can be produced successfully, supply expands to meet demand (and may well exceed demand), with inevitable falls in commodity prices. These prices are often below the cost of production. I see no reason why jojoba should be any different.

I have given an interview to a television team from the BBC, London, and hope that their film will reflect my concern. Queensland's Agent-General in London has drawn my attention to serious concern in Government circles in the UK.

I have been informed that one salesman in Brisbane is claiming that $5.5m has been so far subscribed to this $2 company.

I reiterate that jojoba may develop into a viable plantation crop in Queensland and elsewhere. Realisation of this will be achieved best by sound agronomic and production research. It can only be hampered by sensationalism, dream-time claims and get-rich-quick schemes.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Government's Participation in Agreement for Reduced Working Hours

Mr CASEY: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: In recent weeks, has the Government been party to any agreement with private enterprise employees relative to reduced working hours?

Dr EDWARDS: That matter does not come within my portfolio.

Reduced Working Hours for Employees at Tarong and Callide Power Stations

Mr CASEY: Perhaps, then, the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, as a member of Cabinet and because of his outburst in the Chamber yesterday relative to reduced working hours, might like to answer this question: Is it not correct that in recent weeks the Government has been party to an agreement relative to reduced working hours covering over 1 500 construction workers at the Tarong and Callide Power Stations, operating for and on behalf of the Queensland Government?

Dr EDWARDS: Again, that matter does not really come within my portfolio.

Mr CASEY: The Treasurer thought yesterday that industrial matters were within his portfolio, when he was only too willing to answer Dorothy Dix questions asked on behalf of the Liberal Party organisation.

Dr EDWARDS: I rise to a point of order. I do not intend to answer questions when I am not given the opportunity to express my views, and for that reason I sat down. I reiterate that I do not intend to answer such questions.

Mr CASEY: It is the old duck and dive.

Reduced Working Hours in Power Generation Industry

Mr CASEY: I will now ask a question of the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations, as we have heard very little from him in relation to the current dispute. I refer to the Government's decision of 10 April 1980 to reduce working hours in the power generation industry on the basis that the economy could accommodate such a reduction. The Government's action on that occasion was further justified in a report of the Mackay Electricity Board for that year, which clearly showed in the section relating to industrial relations that—

> "The 9-day fortnight has resulted in increased productivity . . There has been a fall-off of sick leave taken and staff morale is at a noticeably higher level . Office opening hours have been extended and offices are now open for business from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday."

In fact, it was a very successful move for those employees. I ask: What sections of the economy have deteriorated since then, and to what extent, so that, in the Government's opinion, it is now impossible to extend that benefit to other Crown employees?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It is true that an agreement was reached between the electricity authorities in this State and the trade union representatives of the employees in the industry. That agreement involved not only a reduction in working hours and a spread of hours over a fortnightly period but also an increase in productivity and trade-offs that were acceptable to both sides. It was made in very reasonable manner, as, indeed, were agreements in private industry for a shorter working week.

The Government's position on negotiation for a shorter working week for its employees in the Public Service and for Crown employees has not changed; but the point is, of course, that the honourable member tends to forget a little bit of the history of these events and the circumstances in which they were framed. The negotiations in the power industry took well over 12 months. They were mutually beneficial and were resolved satisfactorily. There was no attempt, other than in the very early stages, to use

provocation or industrial muscle to try to solve the problem. However, recently we have seen that other people are not prepared to proceed with negotiations in the manner originally laid down by the Government and have called strikes, and kept on calling them, to try to bully the Government into an unacceptable position.

Opposition Members interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Let me tell members opposite about their party. Way back in 1956 it refused to give the people of this State a 40-hour week. Labor refused to do that. The Government which gave the people of Queensland a 40-hour week was the Government of which I was a supporter and a member in this House.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr Casey interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition under the provisions of Standing Order 123A.

Police Investigation into $30,000 Donation to Caspalp

Mr ROW: I ask the Premier this question in his capacity as acting Minister for Police: At what stage are investigations by the Queensland Police into a donation of $30,000 received by the Caspalp Promotion Fund administered by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Casey)? Has the Solicitor-General received a preliminary report on the police investigation to date and, if so, has any advice been received from the Solicitor-General on the matter?

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: This question has exercised the minds of many members of the public who are interested in knowing the outcome of the investigations that have been submitted to the Justice Department for consideration. I should say that the Police investigations into the receipt of the funds from the poker machine lobby by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Casey) are inconclusive. That is because Mr Casey has consistently refused to be interviewed by the Police and to assist them in their inquiries.

Mr CASEY: I rise to a point of order. The Premier's comments are completely untrue. I have had discussions with the police. Appointments made by the police to see me were cancelled by them.

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

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: In other words the Leader of the Opposition is now indicating that he is prepared to talk to the police?

Mr CASEY: On a further point of order, I indicate that the Premier is again deliberately misleading the House. In this Parliament I clearly told the people that I was prepared to talk to the police. Publicly, in May this year, I invited the police to come and see me rather than go round the back door, as they had been doing, on the instructions of the Premier.

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: In the light of the honourable member's comments, I will inform the Police Commissioner that the honourable member is now prepared to be interviewed and questioned by the police.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: I can only say that the Police Commissioner's advice is certainly not in line with what the Leader of the Opposition had said, but we will test him to see if he is prepared to stand by his words in this House.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It is not my desire to send honourable members out of the House regularly, but I will have no compunction about doing so.

Mr Hooper: I will not incur your wrath, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Archerfield is warned under the provisions of Standing Order 123A.

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: It is the legal right of a person to refuse to answer questions on the grounds that he may incriminate himself. I should have thought that if the Leader of the Opposition had nothing to hide he would want to have the matter clarified and completed.

Honourable members will recall that Mr Casey lied on TV when questioned on this matter. He denied any knowledge of the receipt of funds from the poker machine industry. It is my understanding that the police conducting the investigations wanted to put questions to him about the disposal of the $30,000 paid into the account known as Caspalp. He denied knowing anything about it. Although he, his colleagues sitting alongside him, and another person created the account, he denied on TV knowing anything about it. Although exhaustive inquiries have been undertaken the investigating police have not been able to account for a portion of the moneys received. That is what they want to question the honourable member about.

A preliminary report on the investigation was submitted to the Solicitor-General, who has now advised that insufficient evidence is contained in that report to proceed with a charge, and that it is a matter of speculation whether any further investigations would lead to any different opinion in view of the fact that the honourable member refused to be questioned by the police.

The Police have pursued their investigations under sections 60 and 436 of the Criminal Code. The police will continue to seek permission to interview Mr Casey and question him on the matter so that the investigations can be concluded. It is also customary for the Government to submit legal matters to other independent legal officers for interpretation.

Killing of Groper near Dunk Island

Mr ROW: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: What action is likely to be taken following the recent incident in which a tame groper was apparently wantonly destroyed by human hands in waters near Dunk Island?

Mr AHERN: I think that most people who read of the Press reports about the destruction of that animal would detest the action that was taken. I would describe that as sick vandalism. For 20 years the animal was trained to come to the surface to be fed. People in the area, including the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, rightly detested the action that was taken. Firstly, under section 52 of the Fisheries Act it is an offence to take a fish with a firearm, and we are pursuing inquiries through the fishing inspectors with a view to bringing a prosecution against those responsible. If our advice is that a prosecution can be brought, it will be brought.

In the long term, to protect animals of this nature, two courses of action are open: (1) to impose a total prohibition against taking the species involved; (2) to bring in a maximum size limitation. I am discussing both of those options with the fishing industry and will bring forward a recommendation to Cabinet on either one of them as early as possible.

Bruce Highway

Mr MUNTZ: I ask the acting Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police: Would he inform the House of—

(1) The effects of proposed increased Federal funding on the National Highway in Queensland, with particular reference to the Bruce Highway;

(2) Will he ensure that State and Federal departmental discussions and initiatives will commence immediately to implement planned upgrading of the Bruce Highway and ensure that No. 1 priority is given to the worst section of the highway between Mackay and Townsville and, of course, between Mackay and Sarina, as indicated by Mr Hinze during his two detailed personal inspections of that highway earlier this year; and

(3) Will he respond favourably to my invitation to visit the Whitsunday electorate and travel the section of the highway between Mackay and north of Bowen to experience for himself the real problems, the single-lane bridge death-traps and substandard pavement, and support Mr Hinze in his stand, and at the same time take the opportunity to visit schools in the Whitsunday electorate and evaluate and endeavour to solve the problems?

Mr GUNN: The initiative by the Commonwealth Government is extremely welcome. The funds are in addition to those made available under the present Commonwealth road grants legislation. Queensland can expect to receive between $40m and $50m this financial year from the surcharge of 1c per litre. That will bring the Commonwealth allocation to Queensland to between $180m and $190m this financial year. Next year the amount will increase significantly. I might add that the projects between Caboolture and Caloundra and also in the Sarina/Mackay/Bowen area could be started. I shall be visiting the areas.

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Bribie Island

Mr FRAWLEY (Caboolture) (12.1 p.m.): I rise to mention some of the problems that confront the people of Bribie Island and, to a lesser extent, Caboolture. Bribie Island is 27 km long and contains an area of 150 sq. km. It lies at the northern end of Moreton Bay and is located 68 km from Brisbane by road. It is separated from the mainland by Pumicestone Channel. In 1963 a bridge was built by this Government to link Bribie Island with the mainland.

Bribie Island is the most historical of all the Moreton Bay islands. Matthew Flinders landed there in July 1799, and it was from Bribie Island that the first exploration of Moreton Bay was made 24 years before the Brisbane River was discovered.

Bribie Island is used extensively for recreational purposes and it is one of the safest places anywhere to which a family man can take his wife and children for a holiday. Bribie Island should be kept in its present state as much as possible. Any development should be planned very carefully. It is essential that Pumicestone Channel be retained in its present condition. In fact, it should be declared a marine park. Bribie Island itself is a flora and fauna sanctuary and parts of the island would make an ideal national park.

Bribie Island is under threat of the construction of a pulp mill. The proposal was stopped by Cabinet. However, the local people are now faced with the threat of construction of a coal-loading facility on Bribie Island with coal stockpiled somewhere near Beerwah.

As far as I can gather, the plan is to construct a railway line from the Darling Downs to Beerwah, where coal will be stockpiled. From there it will be carried by a conveyor belt over Pumicestone Channel to the north-east coast of Bribie Island, where a deep-water port will be constructed.

My inquiries reveal that plans for the coal-loading facility are well in hand and that the Government will be lobbied to permit the construction of the coal-loading port.

As everyone is aware, the mining industry in Queensland possesses enormous political clout. If people in the mining industry really want a coal-loading port at Bribie Island, its establishment will be very hard to stop. If the rural part of Bribie Island is rezoned to allow the construction of a coal-loading facility, it will not be long before a pulp mill is established. Anyone could win a court case on that issue. A coal-loading facility is a heavy and noxious industry, and once it is established a pulp mill will follow without any problem.

The latest threat is the proposal that Caboolture could be the site for a uranium enrichment plant. I am in favour of uranium enrichment plants, but not anywhere in South-east Queensland and certainly not in any area containing a large population.

In 1979 the Federal Government arrived at the decision to seek a commercial feasibility study on the possibility of having a uranium enrichment plant somewhere in Australia. As a result, four major Australian companies—BHP, CSR, Peko-Wallsend and Western Mining—got together and later this year are expected to reach recommendations as to technology and markets. A pre-feasibility report was tabled in the Senate on 26 November 1981.

Natural uranium contains about 0.7 per cent of the energy-producing uranium-235 and about 99.3 per cent of the stable uranium-238. The enrichment process separates the two uranium isotopes. I shall not go into this in detail, because I know that the honourable member for Nudgee knows a good deal about it.

There are various uranium enrichment procedures. The two most important ones are gaseous diffusion and the centrifuge process.

Mr Underwood: We don't want it in Ipswich, and we don't want it anywhere in Queensland.

Mr FRAWLEY: Although the honourable member is a former schoolteacher, he does not understand a great deal about this.

Mined uranium is milled and is converted into uranium hexofluoride. The UF_6 is transported in solid form.

The uranium hexafluoride sublimes at 60 degrees centigrade. For those honourable members who do not know what that means, I point out that it forms a gas. UF_6 is no more radioactive than natural uranium, but it is a very dangerous chemical. It is extremely reactive and very poisonous and must be handled with great care. It reacts vigorously with water and many other metals.

The worst possible accident that could occur in a uranium enrichment plant would be a pipe rupture which would allow some of the uranium hexafluoride to escape into the atmosphere. That is why I oppose any proposal to set up a uranium enrichment plant anywhere near Caboolture or in South-east Queensland.

It is rather ironic that one of the greatest assets that could have been given to the Caboolture Shire would have been the construction of a hydroelectric power station at Rocksberg in Upper Caboolture. It would have solved Caboolture's water problem for years. A dam would have been built by the State Electricity Commission and the Caboolture Shire Council would have benefited from it. A lot of cheap power would have been fed into the grid in South-east Queensland. In fact, the station would have produced about one million megawatts of power a day.

The proposal to build that station was knocked on the head by a small group of people who did not want it in the area. Yet moves are afoot now to build a pulp mill on Bribie Island and a uranium enrichment plant in Caboolture. Caboolture and Ipswich are the only two places in Queensland that are favoured by the group that is investigating possible sites for the construction of a uranium enrichment plant. It has also been threatened that a coal-loading facility will be built on Bribie Island.

When it was first mooted last year that a pulp mill would be built on Bribie Island, I spoke to the Premier about it and he assured me at a joint parties meeting that I could assure the people on Bribie Island that a pulp mill would not be built there, and I did that. But some people, including the mad doctor from Buderim—in fact, he is not a doctor of medicine; he is a bug doctor, an entomologist—went to Bribie Island and decided to stir the pot and get a lot of opposition to the proposal. They did that even though they knew that a pulp mill would not be built on Bribie Island.

As a matter of fact, one of the strong opponents of the proposal and one of the real conservationists on Bribie Island stood as a candidate in the election for the Caboolture Shire Council. Even though she is a member of the National Party, she received only 877 votes out of a total of 5 000 votes in Division 4 on Bribie Island. As a matter of fact, she was beaten by another member of the National Party and a member of the Labor Party. Two candidates were elected from Bribie Island. This ardent conservationist came last in a field of five candidates. As I say, she received a lousy 877 votes. That proves that the people on Bribie Island did believe what they were told.

Mr Prentice interjected.

Mr FRAWLEY: I do not mind having women in politics as long as there are more men than women. But once women get the upper hand, we will be in trouble. As long as men hold the majority, it is fair enough to have women in politics. I have a lot of respect for the two women who are presently in this Parliament, but that is all we want; we do not want any more of them.

Previously I have given the vital statistics for Bribie Island. It is a great little place for people to have a holiday. It is disgraceful that the Government does not make a firm statement that a coal-loading plant will not be built there. Many people on Bribie Island are old; many of them have retired there.

Mr Powell: It is a very nice place.

Mr FRAWLEY: Yes. The fishing is good and Pumicestone Passage is a very safe water-way. There is surfing on the ocean beach side of Bribie Island. It is disgraceful that people who have retired to Bribie Island to live out the rest of their days should be tormented to the extent that they have over the last 18 months.

Some people on Bribie Island have been advocating increased tourism for the area. I sound a note of warning for the people on Bribie Island. One of the worst things that can happen anywhere is for too many tourists to visit the area. I would hate to see Bribie Island become a big tourist centre like the Sunshine Coast. I want to see it remain as it is—a nice little retirement place. At present, only 5 000 or 6 000 persons live on Bribie Island.

Mr Vaughan: Have you changed your mind? Are you going to run again?

Mr FRAWLEY: I have nothing to gain in this matter. Everybody knows that I will not stand as a candidate at the next election. So, politically, I do not have have to say anything about Bribie Island. As I say, I want to see Bribie Island remain as it is now.

Mr Vaughan: Is that where you will retire?

Mr FRAWLEY: No. As a matter of fact, I intend to retire to Redcliffe.

Mrs Kyburz: You can't build a barbed-wire fence round the jolly place.

Mr FRAWLEY: There is no need to build a barbed-wire fence.

Mr Innes: How will they get the timber from the forest over that bridge?

Mr FRAWLEY: The proposal was to build another bridge on the north of Pumicestone Channel.

Mr Innes: If that doesn't go ahead, what will happen?

Mr FRAWLEY: The timber on Bribie Island will have to come to the mainland across the Bribie Bridge.

An Honourable Member: What timber?

Mr FRAWLEY: The timber that is owned by APM Forests on Bribie Island. There is quite an amount of Caribbean pine. I urge the Government to hurry in making a statement that no coal-loading will be permitted at Bribie Island.

(Time expired.)

38-hour Working Week Dispute

Mr YEWDALE (Rockhampton North) (12.10 p.m.): My subject-matter is a little more serious than that of the previous speaker. In today's debate I wish to talk about the state of industry in Queensland and how the problems presently confronting the State rest squarely on the shoulders of the coalition Government.

It was very apparent this morning when the Opposition attempted to debate the vital matter of shorter working hours and the industrial disputation taking place that every one of the Premier's colleagues on both the National and Liberal back benches supported his attitude of not debating the issue in the House. Obviously they did not think that this vital issue was serious enough to be ventilated in the Parliament in the interests of the State.

The argument about shorter working hours has turned into a matter of the survival of the trade union movement in Queensland. That is exactly how the trade-unionists in Queensland are reacting. History shows that the 48-hour week, the 44-hour week and the

40-hour week were condemned by Governments on the basis that they would break the country; that they would not work and that shorter working hours were not possible. We again have the argument that a two-hour reduction to 38 hours will break the State.

That is in spite of statements being made by the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations (Sir William Knox) that Queensland is "in the pink" and that this State is the best one in the Commonwealth, the wealthiest and the most productive. All sorts of things are being done in Queensland, but the Government will not allow a two-hour reduction in working hours. Three months ago the Minister said that Queensland was at the top in peace on jobs, indicating that industrial disputation was less in Queensland than anywhere else in Australia.

On the other side, however, the Premier talks of the terrible trade-unionists disrupting the State from time to time. On the issue of two hours, the Premier—I repeat, "the Premier"—says that it is not on.

The Cabinet is so industrially naive that it expects workers to stand by and see their unions deregistered, fellow unionists suspended and prosecuted, and their homes and property sold up in the event of damages claims being awarded against them. I am not exaggerating. That is what can be done under the Essential Services Act. If a worker cannot respond to a damages claim made against him in court, his property, goods and chattels can be taken from him by the Government. I believe that the Premier and Deputy Premier are prepared to go to that extreme, because they have given that indication until now.

This Government, which does not understand how to operate industrial relations has, through blatant, roughshod tactics, turned Queensland into a state of turmoil. It is happening throughout Queensland again. Workers are walking off jobs all over Queensland today spontaneously—not by way of meetings; not by way of directions; not by way of anything other than reaction against the Premier and his Cabinet in their decision against the workers in Queensland.

Let me examine the Government's approach to the vital portfolio of industrial relations at the time of the introduction of the essential services legislation. I had the dubious honour of being the Opposition spokesman in the debate on that legislation. I say "dubious" because of the contents of the legislation and the effect of the legislation on the community generally and the trade unions in particular.

At that time the Minister for Labour Relations was Mr Campbell, who is now retired. Did he handle the legislation in the House? No, he did not, because he was not allowed to. The Premier and the Deputy Premier at that time saw fit to remove him from the situation. Why? Because he knew a little about industrial relations. He at least talked to trade-unionists in an organised fashion. He was not allowed to be the hatchet man because that was not his attitude; he would not have had his heart in it.

Then we were told that Mr Sullivan would handle it. A big "No" came from Mr Sullivan on the essential services legislation. Quite frankly, he was not competent enough to handle it, irrespective of his attitude.

We were then told that the Premier had taken charge of the essential services legislation, and until the last minute the Premier was to introduce it. Did he bring it in? No, he did not. He turned to the bully-man of the State, the Minister for everything (Mr Hinze), who became the hatchet man for the Premier and introduced the legislation. That is a classic example of who handles industrial relations in this Queensland Bjelke-Petersen-Edwards coalition. It is the Premier who handles industrial relations right from the top. It is fair to say that any National Party Cabinet Minister who bucked the Premier in that respect would find himself out of Cabinet; the same applies to Liberal Ministers. To my mind, the question of Cabinet solidarity is not valid in the argument that is now taking place in Queensland.

My information is that the early discussion on the shorter working week reached a large degree of agreement. No-one has denied that; not even the Premier or the Deputy Premier. The important aspect of that meeting is that the Premier was not involved; he was out of the State. It can be said that the Liberal Leader (Dr Edwards) was privy to those talks but has seen fit to welsh on fairly definite agreements for a 38-hour week.

The actions of the Premier and the Deputy Premier in recent days have shown that they have taken complete control of this dispute. The Premier is reported in the Press today as saying, "The longer they go, the deeper they get into a mess." That shows the blatant contempt exhibited by the Premier and the Cabinet. They have not said one word of conciliation or put forward one solution; all they have done is suspend, sack and prosecute.

I need not reiterate to the House all of the details leading to the dispute, but it is pertinent to point out that at a crucial time, when large numbers of striking workers were reporting for work at midnight on the first day of the stoppage, the Premier dropped the hatchet four hours before midnight, stating that the men had to return to work, and then issued suspension notices. That was the crunch that led to the present industrial circumstances in Queensland, with many workers on strike. I believe that decision was made earlier today to extend the dispute.

One does not have to ponder long on the outcome of the Premier's decision. This morning's union reaction to the Government's decision was totally spontaneous. The Government does not understand the concept of unionism, and I suggest that it have a good look at history, both in Australia and throughout the rest of the world, which shows that although workers may not always agree with the actions of their fellow workers in trying to demand better conditions or to improve their lot, they certainly understand the action of the Gestapo-like Government of the Queensland Premier when it brings down the hatchet on workers to the degree that it has. Unionists are reacting to that action because they can see their own livelihood endangered.

The Premier wants to deregister the unions and then have them registered on a yearly basis. I am sure that the unionists would be quite happy to deregister the Premier and then perhaps have him on a yearly basis, at the most.

I turn now to the performance and attitude of the Deputy Premier this morning when he was asked a couple of simple questions by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Casey) in relation to the campaign for a shorter working week. The Deputy Premier fumbled and fiddled about for the few minutes that he was on his feet and then returned to his seat. The questions were very simple: Had the Government in any way negotiated shorter working hours with other than Crown employees? The Deputy Premier said that that was not within his responsibility and declined to answer.

My present information is that the work-forces at both the Tarong Power Station and the Callide Power Station have reached agreement on a 38-hour week. In the case of the Callide Power Station, the agreement has been signed—I must qualify that; not by the Government—by the parties and endorsed by Cabinet. At Tarong, the agreement has been reached and approved by Cabinet but it has not been signed by the parties.

Mr Warburton: Private enterprise.

Mr YEWDALE: Yes, private enterprise; but those agreements have been reached. The Deputy Premier obviously knew that they had been reached—he should not be Deputy Premier if he did not—because yesterday, during question-time, he went on and on about the serious problems with which we are confronted.

I do not think that the Press in any way tends to favour the trade union movement, but today in the "Telegraph" we see an editorial stating—

> "Sadly, this obvious lack of understanding is being reflected in relations between the unions and the government. In Mr Fred Campbell's day, the unions had a Minister who understood their point of view and who argued for moderation rather than confrontation.
>
> Today, the Government seems determined to 'take the unions on', in a macho display more suited to the sporting field than sensible, moderate good government.
>
> . . . .
>
> Mr Bjelke-Petersen should forget about the Essential Services Act, the Transport Act and all the other emergency powers which his government has seen fit to acquire."

(Time expired.)

Film "Not a Love Story"

Mrs KYBURZ (Salisbury) (12.20 p.m.): Today I want to speak about an extremely important issue to the people of Queensland, particularly the women of Queensland, that has been raised in "The Courier Mail" in the last few days. The issue is pornography and the so-called banning by the Queensland Films Board of Review of a film against pornography. The film "Not a Love Story" is extremely important——

Mr Yewdale: Can't you talk about the important issues of the day?

Mrs KYBURZ: Don't you back snipe me with those blackmailing scum up in those power-stations. As far as I am concerned, the Army should be moved in on them. I will give the honourable member what for this afternoon. This is a very important issue, and if the honourable member is not concerned about women and this film he had better keep quiet.

Mr Underwood: The film degrades men and women.

Mrs KYBURZ: The honourable member reminds me of a dear little puppy rushing out to wet itself.

As far as I am concerned, all pornography downgrades women and shows an absolute lack of respect for them. It is the interests of men and women—I hope Opposition members are listening to this—to do everything possible to cease the exploitation of women, indeed, both sexes, and especially children. This film is reputed to explain how and why pornography exploits women and, I must say, who better than a prostitute to show just how such exploitation can occur.

On Monday a Press report stated that the film had been banned, but when I looked into the report I was informed that the story was in fact a blatant plant, I presume by the distributor. In fact, the chairman of the Queensland Films Board of Review had not banned the film but had simply warned the distributor that, after viewing by the entire board, it might not be able to be shown in Queensland. That shows that we should not believe everything we read in newspapers. However, yesterday a more truthful report was printed and the censor was able to say that the film had not been banned. She was able to tell the public exactly what was the situation. Mrs Malone said that "Not a Love Story" had not in fact been banned and had not even been formally submitted to the board. I suggest to the distributor that the film should be formally submitted to the board so that a decision can be made, although I will have more to say about that later. Mrs Malone's comments were intemperate, however, and she should not have said that the film might attract a prohibition order. I believe that a board is set up so that there can be a variety of opinions, and the chairman of any board should not alone be able to stipulate what will or will not be shown, read or done.

Yesterday's Press report also got to the truth of the matter about the distributor. On the strength of the chairman's unofficial opinion the distributor in Melbourne decided not to even show the film to the board, which is rather foolish, because if he is genuinely concerned to have the film distributed in Queensland he should do so. I believe the film to be of serious intent, as was suggested by the distributor, and if that is the case it is very important that it be shown in Queensland.

I am a little upset about a comment that Mrs Malone is reputed to have made. I say "reputed" because, although it was printed, I do not know that she made it. She said that she thought it would not pass the review board's stringent guide-lines because it covered a very small aspect of pornography and mostly people involved with the feminist movement. Quite frankly, I take umbrage at both of those comments.

The pornography business is enormous, and it is growing. I do not know whether it has a small aspect of pornography, but I do not believe that prostitution and public displays of sexual activity can be classed as small aspects of pornography. To me, they are fairly large and fairly important. I also believe that her comment that it concerned mostly people involved with the feminist movement is utter trivia. Quite frankly, if feminists are the only people who take an interest in this sort of film, and the only ones prepared to put money, time and work into making such a film we should certainly pay as much attention to it as we do to some of the other garbage that is being shown in Brisbane's drive-ins and hard-top theatres.

So far as I am concerned—and Mrs Malone should know this—feminists are not what Mrs Malone seems to believe, namely, persons from another planet. They are simply women who care about other women. If those are the people who will put care and attention into making this sort of film, it deserves our interest and caring concern.

Mr Moore: Why are we advocating pornography all the time?

Mrs KYBURZ: I am opposing pornography. If the honourable member had been listening carefully he would know that.

I have spoken to the responsible Minister (Mr Elliott) and explained to him precisely why it is so important that a film showing the exploitative nature of pornography should be seen. I pointed out to the Minister that we have films showing rampant violence in the community, such as shootings and berserk killings. Films show bikie gangs rampaging through a town, truck drivers boosting their sexual ego by driving along main roads and killing people with their huge trucks. Obviously those films are not considered to be damaging, but I believe that when they depict that sort of violence they are far more damaging to our youth than a film like this which is a serious attempt to show precisely what pornography does in the whole of society.

I take this opportunity to invite Mrs Malone to come to Parliament House to explain her side of this matter, to give a truthful account of it and explain her comments about feminists.

As I said, the people who made this film are displaying public concern for women. Whether they are men or women, does not really matter. I would like to see it to get to the truth of the matter. It received rave reviews in the rest of Australia, and we must face the fact that Queensland cannot be so far behind the other States. It also received rave reviews in the United States and Canada, where it was made. Indeed, the film was partly funded by the Canadian Government's film board. When a proposal is submitted to a film board it usually has to have some worth. I would not say "artistic merit", but I would say "worth" I am interested to see the line of attack on pornography taken in the film.

Pornography creates problems in our community. It is a subject which creates a degree of emotionalism because some people still believe that they have a right to exploit the human body in every way possible and to use pornography as they choose. I do not believe that people have a right to exploit the human body, male, female or child, for commercial purposes. That is precisely what pornography does. It also downgrades women in the eyes of the rest of the community. Therefore, I hope that the film will be shown in Queensland.

I have asked the member for Aspley whether she would like to view the film with me. She is against pornography. We both express concern because pornography downgrades all women. Therefore, if the film fights pornography, it is against sexism, as we are.

(Time expired.)

Bruce Highway; Control of Cane Pests and Diseases

Mr MUNTZ (Whitsunday) (12.30 p.m.): I recall quite clearly last year informing this House of the deplorable state of the Bruce Highway between Mackay and Townsville and demanding an all-weather, flood-free Bruce Highway between Rockhampton and Townsville during the '80s.

Since then, I have not relented in my campaign to reach that goal. This afternoon I would like to express my gratitude for the interest shown by the Main Roads Minister, Russ Hinze, in this campaign. He has taken the time on two occasions this year to personally drive on and inspect this section of highway with me—in the first instance between Mackay and North of Bowen with his officers and, later, with the Federal Minister for Transport, Ralph Hunt, at the invitation of the Federal member for Dawson, Mr Ray Braithwaite, on a joint inspection.

It was during this inspection that a joint study was commissioned in a co-operative effort to have the Bruce Highway upgraded under a tangible, workable and effective plan over 10 years. This is undoubtedly the most encouraging news that we, in the North, have received for many years. Certainly, if something had not been done, it would have taken 30 years to reach an acceptable goal.

I would like to record the untiring work that my colleague Ray Braithwaite, Federal member for Dawson, has done over a lengthy period to have the Bruce Highway from Rockhampton to Townsville upgraded. He has researched and debated the matter at every available opportunity and the people of Dawson owe full credit to him for any planned injection of Federal funds into that highway.

I appreciate the work costing over $50m that has gone into the new coastal section of the Bruce Highway between Marlborough and Sarina. I am also thankful for the work that has been completed since 1980, including the Ron Camm Bridge and approaches, Gibson Creek Bridge and approaches, Bucasia Road and Shute Harbour road-works and numerous sections of highway within the Pioneer, Proserpine and Bowen shires.

No. 1 priority should be given to the replacement of approximately 90 single-lane and substandard bridges on the Bruce Highway. They are death-traps for which I can find no excuse. Of the 90, 22 are on a stretch of 113 km within the Bowen Shire alone, not to mention similar death-traps within the Proserpine and Pioneer shires. I know I am talking of hundreds of millions of dollars (for instance, $115m between Mackay and Townsville and a similar amount between Townsville and Cairns), but if it is lives that we save, for my part, hundreds of millions of dollars it will have to be for the Bruce Highway during the 1980s.

It is imperative that the Main Roads Department formulate a more satisfactory means of displaying "Give Way" signs at these death-traps until, of course, permanent widening can be carried out.

My suggestion—and it stemmed from a concerned resident of Proserpine who spoke to me last week—is that a "Give Way" sign be clearly painted—and I stress, in large print—on the road approaching single-lane bridges, preferably using luminous paint and with an indication of the distance to such bridge, for example "Give Way—200 metres"

Standard "Give Way" signs should be kept clean and visible. My federal colleague, Ray Braithwaite has also advocated similar action, for too many lives have been lost on these death-traps. The majority of travellers, being tourists and, quite often, elderly tourists, are not familiar with this highway. I have been trapped on a number of occasions, particularly at night, and it is a frightening experience.

The project I have suggested, covering all one-lane bridges on the Bruce Highway, would not be expensive and could be carried out with normal and essential maintenance. It could be accomplished within weeks and it would save more than one life.

A highway of such national significance serving Central Queensland and North Queensland, with their unlimited resource development and which are already providing this State with something like 22 per cent of total State export income or 5.12 per cent of total Australian exports, coupled with the growing national and international tourist trade, deserves No. 1 priority. Special consideration needs to be given to the infrastructure requirements of these industries.

Last night the Federal Treasurer brought down his Budget. I welcome his announcement of the commencement of a special Australian Bicentennial road development program. Funds allocated under that program will be in addition to those provided under the Commonwealth road grants legislation. This morning the acting Minister for Main Roads told the House that in this financial year Queensland could expect to receive approximately $40m or $50m under this program. That will make the total Commonwealth allocation to Queensland approximately $180m to $190m in this financial year. The amount should increase significantly during the period from 1 July 1983 to 31 December 1988.

The Commonwealth announcement has indicated that the additional funds will be distributed between national highways, arterial roads and local roads. An initial assessment indicates that in 1982-83 approximately $20m by way of additional funds will be available for national highways in Queensland and this will permit the acceleration of much-needed projects on the Bruce Highway, particularly on the sections near Sarina, Mackay, Bowen and Townsville. The full details of the Commonwealth proposed program are not yet available and therefore it is impossible at this stage to give specific indications of the effects of works programs.

I certainly welcome the announcement made last night by the Federal Treasurer and I record my deep appreciation for the work done by the Federal member for Dawson, Ray Braithwaite.

Another matter that I want to discuss is the control of cane pests and diseases. For some time I have been concerned about the inadequacy of the existing powers given to cane pest and disease control boards and to Sugar Experiment Stations Board staff to control and eliminate the threat of abandoned, volunteer and/or diseased sugar cane. My concern is not new. Adequate powers are provided to the Sugar Experiment Stations Board and pest board officers for the control of diseased cane on assigned land. However, no powers exist for control on unassigned lands.

Cane pest and disease control boards have been frustrated in their attempts to have abandoned and volunteer cane growing on unassigned land destroyed. Sugar-cane of this nature provides an excellent harbourage for cane pests and is also a likely reservoir for cane diseases.

Abandoned cane ranges from a few stools on roadsides, in drains and gullies and on reserves to large areas on unassigned land. The latter case is mainly where land has been resumed or reserved for roads, railways, schools and residential and industrial developments.

There is diverse ownership of land on which this cane is growing. It is owned for example, by Government departments and instrumentalities, local authorities, public or private companies or private individuals. This diverse ownership can make local representation difficult, and effective control measures without adequate powers are almost impossible. It is imperative that, when caneland is sold for development, action to destroy the cane must be taken quickly before non-cane-growing ownership becomes widespread.

At the present time, pest boards can only request the landholder to take action to destroy the cane growing on unassigned lands. However, it is no good allowing pest boards to make requests to landholders to destroy cane on unassigned land if it is known that the boards have no legal backing and that therefore the requests can be ignored. In some instances, after several years and many requests no action has resulted. The physical tasks and the financial expenses involved in destroying the abandoned cane, particularly if large areas are concerned, are usually inhibiting factors for landholders.

Abandoned cane resulting from the substitution of assigned land should be destroyed completely on the old land before the substitution is confirmed by the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board.

Each year, millions of dollars of damage is caused by pests and diseases in sugar-cane. Annually large sums of money are expended by cane growers on pesticides, weedicides, insecticides and fungicides to minimise loss. Subsidies on rat-baiting programs and pig-fencing construction and boundaries on other pests are paid by pest boards to further minimise losses in the field.

I believe that cane growers act responsibly in pest and disease control so as to reduce the risk of financial loss. Therefore it is frustrating that abandoned cane, which already acts as or is a potential harbourage for cane pests and diseases, is outside the control of pest boards. The existence of these areas of abandoned cane can only cast doubt on the effectiveness of any pest and disease control program. The undisturbed nature of these areas for long periods makes them ideal breeding places for pests and diseases.

The presence of Fiji disease in the Mackay and southern areas and that of itch grass in the Ayr, Mackay and southern areas require the co-operation of all landholders and statutory authorities for effective control measures to be carried out. Harbourages allowing the breeding of rats, pigs and other pests cannot be permitted to be retained.

I believe that the answer to this problem lies in the advice given by Mr J. Davies, who is the legal adviser to the Queensland Cane Growers Council. He said that it would be a simple matter to amend the Act by "inserting in addition to or instead of the Director a person or body of persons recognized by the Act and investing that person or body with the power under Section 27 of the Act" That would give more effective control by this board.

Annual Report of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate) (12.40 p.m.): My purpose in speaking today is hopefully to extract some honest, forthright answers from the Government or the relevant Minister, the Minister for Tourism, about the falsifying of the annual financial statements of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. My accusations do not suggest misappropriation of funds, but I do suggest incompetence to the extent that it casts doubts over the true ability of the corporation, the Minister and the Government to handle the tourist industry of Queensland, which is one of our most important and largest industries.

On 23 March 1982, the Minister for Tourism, the Hon. J. A. Elliott, MLA, presented to the Queensland Parliament the 1981 annual report of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. That annual report for the year ending 30 June 1981 was presented to Parliament six months following the cut-off date for the furnishing of the report by the corporation to the Minister, as required by the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation Act. I make that point because I think it is becoming a habit with this Government to present the annual reports of the various organisations and departments too late. Section 60 of the Act states—

> "Within three months after the expiration of each financial year the Corporation shall furnish to the Minister a report on its operations throughout that year including a financial statement for that year."

The Act also provides—

> "Sections 63 to 71 both inclusive of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977-1978 shall apply to and in respect of the Corporation, its employees and accounts as if the Corporation were a statutory corporation representing the Crown."

That simply means that the Auditor-General has rights identical to those that he legally exercises in respect of the financial activities of, for example, State departments.

Not only was the 1981 annual report late in being presented to Parliament; the 1980 annual report of the corporation, about which I will have something to say later, was circulated to members on 12 February 1981, over seven months after the end of the 1979-80 financial year. I understand that the printing and circulation of the 1980 annual report was authorised by Mr Speaker out of session.

On Wednesday, 4 August 1982, the Minister for Tourism was granted leave of the House to make a ministerial statement. He said that the annual report of the corporation for the year ended 30 June 1981 showed a financial statement containing some "minor inaccuracies" of "no great significance" The Minister was subsequently given leave to withdraw the 1981 annual report tabled on 23 March 1982 and he presented a substitute annual report for 1981, containing an altered and very much expanded statement on the financial transactions and affairs of the corporation for the financial year ended 30 June 1981.

On the same day, Wednesday, 4 August, I questioned the Minister in this Parliament on the discrepancies in the financial reports. The Minister was asked to explain why there were in fact major differences in amounts shown in the old and new annual reports under the same heading. For example, under the heading "General Administration Expenses", the old report showed an amount of $2,718,965, whereas the new report showed an amount of $2,977,629, a difference of $258,664. The new report showed salaries' payments for the year ended 30 June 1981 as being $3,525,233 or $183,631 less than the salaries' payments shown in the old report.

The Minister replied by saying—

> "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."

That is absolute rubbish. That whole statement needs to be revised.

The Minister has in fact misled the Parliament and to date has made no attempt whatever to correct his false statement to this House. His only contribution of value consequential to the corporation's finance fiasco is to tell us that the "new" financial

statement has been examined by the new Auditor-General (Mr Craven) and has been found correct in all respects. One would hope—and I am sure all honourable members share that hope—that that would be so. It would seem that there was an inexperienced officer involved in the financial fiasco for the year ended 30 June 1981—or so my research finds—just as it seems that the financial report contained in the "new" annual report was certified by the then Auditor-General (Mr Peel, of some fame in this place) prior to his resignation as Auditor-General in December 1981.

How the false financial statement made its way into the 1981 annual report remains a mystery to this time. Surely we cannot be expected to believe that such blatant mistakes and omissions went unnoticed by board members of a corporation responsible for one of our State's biggest money-earning industries. Additionally, how did the false financial statement come to be shown in the annual report as being certified by the then Auditor-General, Mr Peel? We should certainly be told if Mr Peel ever saw the false statement. We should certainly be concerned at the apparent ease with which the Auditor-General's certificate can appear on a false statement presented to this Parliament by a Minister supposedly responsible for the corporation's activities. Why is it that the "new" 1981 financial report is the first to show details of the corporation's trust fund? Why is it that for the first time there appear notes to various items of receipts and payments for both the general fund and the trust fund?

If we examine the previous annual report of the Tourist and Travel Corporation for the period ended 30 June 1980, nothing is shown about the trust fund; neither do any notes to the various items of receipts and payments appear. In fact, the 1980 financial statement—previous to the one in question—is identical in format to the false 1981 statement withdrawn by the Minister. The "new" 1981 financial statement explains that the gross commission earned by the corporation for the 12 months to 30 June 1981 has been correctly shown in the receipts column—that is, an amount of $1,888,687. The report also explains that the amount of $1,246,714 shown in the previous annual report —1980—as being received for commission and other income was less the $330,000 allowed back to agents. In fact, the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation statement of receipts and payments for the period 1 August 1979 to 30 June 1980 does not mention or recognise the $330,000 transaction. This means that both totals for payments and receipts for the 11 months to 30 June 1980, as per the corporation's lavish 1980 annual report, are short by $330,000 in each case. So like the now defunct and withdrawn 1981 annual report the 1980 report must surely be corrected and replaced. What we have in our possession now, as circulated in February 1981, is not a full and proper financial statement of the financial transactions of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation for the 1979-80 financial year. It is as false as the 1981 report. Neither were we advised in the 1980 report of the operations and details of the trust fund operating separately to the general fund—a trust fund that had a balance at 30 June 1980 of $919,289.

I am concerned that a statutory body responsible for a major Queensland industry can make such major blunders in what should be a fairly simple accounting exercise. When the Government destroyed the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau, the Parliament was told that a board of seven directors, drawn mainly from private enterprise, would be appointed to apply their business acumen and expertise in the best interests of the Queensland tourist industry. We realise that most of the directors have other interests, but they must be held responsible for this tremendous problem in relation to the previous 1980 annual report.

In conclusion, I reiterate that the 1981 report was withdrawn and replaced by the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts (Mr Elliott).

(Time expired.)

Electoral Enrolments, Bracken Ridge

Mr AKERS (Pine Rivers) (12.50 p.m.): I wish to raise a matter of great interest to many residents of Bracken Ridge. I refer to a cover-up of wastage of money by the ALP alderman for Bramble Bay in the Brisbane City Council.

Recently many people—I suspect thousands, but at least hundreds—have received, to their great surprise and consternation, a hand-delivered notice from the Brisbane City Council that virtually accuses them of not voting in the 1982 local government election

and threatening legal action if they cannot provide a suitable reason for not recording a vote. At the conclusion of my speech I will lay on the table of the House a letter that was received by one of the people in Bracken Ridge.

On investigation, I find that the returning officer for Bramble Bay simply did not do his job properly. He omitted to transfer to the master roll for that ward the names that were crossed off at least one of the electoral rolls at one of the booths and the central returning officer was misled into sending out notices to hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people. A very significant administrative cost has been totally wasted in the preparation and dispatch of those unnecessary notices, particularly as they were hand-delivered.

I can understand that the central office could miss the error in the overall figures for the Brisbane area, because it has to check on a couple of hundred thousand voters and I am speaking of only a couple of thousand. So obviously the fault lies with the returning officer for the Bramble Bay ward.

Mr Davis: In other words, you are saying he was incompetent?

Mr AKERS: Yes, he was incompetent and unsuitable for the job.

Mr Davis: Why don't you say it outside Parliament?

Mr AKERS: This is the place where members of Parliament make statements and bring out faults in administration and incompetence in the Public Service, which is what I am now doing.

That returning officer appointed by the Brisbane City Council exhibited a total inability to conduct an election. He should have noticed the inordinate proportion of non-voters at that booth and realised that a mistake had been made. If he had noticed that and done something about it, he could have saved the ratepayers a great deal of money and saved from unnecessary concern those who received the notices.

When the residents received them, they were quite rightly indignant and telephoned their local alderman, who told them simply to throw them into the rubbish bin because a mistake had been made and everything would be all right. That is a terrible exhibition of incompetence by an alderman and shows an attempt to cover up a wastage of ratepayers money. That is not good enough. A great deal of precious ratepayer's money has been wasted and honest citizens have been falsely accused. All of that occurred and the alderman simply told them to forget about it. He should have been concerned and taken some notice. At the very least, he could have told citizens that he would have the matter investigated and have the returning officer involved at least chastised, if not sacked. The alderman had won the election, so everything must be OK. He certainly does not want the result questioned—he does not want to place his position in jeopardy—so he is covering up.

I am concerned that that returning officer is also the returning officer for the State electorate of Sandgate and will have to conduct an election in that electorate some time next year. He has already shown his incompetence, so there must be grave doubt about his ability to conduct the next election. I call on the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police and the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General to fully investigate the matter and ensure that that type of thing cannot happen again in any local government election, particularly in the Sandgate area. I call on them to make sure that there were no other irregularities that have been covered up and have not come to the public notice.

The city council had to send forms out to electors to make sure that the election of the alderman for Bramble Bay was legitimate and that no mistakes were made in the counting of the poll. We must be sure that no other mistakes were made. I remind the Chamber that the control of the city council is decided by one seat. If the result of the election in Bramble Bay ward was wrong and the result had been reversed, the entire complexion of the city council would be changed. I believe it is incumbent on the Attorney-General and the Minister for Local Government to ensure that that election was legal and that no other irregularities have been covered up.

Mr Davis: You are clutching at straws.

Mr AKERS: If the honourable member is so little worried about democracy that he can just brush it aside like that, I am really concerned, because that is obviously a reflection of the ALP's attitude towards democracy. The ALP alderman for Bramble

Bay has treated the issue in the same manner. But many people in the Bracken Ridge area are concerned that their vote was not counted, and they have been told by the city council that they were not——

Mr Davis: It would be the Liberal Party candidate, because he did not get enough votes.

Mr AKERS: It may well be that the Liberal Party candidate did not get enough votes, but there is enough evidence to make me worried, and to make many people in Bracken Ridge worried—I have had many calls on the matter—that their vote counted and that the alderman for Bramble Bay was legitimately elected.

Mr Davis: What was the result of the poll?

Mr AKERS: It was a fairly significant win for the ALP.

Mr Davis: What were the figures, for the record?

Mr AKERS: I do not have the figures, but I accept that there was a fairly large proportion in favour of the ALP.

Mr Davis: I will tell you. It was about 4 000 difference and the vote was 66 per cent for Labor. Right?

Mr AKERS: I will not argue with that because I know it was a fairly high percentage; but it was out of context with the results of other elections, both Federal and State, in the same area, and so there must be some cause for concern. The figures did not fit the usual pattern.

Now we have seen that there was an illegality, or certainly an irregularity, in the conduct of that election, everyone who cares about democracy should be concerned about whether that election was run correctly. The member for Sandgate should be concerned about the next State election. I understand that the women's section of the ALP has failed in its attempt to unseat him, but he has to front up for the next election under this same returning officer. The blame for the original fault rests with that officer. He has shown his incompetence, and I demand that he not be given control of another election until it is proved that he is competent. There are many other intelligent and efficient people in the Bracken Ridge and Sandgate areas who could run an election quite safely and impartially so that we may be assured that the democratic process was carried out.

Two things have been shown: the first is the incompetence of an officer; and the second is the incompetence of an alderman in covering up a waste of ratepayers' money by not demanding that that returning officer be removed from his job and ensuring that a similar tremendous wastage of public money does not occur.

Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the document referred to.

Petitions Presented to Parliament

Mr YEWDALE (Rockhampton North) (12.59 p.m.): In the last few seconds of this debate I wish to deal with a question concerning petitions presented to this Parliament. In the many years that I have been here I have noted that innumerable petitions have been presented by members of Parliament on a number of subjects. It seems to me that they all finish in the closet.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 5 August, the time allotted for the debate on matters of public interest has now expired.

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

AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

Consideration of Report

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House) (2.15 p.m.): I move—

"That the House will, this day, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders as recommended by the Standing Orders Committee."

I point out that the report is the first, to the House, from the Standing Orders Committee that consists of members from both sides of the House. This first report is the outcome of seven meetings of the committee which held its first meeting on 28 April last year. During that time the committee has considered certain amendments to existing Standing Orders to allow for the better regulation of the proceedings of the House. To enable the committee to fully consider the matter, it called for submissions from the parties represented within the Parliament and from the Independent member. It also called for information from other Parliaments on procedural matters.

The amendments proposed in the first report can be categorised into two groups:

(1) Amendments which deal with procedures that have, for some time now, been employed in this House under Sessional Orders. These amendments cover a number of areas such as procedures dealing with the Adjournment debate, the presentation of Bills and the presentation of petitions. Members will all be familiar with the amendments proposed in this group as they are those which have had a considerable trial in this House.

(2) The second group of proposed amendments are new procedures to the House. These cover areas such as question-time, with the amendments concerning themselves with both the asking and answering of questions, ministerial statements and matters of public importance.

In all, the first report from the Standing Orders Committee proposes 33 amendments to Standing Orders for this Parliament. These include the amendment of 14 Standing Orders, an amendment to one of the Rules of Practice under the Standing Orders, deletion of nine of the Orders and the insertion of 14 new Orders. These proposed amendments are contained in the report which was tabled in this House and ordered to be printed on Thursday, 25 March 1982.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (2.17 p.m.): I second the motion moved by the Leader of the House that the report of the Standing Orders Committee be brought before a Committee of this Assembly.

It is not often that the Standing Orders Committee of this Parliament brings a report to Parliament. The last time it did was in 1962. As the Minister pointed out, the Standing Orders Committee of this Parliament began in April 1981, and this is the first report that the committee has presented.

The charter given to the Standing Orders Committee was very wide-ranging, but the report covers only a very small section of the Standing Orders. It relates mainly to the Sessional Orders that have been passed. Each session, when the House meets, Sessional Orders have to be moved relating to matters such as days of sitting, matters of public interest, time limit of speeches, the ringing of bells for divisions, questions upon notice and without notice, the Adjournment debate, the presentation of petitions and the presentation of Bills. Even when the Standing Orders Committee has dealt with the problems of this Parliament in the past, only very limited amendments have been approved by the Parliament.

I believe that I have attended every meeting of the Standing Orders Committee, which has been considering a much wider range of subjects. The committee intends to look in detail at all of the Standing Orders of this Parliament. The committee can only make a wide-ranging contribution if the amendments it recommends pass through the Parliament.

I hope that this report is just what is says it is, that is, the first report, and that the Standing Orders Committee will continue to meet under your guidance, Mr Speaker. I hope that it will fully review the Standing Orders of this Parliament. I emphasise that they are hopelessly outdated, as is proven by the need for so many Sessional Orders.

In comparison with the Standing Orders of the other Parliaments in Australia, the Standing Orders in Queensland are archaic. They are certainly not framed in the best interests of the people of Queensland. One of the most critical situations that could possibly take place occurred this morning. A chaotic situation faces the whole State yet, under the current Standing Orders, we were not able to debate that problem. That is one of the sections that will probably be changed dramatically following the acceptance of the first report. It is obvious that the Westminster traditions that are followed by the Federal Parliament are not being followed in this Parliament. It is absolutely essential that members of Parliament realise that they must make a contribution to the future of Queensland by updating the Standing Orders.

The Opposition considers that the first report is a compromise. After three compromises, the Opposition will accept the report in toto. Opposition members believe that it should be passed today. The Government has been very reluctant to give any concessions, particularly in the three proposed major amendments to the Standing Orders.

One of them relates to question-time. The Opposition is not satisfied that the reforms dealing with question-time have been taken far enough. However, the Opposition accepts the compromise and, if the report is considered in toto, it is prepared to back it.

The Opposition is also prepared to back the proposed amendment relative to you, Mr Speaker, making decisions under Standing Order 137. The Opposition believes that the Speaker of the Parliament should not be placed in the invidious position in which he is sometimes placed. He has been accused of making arbitrary decisions. The adoption of that proposal will relieve the pressure on the Speaker.

The report makes members of Parliament more accountable to the Parliament and to the people of Queensland. Ministers who make ministerial statements should be able to allow their statements to be debated. That is one of the provisions contained in the Standing Orders report.

The Opposition is concerned about reports that the charter of the Standing Orders Committee could be changed by amendment. It is also most concerned that significant progress may not be made today and that the report will not be accepted by the Parliament in toto. I do not know what procedures will be followed at the Committee stage. I do not know whether amendments will be accepted at the Committee stage. If they can be and they are accepted, a long and complicated procedure will follow. If amendments are pushed through by members of the Government or the back bench, it is obvious that the report will not pass through all stages today. That concerns the Opposition greatly because, after one year and many meetings of the Standing Orders Committee, no determination would be made in the Parliament. The Government would be the laughing-stock of the people of Queensland. The Government must bear the brunt of its actions.

In seconding the motion, I make it clear that the Opposition participated in the compilation of the report and that it is prepared to accept it in toto, as I believe it should be accepted.

It will be interesting to see what the Liberal Party members do on this occasion. It is expected that members of the back bench of the Government intend to rat on this report. The Standing Orders Committee comprises members of the three political parties. Consultation took place between them. Opposition members reported to their party and its caucus on the progress that was made. We accepted the compromises that were reached, and we expect that, in the best traditions of this Parliament, the House will accept the report.

The members of the Standing Orders Committee—the Premier, the Deputy Premier, you, Mr Speaker, as chairman, the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Opposition's leader of business in the House and the Chairman of Committees—represent their parties and express the views of those parties. If any attempt is made to amend the report or to delete portions of it, such an attempt will be seen as a vote of no confidence in those leaders. Naturally, I exclude the Opposition from such a vote of no confidence. The Opposition's leaders consulted with their fellow members and with the caucus.

It will be a tragedy if the implementation of amendments to our Standing Orders is delayed further. It could be that, as usual, the Standing Orders Committee will not meet for a long time. After all, it did not meet between 1962 and 1981. If the implementation of the report is delayed further, the blame must rest with the Premier and the Deputy Premier. They will be guilty of trying to drag Parliament, screaming, back into the 1880s.

Around the corridors of this building I have heard the Government back-benchers say that they are so ashamed of their incompetent Ministers—the Elliotts and others—and so concerned about their inability to acquit themselves well on the floor of the House that they are not prepared to see them questioned by members of the Opposition.

Mr Neal interjected.

Mr D'ARCY: The honourable member for Balonne may laugh. That is what he is saying behind closed doors and in the corridors.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: They are saying it outside.

Mr D'ARCY: Government back-benchers certainly are saying that the Ministers, who are appointed by the Premier and the Deputy Premier, are not competent, so they are not prepared to allow them to be questioned on the floor of the House by Opposition members.

The report contains compromises. One is that at question-time members will still be able to read questions in the knowledge that they will not be answered until the following day. The Opposition went too far in allowing that compromise, in allowing Ministers to read out answers prepared for them by their departments. Surely Ministers should be competent enough to answer off the cuff questions concerning their portfolios.

Mr Hewitt: Why take up the time of Parliament with questions on notice?

Mr D'ARCY: I could not agree more with the Minister. Obviously he believes that our time should not be taken up in such a manner. I hope that no longer will a Minister be permitted to stand up and parrot an answer prepared for him by his department. Similarly, I hope that no longer will an incompetent back-bench member of the Government be permitted to stand up and give notice of a question just for the sake of hearing his own voice. One wonders what the honourable member for Peak Downs would do without being afforded that privilege.

It must be remembered that, except for one occasion in 1962, amendments to the Standing Orders have never been questioned. On that occasion they questioned by a former member for Townsville South, Tom Aikens. In spite of that, in 1962 the amendments were agreed to by the House.

Opposition members do not want to see half-baked amendments put forward today by Government members. We believe that the charter of the Standing Orders Committee is wide enough and that the members of that committee are competent enough to represent their parties and to report back to them.

If Parliament does not pass in toto the report of the Standing Orders Committee, the Government and its representatives on the Standing Orders Committee, including the Premier and Deputy Premier, will lose face with the people of Queensland, with this Parliament and certainly with the Opposition. If the Parliament refuses to accept this report, it will be passing a vote of no confidence in the Premier and the Deputy Premier—and that will be a sad day for Queensland.

Mr SCASSOLA (Mt Gravatt) (2.30 p.m.): Before I go into the matters that I wish to raise, I shall just refer to one or two of the comments made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

First, he said that the Government has to accept responsibility for the consequences of the report. I am surprised that he should make such a comment, particularly as he purports to be a member of this Parliament. Matters of this kind are not matters for governments or for political parties; they are matters for members of the Parliament, matters on which members of Parliament should make their own individual decisions, and I have maintained that view for a very long time.

I move the following amendment to the motion moved by the Leader of the House—

"At the end of the motion add the words—

'This House is of the opinion that it should be given the opportunity to consider the greater use of committees including a public accounts committee and the provision of regular private members' days and accordingly requests the Standing Orders Committee to formulate recommendations thereon and such other matters as it may choose to further consider and that such recommendations be presented to the House on or before the 15th day of November 1982 for consideration by the House before rising for the 1982 Christmas recess.'"

Before speaking to the amendment, I point out that in my view there is no reason why the House, and later the Committee, cannot deal with the report that has already been presented to the House and also accept the amendment. If accepted, the amendment would require the Standing Orders Committee to come back to the House with some further recommendations.

Mr Burns: Do your members think that we will get the current provisions in the Standing Orders Committee's report as well? You are not delaying it for three months, or something like that?

Mr SCASSOLA: No, that is certainly not my intention. As I develop my argument later, I shall seek to demonstrate that if honourable members want the reforms contained in this report, then, in order to make the Parliament meaningful, they will have to go further. The important matters that were the subject of submissions to the Standing Orders Committee should be considered by the committee as matters of considerable urgency.

As I have said, questions of parliamentary procedure and parliamentary reform are not matters for political parties or for governments; they are matters for all members of this Parliament, and all members should direct their individual attention to them. They are matters that really go to the heart of the functioning of Parliament.

The question that we are really considering is whether this Parliament can fulfill its function and discharge its obligations to the public outside. Parliamentary matters are the most talked about, the most investigated and the least acted-upon subject matters in this State. Over the years, members of this Parliament have investigated the Westminster system, they have attended conferences of the Comonwealth Parliamentary Association and they have looked at Parliaments in the other States of Australia. However, for more than a generation there has not been any meaningful reform of the procedures and practices of this Parliament. In fact, the last time any in-depth investigation into this Parliament was carried out, was back in 1950. Despite all of that, we still operate under rules that basically were framed in the 19th century and that probably are more relevant to the 18th century than to the last two decades of the 20th century. The question is of great importance. It is one that affects the people of Queensland; it affects the exercise of democracy; it affects the exercise of the function of this Parliament.

It is said that the procedure of Parliament is not very important because the people outside do not have great regard for it. I beg to differ. I believe that matters relating to the operation of this Parliament are of vital importance to people outside and are of interest to people in the community. They are matters for the benefit of people outside. If this Parliament operates properly, it discharges its functions in the interests of the community outside. The community outside is interested in seeing that this Parliament operates in its interests, that things are done correctly and properly, that laws are passed not in a great rush but after consideration of submissions by people, and that the funds that have been appropriated in this Parliament are properly expended. They are the sorts of things that we ought to be looking at.

Because of the great difficulty we have had in getting people to the barrier, as it were, in this area, we should be thankful that we have a report before the Parliament at all. The Standing Orders Committee met in 1981 for the first time in almost 10 years. Until last year, it had not met for almost 10 years. I repeat that this report is the first meaningful investigation into the operation of Parliament by the Parliament—we are talking about a parliamentary committee which is made up of people on all sides of the House—since 1950.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Is the amendment that you are proposing a personal amendment by you, or has it the support of the Liberal Party?

Mr SCASSOLA: I have already made the point that, in my opinion, these are matters not for political parties but for individuals. I have put this amendment to the Parliament as a member of this Parliament. Other members can speak for themselves and express their own views about it.

You, Mr Speaker, called for submissions last year. A relatively short time span was given for submissions. A number of people made submissions, many of which were of great moment. The report represents some 12 months' work. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, in the main it seeks to incorporate into Standing Orders those matters that were part of the Sessional Orders passed in this Parliament. In a few instances, the report seeks to go further than that and to introduce innovation; but, in going further—and I suggest that members might take note of what I say because it is relevant to the amendment—in a number of instances the committee has taken the experience of other Parliaments—in the main it has taken the experience of the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives—and incorporated them into this Parliament. I do not suggest that the reform should not be included, but in reality it is not taken in context.

I refer honourable members to page 8 of the proposed amendments and in particular to proposed Standing Order 137—Matter of Public Importance. I am subject to correction, but basically, with the exception of one clause in the first sentence, that is taken word for word from the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives. That provision should be read in the context of the rules, procedures and practices of the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives, and no allowance has been made for our particular circumstances.

Firstly, to invoke the provisions of that rule, eight members including the proposer must rise to their feet. Some might say that that is not unreasonable; but the fact of the matter is that the House of Representatives has, I think, about 125 members; this House has 82. Our old rule stated that five members had to rise in their places, so by increasing the number to eight a greater burden is placed on those who seek to raise matters in this Parliament.

I also refer honourable members to one of the clauses in the first proposed amendment which states—

> "On any sitting day, other than a day allotted for debate on the Address in Reply or Supply ..."

That means that at least 25 sitting days of this Parliament are excluded from the operation of that provision, so that a substantial part of the life of each session is outside the operation of the rule. Once again, that rule was taken out of context, in that it was taken from the House of Representatives, which has private members' days and on every second Thursday, I think, the day is set aside until 4 p.m. for the raising of private members' business.

Mr Hewitt: Until 4 o'clock, although it does not have to be until 4 o'clock.

Mr SCASSOLA: Yes, it may not be as late as 4 p.m.; but the point is that members can initiate matters themselves that can be dealt with and disposed of in the Parliament. There is an additional method of raising matters of urgency at other times.

However, the two things are not brought together in the report; it has only one of them. If this reform is to be included, I suggest that it is important to look at the other matter as well. I firmly believe that private members' days are an important part of the function of Parliament and an important part of the procedures of this Parliament and many others. As I pointed out, many other Parliaments such as the House of Commons and the House of Representatives have private members' days.

In a number of instances the report takes reform out of context and thus gives an imbalance. What is needed is not only these reforms but others, and I suggest that in all the circumstances it is a matter of considerable importance that the Standing Orders Committee should urgently direct its attention to those other important matters such as private members' days and a public accounts committee. We have had a great deal of discussion about them. The committee should then come back to this Assembly with recommendations relating to those matters so that they can be dealt with in the life of this Parliament. I do not believe that it is in the interests of the members, in the interests of the Parliament or in the interests of the community to have a long drawn-out exercise when it is really not necessary.

We have had a long debate over many years about parliamentary reform, and it is time that we saw some meaningful recommendation about those matters which, I believe, a substantial majority of members really do want. If members of this Parliament were to exercise their individual judgment, these matters would come to fruition fairly quickly.

If I may say so, the result of this report is that there have not been brought forward in full those reforms that can use the talents and experience of members for better government. There is an enormous talent in this Assembly, and it should be used, after the political decisions are taken, for making decisions that are objective and in the best interests of the community. In fact, after the political decisions are taken, all members can contribute to the debate in a constructive and objective way and thus make a better contribution. They will not be able to do so unless the Parliament, under its rules and orders, permits adequate supervision and adopts proper procedures. And that is what we are about in this instance—ensuring that members can play a meaningful role in the discharge of their duties in the interests of the community that they serve. Ultimately, of course, that is the point: we serve the community.

I suggest that the best way in which this Parliament can discharge its obligation is through a comprehensive committee system, and I cite as an example—it is mentioned in the amendment—a public accounts committee. We have had a lot of discussion in this Chamber about a public accounts committee, and I do not propose to canvass the merits—

Mr Davis: But you never support it when it comes to a vote. Put that on the record.

Mr SCASSOLA: In response to that criticism, I point out that we have had in this Parliament for almost 18 months a Standing Orders Committee that has been given the responsibility of bringing forward recommendations for reform, and I think it is proper and reasonable that the committee should have the opportunity of doing that. I do not think that the events of last week, when people who were members of the committee sought to grandstand in the Chamber knowing that this report was to be debated, ought to be permitted. There is a proper way of doing things, and might I suggest that the proper way is to have a committee that is representative of all sections of the Assembly. Might I also suggest to the honourable member for Brisbane Central that the proper way is for this Assembly to indicate to the committee that it desires recommendation for reform to be brought forward, not on a party political basis but on a parliamentary basis.

I said that I wanted to say something about a public accounts committee. I do not intend to canvass the arguments for or against, because much has been said about that already. I merely say that almost every other Parliament in the world has a public accounts committee. Certainly every Parliament in Australia, except the Queensland Parliament, has a public accounts committee. One has only to go to Singapore to find that the Singaporean Parliament, with an Opposition of only one, has a public accounts committee.

The committee system, which supervises the expenditure of public money is seen as a vital, integral part of the parliamentary and democratic process. It is very important that that sort of thing be incorporated in the procedures of this Parliament. I also believe that the committee ought to look at such matters as public works committees and come back to this Parliament with recommendations.

Mr Burns: Mike Ahern chaired a committee that made certain proposals.

Mr SCASSOLA: The honourable member is quite right.

A report presented in 1974 recommended that this Parliament have procedures incorporating public accounts committees and public works committees. The idea is not new to this Parliament, and it is not new to other Parliaments. Such committees are well established in most Parliaments throughout the world.

I also believe that this Parliament ought to have recommendations before it relating to the establishment of a body that I might call a public bodies review committee. We have literally hundreds of boards and committees of various kinds—semi-Government authorities which are really——

Mr Akers: They are Qangos.

Mr SCASSOLA: They are really Qangos which are not accountable to this Parliament in any meaningful way. It is time that this Parliament seriously considered setting up a committee of its members to oversee the operations of the boards and authorities. That, again is not a new matter. It has been incorporated in the procedures of other Parliaments, and I cite particularly the Victorian Parliament. Despite the fact that it has been in operation for some time in Victoria we seem to have difficulty in introducing such things in Queensland.

As I said, I believe that members of this Parliament ought to have an opportunity to initiate business. No real opportunity is given to members in this Parliament to initiate business for proper debate. We have a Matters of Public Interest debate that takes up an hour a week. It consists of six individual speeches on different topics. There is no real debate. In the main, those speeches, other than perhaps gathering a headline here and there, go no further.

We have an Adjournment debate that really takes the same form. It takes place at too late an hour in the day. Not infrequently the Adjournment debate starts at 1 a.m. when most members are too tired to pay attention to it.

Mr Moore: It should be the first business after dinner.

Mr SCASSOLA: It could well be. In the House of Representatives the Adjournment debate usually runs from 10 p.m. to 10.30 p.m. after which the House can proceed with further business if it wishes to do so.

The important point I make is that members have no real opportunity to initiate business in the House. When I say that I do not mean that the House must accept the business that is initiated or that it must adopt any motion that is proposed—far from it. It is important that members be given the opportunity to raise them.

As a French philosopher once said—and I do not purport to quote him word for word—

> "I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

It is time that we adoped that principle in this Parliament.

I firmly believe that this Parliament ought to set aside days when private members' business can be raised as of right, as happens in the House of Representatives and in other Parliaments in which members can on a particular day raise matters and have those matters debated, rather than have the procedure where a member either raises a matter in a 10-minute speech or a 5-minute speech or where he has to resort to the urgency procedure that is not always in the interests of the Parliament at any given time. There ought to be days set aside for those matters.

The amendment that I propose is of great importance. It is a matter of substance. It does not seek to derogate from the report which has come to the House from the Standing Orders Committee. I see no reason why that report cannot be dealt with today. I suggest that members will support the amendment, which asks the Standing Orders Committee appointed by this House to report back to it on the matters of significant importance which were raised in the submissions made to the committee 15 or 16 months ago. It is a matter of considerable urgency that those matters come back for deliberation by this House.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have some concern about the wording of the amendment. I have before me a motion by the Leader of the House, which reads—

> "That this House will, this day, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders as recommended by the Standing Orders Committee."

For the information of members who do not have a copy of the amendment, I point out that it proposes to add to the motion the words—

> "This House is of the opinion that it should be given the opportunity to consider the greater use of committees including a public accounts committee and the provision of regular private members' days and accordingly requests the Standing Orders Committee to formulate recommendations thereon and such other matters as it may choose to further consider and that such recommendations be presented to the House on or before the 15th day of November 1982 for consideration by the House before rising for the 1982 Christmas recess."

Despite the fact that I appreciate the concern and interest of the member for Mt Gravatt, only one motion is before the House. Another motion, which is not an amendment in my opinion, asks for different action to be taken by the Standing Orders Committee. As I said earlier, I propose to permit the debate to continue. The amendment is not closely aligned to the motion but, as difficulties have been experienced relative to the time it has taken to submit a report to the House, I will permit the debate on the amendment to proceed. I ask members to consider very carefully what they are doing. Our main function this afternoon is to consider the report. I am in possession of a statement that reads—

> "The committee still has before it a large number of proposals all being carefully considered and proposes to submit and recommend to the House further changes to the Standing Orders."

I leave those thoughts with honourable members.

Mr PRENTICE (Toowong) (3 p.m.): Thank you for your indulgence, Mr Speaker. I second the amendment moved by my colleague the honourable member for Mt Gravatt. In my short time in this Parliament, and having seen it in operation, I have become aware

of what I think are grave deficiencies in its ability to do its job properly. I say that not with any pretence of possessing greater knowledge than my colleagues but expressing a view that is held widely on both sides of this Parliament.

If a Parliament is to work properly, it must be capable of calling the Executive Government to account. As our Standing Orders stand, Parliament is allowed to exercise that responsibility only to a limited degree. Even in the time since Standing Orders were last reviewed and last amended a dramatic increase has taken place in the complexities of government. There has been greater dependence on statutory authorities and there has been increasing action by the Government that makes it remarkably difficult for private members of Parliament, wherever they sit, to do their job properly. This is due in part to the sheer volume of work that Governments now engage in.

Individual members, if they are to do their job properly, require better tools. Some of those tools are set out already in the report. Perhaps it could go further. However, provision is made for changes to questions and to other procedures.

The important aspect, however, is that if members are to question the Government of the day effectively—not only to find out where they think it has gone wrong because they disagree with policies or whatever, but because of mistakes that they think have been made by well-intentioned and honest Ministers in a Government that is not out to rort anybody—it is essential that they have the tools to do so.

The honourable member for Mt Gravatt in his amendment has raised a number of those points. A committee system would provide us with some of those tools that are so vital to the proper role of Parliament. I refer not only to a public accounts committee. Anyone who reads the work done by Senate committees will find that great achievements have been made. No longer is the Senate a body that many people regard as moribund and useless. It is a body that is working; it is a body that has life because it is questioning the Government. It is fulfilling its role as a House of review and as part of the Parliament.

The motion gives to honourable members an opportunity to look to the Standing Orders Committee; the amendment gives to members an opportunity to say, "We appreciate the work that has been done so far but, if this Parliament is to do its job, it is essential that the matters of committees, such as public accounts committees, and private members' days be considered, and that the Parliament be given an opportunity to discuss them in detail before this year is out."

Why before this year is out? Because both in my time in this Parliament and before I have heard members of Parliament talking about the need for parliamentary reform. I have heard of the committees that have been set up within and outside parties.

There is still much more to be done. The best way of getting results is to set a time limit. That is not being unreasonable with the Standing Orders Committee; rather is it providing Parliament with an opportunity to discuss these matters in detail.

In the past the Opposition by way of a motion raised the matter of a public accounts committee.

Mr Davis: And you did not support it.

Mr PRENTICE: I did not support it; I considered that the appropriate place for a discussion on that matter was before the Standing Orders Committee. That committee has met and has delivered its report. Now is the appropriate time to raise matters such as that.

It is all very well for Opposition members to try to score political points, but the reality is that if real change is to be achieved, particularly in this field, it should be achieved on a non-partisan basis. As my colleague has said, the making of amendments to the Standing Orders is a matter for political parties, and I would be disappointed if Opposition members were to vote, as a bloc, on every single issue. The Liberal Party is not caucused on this issue, and nor would I expect it to be. I hope that each and every member of this House will make his own decision on what he believes should be done in the best interests of the Parliament and to make it an effective watch-dog of the Executive Government.

Mr Vaughan: All of you guys have got together and are grandstanding.

Mr PRENTICE: A member of the Opposition talks about grandstanding. It is unfortunate that he does that at this time because, in the past, the Opposition has been grandstanding on the question of the setting up of a public accounts committee. It now

has the opportunity to support an amendment, if it wants to do so. Opposition members can make those interjections if they like, but the reality of what we are talking about today is how we can make this Parliament work more effectively. We should do that as a Parliament. It is not a matter on which we should score points. I suggest that the Opposition should not do that; and that applies equally to my side.

I have some concern about other matters in the report, and the major one relates to question-time. I would like to see greater consideration being given to allowing members to ask questions without notice in this Chamber and to handling questions upon notice in a more mechanical manner, along the lines that they are handled in the House of Representatives. They are simply handed in to the Clerk so that they can be dealt with properly. Perhaps there should be some limit on the number of questions upon notice that a member can ask. The best questions that can be asked in any Parliament are questions without notice. They keep Ministers on their mettle and they also prove the value of back-bench members. If a back-bench member is doing his job, his questions will test the ministry and the Government and ensure that they are doing their jobs properly. I suspect that the proposal in the report is a little artificial and that there is room for improvement.

It was with pleasure that I seconded the amendment moved by the member for Mt Gravatt. This matter must be considered by the Parliament; it can be no longer ignored.

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (3.8 p.m.): I have pleasure in supporting the motion moved by the Leader of the House (Mr Wharton). I am surprised that at this late stage further changes are being proposed. At this time I could go along with the proposal put forward by the member for Mt Gravatt about the setting up of a public accounts committee. The Australian Labor Party has been seeking such a committee for years. Unfortunately, it has received no support from the Liberal Party.

We are talking about the first report of the Standing Orders Committee on proposed amendments to the Standing Orders. The amendments were supposed to come into force at the beginning of the first session of the Forty-third Parliament. The members of the Standing Orders Committee were appointed on 11 March 1981. They include members of all political parties. You, Mr Speaker, chair the committee. The members include the Premier (Mr Bjelke-Petersen), the Deputy Premier and leader of the Liberal Party (Dr Edwards), the Leader of the House (Mr Wharton) who is a member of the National Party, the member for Ithaca (Mr Miller) who is Chairman of Committees and a member of the Liberal Party, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Casey), the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr D'Arcy) and myself who, at that time, was the Opposition leader of business in this Chamber.

That all-party committee met on many occasions and debate continued for many hours on the workings of other Parliaments operating under the Westminster system. We decided on the Standing Orders that needed amendment to give Queensland a better Parliament. We did so in the best interests of the political parties we represented and of the members of Parliament as a whole. That is one of the most important things we did. Our respective parties received our proposed suggestions and then we reported to the committee.

Eventually, prior to the Christmas recess last year, amendments were decided upon for presentation to Parliament. Unfortunately, some people welshed on the proposals and the committee met again in February to make further changes. Although those changes were not in the best interests of the party I represent, we were quite willing to give them a go to see if the changes improved the workings of this Parliament and gave members a greater opportunity for debate. The report was presented to us earlier this year, so members have had it before them for quite some time. Now that the report comes before the Parliament for discussion, we find members of Government parties wanting to make changes.

I go along with the suggestions made. However, before we agree to their changes we should deal with the adoption of the committee's report and the recommended changes in it. The suggestions that have been made by the member for Mt Gravatt could be the subject of a further recommendation and report from the Standing Orders Committee as report No. 2. I will illustrate how vague the proposed amendment is and how it is not quite to the point. It proposes to add to the motion the words—

> "This House is of the opinion that it should be given the opportunity to consider the greater use of committees including a public accounts committee and the provision of regular private members' days . . ."

I am quite certain that the Opposition would go along with that. We have been pressing for a public accounts committee for a long time but, as I said previously, without success as we could not gain the support of the Liberal Party; yet members of the Liberal Party want our support on the matter today. I am quite certain that we would give it. However, within a short space of time—certainly before a vote is taken—we on this side of the House should be able to arrive at an amendment that will give the House something more positive.

The amendment continues—

> ". and accordingly requests the Standing Orders Committee to formulate recommendations thereon and such other matters as it may choose to further consider and that such recommendations be presented to the House on or before the 15th day of November 1982 for consideration by the House before rising for the 1982 Christmas recess."

We go along with that. However, do not let us hold up consideration of the report as presented. Instead, the Standing Orders Committee could consider the other matters now being put forward. Over a long period—16 months—every member of the House has had an opportunity to forward to his representative or to his caucus amendments he would like to see made to the Standing Orders.

Unfortunately the amendments moved today did not come to light in the last 16 months. They are presented at this late stage supposedly in the interests of amending the Standing Orders but it is only presented to stop the matter proceeding.

Mr Hewitt: Did you have the opportunity to read the Liberal Party submission to the committee?

Mr PREST: The committee read all submissions placed before it and gave due consideration to them. Unfortunately for the Liberal Party it had two members on the committee, while the National Party had three and the Labor Party had three. If a recommendation of the Liberal Party was not accepted by the committee, that is the fault of the Government members of that committee.

The Liberal Party is not asking for any amendments to the recommendations; it is asking that the committee reconsider these matters. I am quite certain that the members of the committee would be only too willing to do that. All I say is that this first report should not be delayed; the recommendations on amendments to the Standing Orders should be accepted so that the Parliament can have a better basis on which to work.

The recommendations are not made lightly; they are made only after careful consideration of the piles and piles of papers that the Clerk gathered from other Australian and overseas Parliaments that adopt the Westminster system. What the committee did was to pick out the very best parts of the Standing Orders of other Parliaments.

The report of the committee should be accepted by members of the Parliament. They should not lose sight of the fact that this is only the first report. Members on both sides of the House should be able to put forward further suggestions and recommendations to the Standing Orders Committee. If the committee agrees with them, the Parliament can consider them, I hope before the end of this session. Do not let us wait 16 weeks, as we did on the last occasion. The delay was not the fault of the Opposition. Prior to Christmas last year the Opposition was quite prepared to accept the report but, unfortunately, some members on that committee were pressured by their own party and welshed on the recommendations that had been put forward. There is an old saying: never trust a Tory.

I would like the Parliament to accept the Standing Orders Committee's first report and give the committee time to receive further submissions and make further recommendations so that a second report can be prepared. I am quite certain that when provisions such as the establishment of a public accounts committee and private members' days are presented in the proper way, they will receive the support of the Opposition. I will be quite disappointed if the Opposition does not produce a better amendment than the one presented today so that the Standing Orders will be given stronger teeth and much more stability.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (3.19 p.m.): Some matters must be quickly corrected. I cannot in any way speak about the internal matters of the committee of which Mr Prest was a member, but I certainly can speak with some personal concern about a couple of submissions that went to the committee.

It is absolutely incorrect to suggest that matters of the type raised in the amendment proposed by the member for Mt Gravatt were not placed before the committee of which he was a member. In fact, they were included in a submission on behalf of one of the parties represented in this Chamber. I would have thought that the matter of concern which has been attached to some of the more substantial reforms of the Standing Orders might be the reason why the proposal in relation to the expanded use of committees in this Assembly has not been included. The Assembly should be informed of the position that I understand my party to take. There has been absolutely no caucusing; there has been no meeting and common vote taken in my party. We do not believe in caucuses. Each member is allowed to participate in this debate as a private member of Parliament, which is as it should be. The reality is that the internal functions and the communications or correspondence between the committee were not divulged to members of the parliamentary Liberal Party, and I am sure that that will be confirmed by the member of the committee who is present.

Mr Prest: Pull the other one.

Mr INNES: I suppose it is difficult for lemmings to believe that other animals can make individual decisions and do their own thing, but the reality is that the Liberal Party believes in the institution of Parliament. The Liberal Party and the joint parties have recognised the right of private members to come into this Chamber and make their own decisions. I have no doubt that the Assembly will hear from different members quite different opinions on the detail of the report and proposals about what else might be considered by the committee. I would not think of speaking for the member for Caboolture, the member for Windsor, the member for Ithaca or any other person in this Chamber. I will say what I believe, and that is——

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr INNES: For 10 or 12 years we waited to get the Standing Orders Committee to meet.

Mr Warburton: Why didn't you insist on being on the committee in your own right? You stood by and allowed the Liberal Party to be represented.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Sandgate will have an opportunity to speak if he wishes.

Mr INNES: Perhaps the timing involved will demonstrate to the people who have had this added burden placed upon them—that is the leaders of all parties in this Assembly—that the task they were given was too much, having regard to their other responsibilities. It might well be that the future composition of the committee would be better left to persons such as Mr Speaker, members of the panel of Temporary Chairmen and other members of the Assembly who have time to devote to the task. But the reality is that unless there is a bit of a hurry-up—we are almost two-thirds of the way through a Parliament—the committee will not be able to address itself to the other matters which a substantial number of members thought important.

Before I go back to make some mention of the committee proposition I wish to deal with some matters of the principal report. As I understand it, we will move into Committee on the motion of the Leader of the House and there will be an opportunity to deal with matters in more detail. So that the Assembly is not left with the impression that we are debating something entirely apart from the work which the committee has painstakingly done so far, I will point out some matters with which I disagree.

The first is the general rules for questions. I know that they follow those of the House of Representatives and the House of Commons injunctions or recommendations concerning questions.

Mr Akers interjected.

Mr INNES: As the honourable member for Pine Rivers pointed out, it is certainly the formula of the House of Representatives that has been substantially followed.

In reality, it would be completely contrary to the traditions of this House and, in my view, contrary to common sense if a Minister were not allowed to express an opinion on a matter about which he has been asked. I should think that 50 per cent of the questions asked in this House seek comment or the expression of an opinion in relation to a Minister's functions. For a start, I take some objection to that.

One proposal relates to a change in the format of question-time and a suggestion that no member be allowed to ask more than two questions a day. That should be confined to two consecutive questions.

Mr Hewitt: Why quantify it?

Mr INNES: Some people would rightly ask, "Why quantify it?" I know that others believe that we should get away from the strict rotational system.

An Honourable Member: I think that we should quantify it.

Mr INNES: It is perfectly clear from the interjections that there is a breadth of argument on this matter.

Mr Warburton: Suddenly we are all individuals.

Mr INNES: We were individuals before we started this debate—before somebody introduced the word "caucus" into the debate. Some transformation occurred then.

A considerable number of matters must be ventilated in this House relating to the format of question-time. I am confident that some members, irrespective of party, will have different views on how that particular procedure can be refined or reformed in the interests of making that vital function of Parliament more effective.

In the broad sense, I am certainly prepared to support the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee as far as it goes. There are some matters of detail of the type that I have just indicated to which I take objection. As far as it goes, I commend the committee on its painstaking work, but I do not believe it follows that we are obliged to accept every part of every recommendation. Indeed, I will be opposing, or suggesting some amendments to, some of the proposals. That does not mean that we should be prevented, in the first time in so many years, from talking about the other matters on which other members and I made submissions.

Mr D'Arcy: You intend to block the report because it does not suit you.

Mr INNES: I have no intention of blocking the report. I will support most of the report. I will object to or propose amendments to those parts with which I disagree.

To put this into perspective—we can deal with the specific proposals put forward today and still express an opinion. I believe it is incumbent on me to express an opinion on the broad issue and that I am entitled to express an opinion.

Mr D'Arcy: At the Committee stage?

Mr INNES: No. I am referring to the broad issue. After the honourable member's performance this afternoon I can understand why he is agitating.

Over a year ago I was a party to a submission. Substantial parts of that submission were not dealt with. I share with the honourable member for Mt Gravatt concern about the matters which were not dealt with.

Mr D'Arcy: Why didn't you tell Dr Edwards and the Premier?

Mr INNES: I was quite prepared to allow even the honourable member for Woodridge to participate in a committee appointed by this Parliament to consider the recommendations to which I was a party, such as those on private members' days and the increased use of committees.

Mr D'Arcy: Don't you think that we had to compromise?

Mr INNES: I wonder about the use of the word "compromise" I was not present at those committee meetings. What is the truth? Some committee members seem to be saying that the matters that are not in the report were rejected; others seem to be saying

that there are matters still to come. I am prepared to accept the suggestion that other matters are still to come. I know that the Clerk of the Parliament and the persons who act in executive positions on behalf of that committee wrote away and sought far and wide to find examples and details of the workings of other Parliaments to see how they were set up with their committee systems and their private members' days.

I commend the committee for the work that it has done. I accept that it has other matters under consideration. As the time of this Parliament is running out, I would support the member for Mt Gravatt, who said that he would like to see those matters brought to conclusion by the committee and the results of any deliberation put before the House so that any further opinion on the matter may be ventilated.

The Leader of the Opposition is about to raise his hand. I see the report as a report of the whole committee. There is no minority report stating, "We support proposals for a public accounts committee, private members' days and a variation to question-time." Recently the Leader of the Opposition moved a motion. He was grandstanding. When he was delegated by the Parliament to put his mind together with the minds of others towards the consideration of such matters, no minority report suggesting that he had any exception to what was being proposed was forthcoming.

I am prepared to await the joint deliberations of the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the other members of the Standing Orders Committee in pursuing those matters that other members and I thought were important enough to put before the committee last year. But time marches on; we would like to see results.

Because I am pointing in the direction of the Opposition, that does not mean that I condemn it or the committee. I want those two other issues, as I am sure other members do, brought to some finality and put before the House before the end of this session so that we can express an opinion on them. We are entitled to the benefit of the opinion of the specialist committee with regard to those matters, because essentially they relate to substantial reforms to the Standing Orders of this Assembly. I know that members are prepared to await the Opposition's deliberations, but we would like some indication given that they will be dealt with and dispatched this year.

Statements have been made about the general merits of the report. In 1974 the present Minister for Primary Industries chaired a committee that made proposals for the introduction in this House of a committee system, including the public accounts and works committees.

In the last year and a half I have checked the situation that exists in the other States. No matter what the colour of the Government—Labor, Liberal or Liberal-National—one finds that in other States committees have been created to overcome what some people regard as deficiencies of Parliament in a modern and complex world. Everything needs to be updated, and the procedures of Parliament are not unique in that respect.

The Federal Parliament has a public works and public accounts committee. We know that there are Senate standing committees on specialised matters such as the Estimates. There are select committees on matters such as finance and government operations and social welfare. The House of Representatives has standing committees on matters such as expenditure.

The South Australian Government has a public works standing committee, a public accounts committee, an industries development committee and a parliamentary committee on land settlement. The Tasmanian Parliament has a public accounts committee, a subordinate legislation committee and a public works committee, which was set up in 1914. The Victorian Parliament has a public accounts and expenditure committee, a statute law revision committee, a road safety committee, a company take-overs committee, an energy committee, a public bodies review committee and even a public servants' ethical conduct committee.

Western Australia, which has a Government that shares something in common with our Government and its predicament, has a public accounts committee on which senior back-benchers in both the Government and the Opposition participate actively.

So every other Parliament in Australia has found the need for specialist committees. This Parliament, because it is a single-Chamber Parliament, needs to be reformed to make it as effective and as efficient as possible. In the absence of a House of review, this

Parliament should be looking at the adoption of specialised bodies of review, which are available internally by way of such institutions as a public accounts committee and a public works committee.

This year the two professional accounting bodies in Australia held a national conference in Canberra. The theme of that conference was the accountability of government and public bodies. The conference was addressed by the parliamentary committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The conference received comments about the statutory bodies review committee of the Victorian Parliament.

The accounting profession thinks that the accountability of Governments and Government departments and procedures has even fallen behind the level of accountability that Governments require of public companies. The overwhelming view of the accounting profession is that the systems of government have to change to make Governments more accountable. This is a mood of the times; it is the mood of many members of this Parliament. It is the subject of submissions to the Standing Orders Committee.

I believe that before the expiration of this Parliament members are entitled to the benefit of the wisdom of the senior members of this Parliament who constitute the Standing Orders Committee. Members should be able to deal with their recommendations or their decisions as they see fit.

This is a day for private members. I hope that the absence of so many members from the House is not an indication of a lack of interest or disdain. I hope that members are not simply sitting in rooms and will respond to the division bells, should they be rung, on a Pavlovian and uninformed basis.

Mr WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (3.37 p.m.): It seems that the honourable member for Sherwood has attempted to explain what might be termed a last-ditch stand by his colleagues in an effort to hide their image as a group of persons who have been inactive and certainly guilty of procrastination in relation to the amendments to our Standing Orders.

I come back to the points made by the honourable member for Woodridge and the honourable member for Port Curtis. Although the Opposition may not totally agree with the recommendations set out in the report, we have to support them. During the lengthy deliberations that occurred, Opposition members endeavoured to improve the lot of private members—and let us remember that all of us are private members. Our efforts were not totally successful, and no doubt some critical comments will be made if ever we do get to the Committee stage and consider the amendments. No doubt some criticism will be levelled at the proposal to reduce from three to two the number of questions, including supplementary questions, that a member may ask.

Mr Hewitt: Why quantify at all?

Mr WRIGHT: The Minister can argue that later. I recall that in the 13½ years that I have been in this Parliament he constantly proposed changes. But it seems that he has fallen foul of the same disease—the ministerial disease or the leather disease. The member for Nundah is in the same position.

When they were on the back bench, they proposed ideas time after time, but the moment they smelt ministerial leather they changed their approach and forgot the ideas that they had put forward time and again. That is certainly true of the members for Nundah, Greenslopes and Landsborough, to name just three. Those members repeatedly advocated changes, but they were strangely silent when they had the opportunity to introduce the changes.

I come to the amendment moved by the member for Mt Gravatt (Mr Scassola). In view of the claim yesterday that an amendment moved by the member for Murrumba was technically out of order, I wonder how this amendment can be accepted. The words proposed to be added to the motion commence—

> "This House is of the opinion that it should be given the opportunity to consider the greater use of committees. . ."

Surely we have that right already. I hoped that the Liberals who were really concerned about changing the Standing Orders would have come up with something positive and clear, not something meaningless. Surely the opening words of the amendment are meaningless.

I am not sure how members should deal with the amendment. Is it an amendment? Is it a statement of opinion? In fact, if it is an opinion, what is the opinion? Members repeatedly have had the opportunity "to consider the greater use of committees". Very few members, apart from the Premier and a few of the hard-line members of the National Party, do not want to see a committee system in this Parliament, but we still do not have one.

However, I go along with the two specific recommendations in this amendment. They are that there should be a public accounts committee and regular private members' days. The amendment has not gone far enough. It certainly has not covered all the aspects that should be covered by the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

Another member said, "We in this Legislative Assembly have a right to some control over Cabinet, over the Executive." Yet there is a rule that if this Assembly disallows a proclamation, Order in Council, regulation or rule the Cabinet can, days later—for that matter, minutes later—reintroduce and adopt the same proclamation, Order in Council, regulation or rule. So the processes of this Parliament are being frustrated and, in fact, prostituted.

If we change anything, we should be looking not only at the rights of members to ask questions and the establishment of committees but also at the powers that this Assembly has over Cabinet and the Governor in Council. It is rather ridiculous that the Parliament has the right to disallow, for instance, a regulation, and Cabinet can introduce exactly the same regulation and the Parliament has to go through the same procedure again.

The Government seems to be in some confusion. The Leader of the House moved the following motion—

> "That the House will, this day, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders as recommended by the Standing Orders Committee."

I imagine that that is at least Cabinet policy or Government policy and that it is desirable that at this stage we, as an Assembly, consider these amendments. A back-bencher—no doubt he wants to get into Cabinet—intends to move that instead of our having the right to consider these amendments, the bulk of them, the important ones, should be referred back to the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr Hewitt: The important ones are not in the report that you are considering now.

Mr WRIGHT: A number of them are. The Minister might be able to tell me why there is this confusion and conflict. Where is the consulation? Or is there confrontation in the Government? Where is the power of the Leader of the House in this instance? On behalf of the Government, he said, "That is what we want to do." Now a back-bencher is saying, "That is not what we want to do." The real test will be whether this motion will be accepted. Regardless of whether the Leader of the House went fishing, he might find himself in the same boat as the Minister for Commerce and Industry (Mr Sullivan) and the Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs (Mr Tomkins). Some people might be out to undermine the Leader of the House. His position in Cabinet is certainly in question. It will be a real test to see who is running the Government—whether it is the Premier.

I believe that in this instance the member for Isis (Mr Powell) is nothing more than the spokesman for the Premier. He is the one who has been opposing changes to the Standing Rules and Orders of this House; he is the one who has been frustrating the Standing Orders Committee; and he is the one who wants to stop members of Parliament from having any say. So the real test will be not whether the motion moved by the Leader of the House is carried but whether the amendment circulated by the member for Isis is accepted by the House, or at least by the National Party.

If the Liberals are fair dinkum about doing something about this matter, the test will be whether or not they want to proceed. Member after member has stood up and said that this is a matter of urgency because we want to direct this House—and, therefore, the Standing Orders Committee—to consider other matters. A time limit has even been put on it. The test will be whether or not the Liberal Party will support the procrastinating amendment circulated by the member for Isis.

As I said earlier, two specific points raised by the member for Mt Gravatt are worth while. However, he has not gone far enough. Naturally, the Opposition would be inclined to support those two points, because numerous members, including the Leader of the Opposition, have spoken in favour of them. In suggesting that the honourable member for Mt Gravatt has not gone far enough, I move a further amendment, which has now been circulated, at least to the table staff, to some Opposition members and also to Government members. I move—

"At the end of the motion add the words—

'and that this House require the Standing Orders Committee to immediately formulate recommendations to further amend the Standing Rules and Orders—

(a) to enable greater use of committees including a public accounts committee and a public works committee;

(b) to provide for regular private members' days;

(c) to simplify the Standing Rules and Orders to enable members to introduce and proceed with private members' Bills;

(d) to provide for a regular grievance debate;

(e) to prevent Cabinet or the Governor in Council from reintroducing proclamations, Orders in Council, regulations or rules disallowed by the Legislative Assembly;

and accordingly require that committee to present to this House such recommendations so formulated and any other recommendations on such other matters as it may choose to further consider on or before the 15th day of November 1982 for consideration by the House before rising for the 1982 Christmas recess.'"

In speaking to the specific matters in that amendment, I point out that the first two matters—(a) and (b)—are, with the slight addition of a public works committee, in line with the points put forward by the Liberals. I suggest that it is not just the member for Mt Gravatt (Mr Scassola) who has put forward that amendment. He has already been supported by a number of his Liberal colleagues. I recommend that they support at least those two provisions.

Because of their knowledge, the Liberals would appreciate the problms that exist in the introduction and processing of private members' Bills in this House. Because of his understanding of Standing Orders, the honourable member for Greenslopes, a Liberal, would certainly appreciate those problems.

Some time ago we had two distinct recommendations and pieces of advice by Clerks of this Parliament. I am not casting aspertions on the Clerks, because they have the right of interpretation. Before his retirement, one Clerk said that private members' Bills ought to be introduced in a certain way. By the time a private member's Bill was introduced by the Opposition, the Assembly had a different Clerk who said that it ought to be done another way. It was a costly and very unfortunate exercise for the Opposition, and that ought not to continue.

We ought not to have to set up some sort of select committee when a member wants to move a private member's Bill—a select committee that can bring down a recommendation in total opposition to the original motion or suggestion put forward by the private member. We ought not to have to spend something like $1,200 in order to have a proposed Bill printed. We ought not to have to pay hundreds and hundreds of dollars to advertise throughout Queensland and specific areas that the Bill might affect. We ought not to have the Government organising a select committee when it has a major control on the members of that committee. A private member's Bill ought to be what it says: something that a private member of this Assembly may introduce in the interests of his constituents or in the interests of this State. Therefore, it is vitally important that (c) as put forward be supported.

Honourable members would all agree to have a regular grievance debate. The concept of an Adjournment debate has been effective. With all due respect to the Leader of the House, I suggest that to have such an Adjournment debate sometimes at half past one on Wednesday morning—at the earliest, it may be 10.30 on Tuesday evening—is not always in the best interests of the member speaking, of the Assembly, of the people of Queensland or of the issue in question. Seeing we depend so much on the media, we need to enable the points raised by members—surely they are matters of great importance,

otherwise they would not be brought before the House—to be canvassed publicly. Therefore, we need greater opportunity. Perhaps the private members' day will overcome that.

I have spoken at some length about the problems of the disallowance motions, problems that create the anomaly that we in this Assembly, by way of majority agreement, can say we will not support a regulation that a department might have proposed. Yet a Government through its Cabinet, through what is called the Governor in Council, can reintroduce that same regulation. While these matters are being discussed, something ought to be done about the iniquitous situation that provides that before the Assembly has even seen that regulation it can become law, can become applicable and can have a punitive effect on the persons affected by it. All honourable members know that if the Parliament is in recess from November to April and a regulation is brought down in December, it can have immediate affect and the Parliament can do nothing about it until it has been tabled in the House, sometimes four or six months later. That ought not to continue.

So it is important that the Standing Orders Committee should be requested, directed or required to consider the matters that the Liberal member for Mt Gravatt has raised, to consider the points that I have raised and, as I have said, other matters as it may choose to further consider. The report before us is the result of long-term deliberations and some hard negotiations. However, it does not provide everything that is needed for the Parliament to be effective. So we must ensure that further deliberations and consultations take place to provide further input. I ask members to seriously consider the recommendation that I put forward by way of amendment. I will not have the opportunity to speak on this matter again, so I ask all honourable members to totally oppose the foreshadowed motion to be moved by the member for Isis which seeks to refer some of the matters that have already been dealt with over a long period back to the Standing Orders Committee. The test certainly will be on the Liberals in this matter. They get up here and they grandstand on so many things, but when the test comes by way of votes they disappear.

Mr Prentice: What about you?

Mr WRIGHT: No, the Opposition stands by what it says. At least there is a certainty about members of the Opposition; we stand and say what we mean and carry it out. We do not go shopping, as the member for Sherwood has done, or say publicly that we are unaware of a matter, as he did at the time of the amendments to the Justices Act. We do not have other members of the Liberal Party supporting recommendations in the House and then publicly opposing them. At least the public knows where Opposition members stand. That is probably the only characteristic that I like about the Premier: at least everybody knows what he thinks; he is certainly consistent in his hard-line attitude to try to undermine the powers of the Parliament. At least we know where he stands, but it seems in this instance we do not know where the Government stands.

One of the up-and-comings to Cabinet, the member for Isis (Mr Powell) has foreshadowed that he will put forward another recommendation that all matters be referred back to the Standing Orders Committee. That is not acceptable, certainly to me and other members of the Opposition. As the member for Port Curtis said, much hard work was done on that report and at least we should accept the compromises that it puts forward. Admittedly, in many instances compromises are what they are. It has almost been a case of giving a little to get something. I do not agree with some things but at least we will have gained some changes which may make the Assembly more effective.

I urge all members of Parliament to consider the amendment I have put forward on behalf of the Opposition which provides for the completion of the first stage of the amendments and recommended changes and then requires the Standing Orders Committee to proceed to the second stage.

Hon. W. D. HEWITT (Greenslopes—Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services) (3.54 p.m.): I would have thought that the member for Rockhampton, after spending 13 years in this Parliament, would have known a little more of its workings. In the early part of his speech he demonstrated an abysmal ignorance. He cannot understand or comprehend the fact that the Leader of the House moves a motion and a private member brings forward an amendment. He sees that as some great clash between the Government and the Government parties.

Apparently he does not understand that the document being debated this afternoon is not brought forward at the initiation of the Government, rather it is brought forward by the Standing Orders Committee, and it is now in the possession of the Parliament and it is for the Parliament, in a corporate sense, to consider it and vote upon its contents. Therefore, the action of the member for Mt Gravatt is totally comprehensible, and it should be totally comprehensible to any other person who claims to have some understanding of the workings of the Parliament.

Mr Wright: Are you supporting Mr Powell?

Mr HEWITT: I will make a judgment upon that later on, but once again I understand his right to move that amendment. The member for Rockhampton does not seem to be able to grasp even that small fact.

It is a melancholy fact that in my 17th year in this Parliament I have the first opportunity this afternoon to debate the Standing Orders of this House.

Mr Vaughan: And a reflection on the Government.

Mr HEWITT: It is a reflection on the whole of the Queensland Parliament, and is a matter that should be put right.

The Standing Orders are the rules by which we should operate, and we should therefore have the opportunity to address ourselves to them at very frequent intervals, possibly as often as once a year. But certainly it has been far too long since they have been debated. I asked the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations, who has now been a member for over 25 years and who is a heart-beat away from being the father of the House, how often the Standing Orders have been debated in his time. He recalled one occasion only in the very early years of his career, and that is how long it has been since we have had the opportunity to discuss the Standing Orders. Not good enough! We must put that right.

One must join issue with the irascible Deputy Leader of the Opposition who says, "The Standing Orders Committee has brought forward this report and we must therefore, in good faith, adopt all of its recommendations." That is a nonsense thing. His argument is that we should adopt them all, and that is a nonsense thing. I repeat that the Standing Orders Committee has worked in good faith and has brought forward a responsible document, but it is now our possession and not the committee's, and if we choose to adopt it outright, if we choose to amend it, or if we choose to reject it in toto, that is our decision, and that does not reflect on the Standing Orders Committee.

What are we about? We must surely be about creating a contemporary Parliament. With the best will in the world this is not a contemporary Parliament, and we must be in the business of dragging it, screaming if necessary, into the 20th century. A contemporary Parliament is one where private members are given maximum opportunity to question the executive arm of government and bring it constantly to account. That is what a contemporary Parliament is all about, and that means that we need to be constantly in the business of expanding the rights of private members. That is what we should be about, and if these amendments put us upon that track this afternoon then I am well pleased. But I am bound to say that some of the recommendations fall far short of my expectations and the report is totally silent upon some of my expectations. The amendment of the honourable member for Mt Gravatt will, I hope, lead me to the realisation of some of those expectations.

I believe that the member for Rockhampton finds it hard to wear that a Liberal member will bring forward an amendment with the expectation that it may be supported. That honourable member's amendment is a rehash of the basic sentiment of the honourable member for Mt Gravatt with a little bit more embellishment to give it the pretence of being another amendment. It is not. It is a nonsense exercise and a political exercise on a sad occasion when we should be moving away from political stances. My attitude is that the amendment is nothing more than an embellishment of the very responsible amendment we had from the honourable member for Mt Gravatt.

Without taking up too much time, I dwell upon one sad feature of this House which I have long lamented upon, and that is the appalling charade and facade we call question-time. We should be ashamed of it, and anything we do to entrench the present

procedures should be rejected out of hand. I do not believe that any time of the Parliament should have to be taken up with questions on notice, either by way of asking or by way of answering. The process should be that the questions are tabled, the answers are tabled, and Parliament each day gets on to the business of the day. We should have only questions without notice asked verbally. Then there would be no reason to quantify, to restrict a member to two questions a day. My proposition is that no member should ask a second question until every other member has had an opportunity to ask one question. If time remains, Mr Speaker could give members an opportunity to ask a second, third or fourth question.

I am bound to say that I am ashamed at the charade that we call question-time. I hope that we may be rid of it as soon as possible.

I applaud the fact that the Standing Orders Committee has at last been activated. I draw solace from the fact that it commits itself to further consideration. I look with expectation to the amendment moved by the honourable member for Mt Gravatt. I hope that this House can become a little more conscious of its proceedings, forms and the way in which it works, so that people may understand a little more of the Standing Orders.

When I came to Parliament in 1966, Ted Walsh, Les Diplock, Jack Duggan, Sir William Knox, and Jack Pizzey had a wonderful working knowledge of Standing Orders. They were great disciplinarians of Mr Speaker himself. If they thought that he erred they did not hesitate to take a point of order to draw his attention to it. I believe that all honourable members have an obligation to possess a better working knowledge of the Standing Orders.

I compliment the committee on the work it has done. I hope that it will continue to work in proper earnest and that, ultimately, we will have the opportunity and privilege of working in a Parliament that can be described as being contemporary.

Mr MOORE (Windsor) (4.2 p.m.): It will not take me long to say what I want to say. I do not agree with any amendments of the Standing Orders. They have stood the test of time. By the same token, I do not agree with the Sessional Orders that are introduced. I see no reason for any changes. The whole thing is presently within the command of Parliament. If Parliament is of a mind it can do anything. Any of the things that members are asking for can be done by way of a simple motion that so much of the Standing Orders be suspended so as to allow so-and-so to happen.

We could have whatever Standing Orders we liked. If it is not Parliament's wish—and that is a numbers game—that something should happen it will not happen irrespective of what Standing Orders have to say about it, because they can always be suspended. If Opposition members have not got that fixed in their heads there is something wrong with them. There is no need for change. Anything can be done at the will of the House.

All the talk about a public accounts committee and other committees amounts to nothing. It simply makes it easy for the Opposition to engage in humbug, poppycock and hypocrisy. If the situation were reversed and the ALP became the Government these things would give us as an Opposition the chance to engage in humbug, poppycock, hypocrisy, finesse and all the other things that come about when provisions are written into the Standing Orders. I am opposed to any change. Anyone who cannot see the logic in the few short words I have said must have something wrong with him.

Mr SHAW (Wynnum) (4.4 p.m.): I second the amendment moved by the honourable member for Rockhampton. In doing so, I do not intend to take up too much time. It grieves me that we have spent so long on the debate without getting to debate the contents of the report.

I understand your concern, Mr Speaker, or the difficulty you had when confronted with the amendment moved by the member for Mt Gravatt. The position that we find ourselves in at the present time, which can only be described as a shemozzle, indicates the urgent need to amend our Standing Orders.

I am concerned that the rules and procedures of this Parliament are frequently used as an example to schoolchildren who sit in the gallery to watch the proceedings in the Chamber. If they were present now, they would be seeing one example of how not to

conduct a meeting. As Mr Speaker has said, there is considerable doubt as to whether he should have accepted the first amendment. There would be no doubt in anybody's mind that Mr Speaker was motivated to accept it because of the need to have a discussion on those matters which would not be permitted formally in a consideration of the report and because of the difficulties that exist in this House for members to bring matters forward for discussion.

The member for Windsor said that methods are available to bring matters forward for discussion, and there is an element of truth in that. At that time I heard somebody interject, "All you need is the numbers." That is right, but in a democracy a little more than that is needed. An opportunity is needed——

Mr Moore: Democracy is all numbers.

Mr SHAW: No, it is not. An opportunity is needed for so-called individual members of the Liberal Party who always seem to vote by coincidence and good fortune in accordance with a preconceived plan. Members of the Opposition need the opportunity to bring forward matters for discussion even though they do not have the numbers. They represent a significant proportion of the population of this State. For that reason alone they should be afforded that opportunity.

The amendment moved by the member for Rockhampton clarifies the position. It does not in any way conflict with the suggestions put forward by the Liberal Party representative. There is no reason why they should not accept the amendment put forward by the member for Rockhampton. If they do not, they will be making another attempt to cloud the issue and taking away some of the limelight for action that they feel they may be forced to take on later amendments. I refer particularly to the notification that we have received that some of the very important clauses included in the recommendation, to wit the updating of question-time, are to be deleted from the report. That will certainly involve a question of numbers. I do not think that an opportunity should be given to members to vote against the inclusion of those clauses in the report. They should not be given the opportunity to offer some sort of platitude as to why they were forced to do that.

It was interesting to hear the member for Sherwood say that the views put forward were those of individuals and that the Liberal Party had not put forward submissions as a party.

Mr Gygar: That is not what he said at all.

Mr SHAW: If he did not say that, I apologise. I certainly got that impression. I gained the impression that he was saying that members of his party put forward submissions that never reached that committee and were not considered by the committee. I hope he is not saying that.

Mr Innes: I am not saying that.

Mr SHAW: I am very pleased to hear that he is not suggesting that.

Members of the Liberal Party had an opportunity to make submissions, either as a party or as individuals, and those submissions were considered by the Standing Orders Committee. I am informed that those matters were taken back repeatedly to the Standing Orders Committee.

It is interesting to recall the points that were made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The report contains many recommendations about which he and the Opposition as a whole are not entirely happy. However, he and the Opposition felt constrained to accept those recommendations at this stage because they were one step along the way towards obtaining greater democracy in, and some improvement in the procedures of, the House.

It seems that certain members are trying to frustrate that ambition. It seems that their only desire is to make sure that the House wastes time in this debate and that the debate continue at some time in the future without any positive results.

The honourable member for Sherwood said that a minority report should have been submitted. It is nonsense to suggest that if Opposition members, or anybody else, had put forward their views in a minority report, Government members would have supported it on the floor of the Parliament. Repeatedly Government members have made it quite clear that, no matter how good they consider an Opposition suggestion to be, they will not support it.

I can recall the occasion on which the Leader of the Opposition moved a motion not in line with the Labor Party's policy but in line entirely with the Liberal Party policy. His motion gave Liberal members an opportunity to vote for what they claimed to be their policy. Yet they refused to do so, simply because the motion came from the Opposition side of the House. At that time a certain Cabinet Minister said, "I don't care how good the Opposition's suggestions are, you don't have the right to expect the Government to vote in favour of them." And the honourable member for Sherwood has the cheek to say that Opposition members should have submitted a minority report and that the Government would have given it due consideration!

Mr Innes: What I said was that if any strong exception was taken to the report there should have been a minority report.

Mr SHAW: The realities are that if there is to be any chance whatever of improving the procedures of this Parliament, such as at question-time, there will have to be a compromise. It is to the credit of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and other members of the committee that they were prepared to compromise and to come forward with a proposal that is likely to gain the support of all members and, at the same time, achieve some positive results.

As someone said, Parliament has the right to reject the report. However, that is not saying that there was not a responsibility on the members of the committee to come forward with something that they believed would not give an opportunity to members to bail out saying, "We won't have a bar of any of it, because we object to some particular portion of it."

What we seem to be seeing today, and what Opposition members fear, is Liberal members indulging once again in a face-saving operation that is designed to take the heat off and to draw attention away from the fact that once again they will vote against something for which they have loudly proclaimed their support.

I hope that I will be proved wrong. I hope that a sufficient number of members will reject any proposed amendment to the motion designed to prevent discusion on any section of the report.

An amendment that will have precisely that result has been circulated. It will have the effect not of giving members an opportunity to vote against something to which they object but of not even bringing the report before the House for consideration. If members of the Liberal Party vote in favour of the amendment to the motion, they are saying that they do not want the report to be considered by this Parliament. They will be denying members an opportunity to voice an opinion and to vote on the report. It would seem that once again the Liberal Party members are endeavouring to ease their conscience.

Mr Innes: Get on and talk about the Standing Orders, what you like and what you don't like.

Mr SHAW: I hope that the honourable member for Sherwood will support the amendment moved by the honourable member for Rockhampton. I hope that we will get that amendment out of the way and then move quickly to deal with the recommendations in the report.

Mr AKERS (Pine Rivers) (4.15 p.m.): In his oration, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that we must accept the report of the Standing Orders Committee without the slightest deviation. The honourable member for Wynnum has told us that we should support the amendment moved by the honourable member for Rockhampton. Opposition members should cut out all the grandstanding and tell us what they want.

The honourable member for Mt Gravatt has moved an amendment that embraces a couple of important matters that were not covered by the committee. He considers that they are urgent matters. Possibly if the honourable member had discussed the wording of his amendment with me, I would have suggested some changes, but I will support the amendment as moved.

I shall speak briefly on the report. Honourable members have talked for a long time but they have not actually discussed the report in detail. I will leave my comments on the actual details of the report until we discuss each item in Committee.

First of all, on a general note, I wish to congratulate the Standing Orders Committee on the way in which it has presented its report. The report is set out in such a way that honourable members can understand it very easily. For those members who have not bothered to read the report, I point out that the proposed omissions from the Standing Orders are shown in underlined type and the insertions are shown in black type. That is the way in which reports should be prepared. I also think that that is the way in which legislation should be introduced into this Chamber. Instead of introducing amendments to amend previous amendments, the Government should introduce whole new clauses. It should deal with legislation in the same way as the Standing Orders Committee has dealt with this report. It is an excellent report.

Apart from Mr Speaker and possibly the Chairman of Committees, I believe that the membership of the Standing Orders Committee should be changed. I have said before that the present members of the committee are too busy. Also, some of them have a vested interest in the way in which this Parliament works. Ministers or senior members of the Opposition should not be members of the Standing Orders Committee. The Committee should meet regularly to consider proposals that are put before it regularly. It need not necessarily make recommendations or reports, but it should meet regularly so that there is a constant watch over what is happening and a constant review of the Sessional and Standing Orders to see whether they should be changed. In that way back-bench members of the Parliament would be able to vet what is happening all the time.

After this report is either adopted or rejected, another motion should be moved to change the membership of the Standing Orders Committee. It should be a private members' committee, and include Mr Speaker and possibly the Chairman of Committees.

The Danish Parliament, the Folketing, which is based on the Westminster system, has a Standing Orders Committee of 21 members, and it works quite well. It does more than just look at the actual rules. I have some notes on it, and I shall go into greater detail later.

When I first became a member of this Parliament I thought that the member for Rockhampton was a good speaker, but he has become more strident, and I am sorry to say that his speaking ability has deteriorated. He used to make good contributions. Today he moved an amendment which I think is out of order, but that is a matter for you, Mr Speaker. It was done purely in an attempt to put the member for Mt Gravatt and his proposal in a different light in the public eye. Constantly today the ALP has been playing politics with this matter. It should be a matter for Parliament alone and not for party politics.

Mr Burns: That is not what the Liberal Whip said.

Mr AKERS: The Liberal Whip and I do not always agree. That is why the member for Townsville is between us.

A sincere proposal has been put forward by the member for Mt Gravatt and we have heard sincere discussion on it by other members of the Parliament. It concerns me that the member for Woodridge, in opening the debate on behalf of the ALP, consistently referred to the ALP having caucused on this matter and of having made decisions on the report of the Standing Orders Committee. He kept referring to the Westminster system.

There is no party-political involvement in the running of Parliament at Westminster. Either he has not been there to study it or he is trying to confuse or mislead the House. The system of control in Westminster is totally devoid of party-political influence. The Deputy Speaker is a member of the Labor Party and he is just as independent as the Speaker of that Parliament. The Standing Orders Committee evolves from the Speaker's office. It is a system that works extremely well. It belong to Parliament. It does not belong to one party. Parties do not make decisions on what happens there. The member for Woodridge has shown his entire lack of understanding of the Westminster system, which a few others here seem to ignore at times, merely invoking it when they want to.

The Westminster system is terribly vague. It is not set down in detail in any place. Not even in Erskine May is it clearly set out. There is a procedure—there is a feeling—that keeps the Standing Orders Committee and the Speaker's position totally independent.

The member for Woodridge kept saying that members of the Government back bench intended to rat on the decision. I do not quite know what he means by ratting on the decision of the committee.

Mr Moore: On what decision?

Mr AKERS: He was talking about the decision of the committee. How back-bench members of the Liberal Party—or of the Government, as he said—can rat on a decision that they were not involved in—a decision that a committee made—does not make sense to me.

He kept on reporting to caucus, he said. Finally, he said he expected that Parliament would pass this report. I have shown the total division of the Labor Party on this matter. I ask them to act as parliamentarians.

One member of the Opposition kept asking the member for Mt Gravatt, "Who was your representative?" I had every member of that committee as my representative—not the leader of the Liberal Party, not the Speaker and not, as an individual, the Leader of the Opposition. Every member of that committee was my representative as a member of the Parliament. I expected them to act as parliamentarians. I did not expect them to get instructions from their parties. Obviously the Labor Party tried to instruct its delegates on the committee.

Mr Moore: They even caucused in the CPA meetings.

Mr AKERS: Yes. They cannot understand it when members of the Liberal Party act as individual members of Parliament. They cannot comprehend it. It is beyond their ability to understand that a parliamentarian can be a person and not tied up in the way the ALP ties up its members.

Mr Innes: Would you agree that, under their version, "private members' day" would be a misnomer? They really should be called Opposition days?

Mr AKERS: They do not have private members in the ALP. They are one great amorphous mass, incapable of acting independently. They are tied up. They have signed their lives away. Each one of them has signed a document binding him to the rules of the party.

Later I will go into some detail, but the amendment moved by the member for Mt Gravatt does not block the proposal put forward by the committee, which is what the members for Woodridge and Rockhampton implied. I really could not understand what the member for Wynnum was saying, because he wandered all over the place. The amendment provides that in addition to the recommendations of the committee, and in addition to their being discussed in Committee, the Parliament believes that it should have the opportunity to discuss these other matters and asks the Standing Orders Committee to produce an early report on them.

In passing I mention the Folketing, the Danish Parliament, where I recently spent some time. Because the members there spoke Danish, obviously I did not understand very much of the proceedings, but I gained many details from the information secretary of that establishment. I was amazed that after more than 80 years the proceedings of that Parliament are still very closely based on the Westminster system. That Parliament has a very effective committee system, which is the sort of system I want to see established here. That Parliament has 23 committees and its Standing Orders Committee comprises up to 21 members and does more than consider Standing Orders; it deals with many other things, such as the appointment of the public auditor. So instead of the Government appointing its equivalent to our Auditor-General, the Standing Orders Committee makes the appointment.

That Parliament's committee of scrutineers considers whether elections have been held fairly and spends a great deal of time sorting out disputes. Perhaps the matter I raised this morning would go to that sort of a committee. That Parliament also has a public works and transport committee and one that deals with taxes and duties. However, the most important one, and the one that is relevant to this debate, is the finance committee.

Recently the British Parliament introduced an excellent committee system. Under it the committee has power to call before it officers of Government departments for thorough questioning on expenditure. The committee system virtually runs the Parliament, which is an excellent system. So I support the amendment moved by the member for Mt Gravatt. I asked some senior back-benchers from both sides of the British Parliament just how effective the committee system is and what it costs. They informed me the cost is approximately £4m. At first I thought that would preclude the introduction of such a

system in Queensland, but I then asked how much money was saved. They told me that it saved at least three times its annual cost by scrutinising and thoroughly checking the activities of the various departments.

Later I will deal more fully with some of the points raised in the report of the Standing Orders Committee. For the present I wish to correct one contention that has been put forward by several members. I have before me the order paper for the House of Commons for 6 May of this year. Some members have mentioned the marvellous questions system that the House of Commons is supposed to have. One good provision is that a quarter of an hour is set aside for questions asked solely of the Prime Minister. But of the 33 questions on notice for the Prime Minister on that day, 21 asked her to list her appointments for that day. So a subterfuge is being practised the whole time to try to make the British system work. Let us not look at the British system and say, "We will copy that exactly", because it does not work.

Question No. 1 to the Prime Minister was from Mr Lawrence Cunliff of Leigh, who asked the Prime Minister if she would list her official engagements for 6 May, that day. The listing of that question then allows supplementary questions on any subject at all. So let us not say the Westminster system works perfectly; it does not. We must look at the Standing Orders in relation to this Parliament and Queensland as a whole.

I will be supporting the amendment moved by the member for Mt Gravatt and the motion moved by the Minister.

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (4.31 p.m.): During this debate Opposition members have spent most of their time trying to rubbish this Parliament. I think it was the member for Wynnum who said that he was ashamed to bring schoolchildren into the gallery. I do not think this Parliament has anything to be ashamed of; many of our procedures are quite all right.

I particularly want to address myself to the subject of question-time because in an emotive atmosphere some people are trying to create a question-time that just will not work. If all questions were asked without notice we would have a shambles. We should not be placed in the position in which questions are not quantified.

I heard the comments of the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services, who is always a great man for change—even change for change's sake. I hasten to add that I say that without malice. I would certainly oppose his suggestion that all questions be without notice and that they not be quantified. At present a member can nominate whether his question is with or without notice. If I ask a question that I believe needs a good, solid answer that should be researched, I prefer to put it on notice.

Mr Mackenroth: Why have you got to read it? Why can't it just be recorded in "Hansard"?

Mr BOOTH: I can see nothing wrong with that.

This afternoon Opposition members made great play about the practices adopted in other Parliaments. What about the Parliament in our neighbouring State of New South Wales? How many questions are answered in that Parliament? I suggest that it is less than 60 per cent, and that is what will happen if we adopt the suggestions of the Minister for Environment. At least we are guaranteed that questions will be answered within 24 hours unless the Minister gives a good reason why a question cannot be answered within that time.

Contrast that practice with what happens in the Labor-controlled Parliaments that we have been told about this afternoon. We have been told what wonderful Parliaments they are. We were told, at least by implication, that Opposition members are ashamed to bring people into the gallery but they would not be ashamed to do so in other State Parliaments. I do not agree with them. We should be proud of the Queensland Parliament.

I am prepared to accept some alterations to the format of question-time. I see nothing wrong with a member's being allowed to ask only two questions; in fact, I think three might be a little generous. But I am not prepared to give away the right to put questions on notice so that we can receive a properly researched answer.

Mr Vaughan: Haven't you read the report?

Mr BOOTH: Yes, I have read the report. I am supporting its recommendations because a lot of members opposite are opposing them.

It is essential that we kill once and for all any suggestion that our right to nominate the way our questions are to be answered should be taken away from us. I am not prepared to accept that. This afternoon I rose to explain my position, not to rubber-stamp every proposal.

As to the procedures of this House—although there is nothing wrong with them, equally there is nothing wrong with making an occasional change. The people who formulated the procedures were not fools. They devoted a lot of work to them, and they have stood the test of time.

This afternoon some honourable members have tried to rubbish them and have claimed that we could go much further. Our present parliamentary procedures have not worked too badly. I do not want to throw them away in a hurry. I rose to defend my attitude to questions, the right to nominate the method of asking questions and the right of Ministers to give a properly researched answer. That is what most Ministers want to do, try to do, and do.

Hon. J. W. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove) (4.36 p.m.): I confess that I am a little confused about where we stand procedurally. It is very important that we move forward today. I hope that we get into the Committee stage as quickly as possible so that we may pass some substantive resolutions.

As I understand it, it is only by a substantive resolution that we can change the Standing Orders. At present, we are debating a procedural motion moved by the Leader of the House and some amendments that have been foreshadowed to that procedural motion. Honourable members may think that by passing those amendments we will achieve something. I must say that, in my respectful view, we achieve nothing by doing so, because a procedural motion cannot be turned into a substantive motion simply by tacking some words onto it.

Let me look at the words: The honourable member for Isis wants to adopt some of the recommendations of the Standing Orders Committee and send some others back for further consideration. The honourable member for Mt Gravatt, particularly, wants the Standing Orders Committee to consider provisions for a public accounts committee and private members' Bills and the honourable member for Rockhampton wants much the same sort of thing. It is important that some of these results be achieved.

Honourable members may think that simply by agreeing to the amendment to be moved by the member for Isis we will achieve those results but, in my submission, we will not. On a glance at the words in that proposed amendment it is obvious that they do not even purport to make substantive change. They are prospective words that simply say that we are passing the amendment to this procedural motion with the intention of doing something in the future; adopting certain amendments in the future. They are prospective words that are totally unable to achieve the objectives that the honourable member for Isis and perhaps a number of other members want.

If I am wrong, what then? If I am wrong, and if the amendment to be moved by the member of Isis does have some effect, what effect would it have? The original motion moved by the Leader of the House refers to the recommendations of the Standing Orders Committee. On page 4, at the top of the page, the Standing Orders Committee inserted the sub-heading "Omissions in underlined typed; Insertions in Black type." If the effect of Mr Powell's proposed amendment is, as it were, to pass the omissions in the underlined type and to refer back to the Standing Orders Committee those insertions printed in black type—and that is what his proposed amendment says—in some instances, a hiatus is created. The situation is created in which the existing words in Standing Orders, the ones underlined, are being repealed, and the new words in Standing Orders, the ones in black type, are not being enacted because they are being sent back to the committee. That seems to be as clear as crystal. What sort of a mess will we get ourselves into then? To make that point good I refer the House to the top of page 6.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr GREENWOOD: I have only five minutes. The Leader of the Opposition was kind enough to give me five minutes when he had the call, and I do not want to accept too many interjections.

At the top of page 6, Standing Order No. 69, is underlined. It is to be repealed.

The proposed Standing Order 69, headed "General Rules for Questions", under Mr Powell's amendment, will be referred back to the committee, and the Parliament will not have it for some indefinite time. Presumably, this House will operate without rules for questions. Exactly the same thing can be said with respect to the proposed Standing Order No. 70. It states—

> "70. In answering a Question, a Member shall not Debate the matter to which the Question refers."

Are we to repeal that before enacting the proposed Standing Order 70 below it? Does that mean that during this interregnum we are going to be able to debate all questions? That is nonsense. I will not labour the point.

At the top of page 8 of the report, exactly the same remarks can be applied to 137. At the bottom of page 9 of the report, exactly the same remarks can be applied to 236. There are other faults in the report.

The proposed Standing Order 109 is grossly ungrammatical. Surely to goodness we can do a bit better than that. On page 7, Standing Order 109 states—

> "No Member shall speak for more than forty minutes at a time in any Debate in the House except on a direct Motion of Want of Confidence . "

and so on. It continues with the splendid amendment that presumably we will be asked to pass. It states—

> "or on the Second Reading of a Bill when a Member may speak for no more than 30 minutes:"

What it says is that no member shall speak for more than 40 minutes except in special circumstances. One would expect it to go on to say, "Then he can speak for 50 or 60 minutes." It does not say that at all. It says, "On the special occasion when you may speak for more than forty minutes, you must speak for less; i.e. no more than thirty minutes." It is nonsense. It is badly drawn. It is ridiculous. The quicker that we get into Committee and sort out all those matters, the better. We will not achieve anything by passing Mr Powell's motion. As a matter of law, we could get ourselves into a situation in which in many important respects we no longer have valid Standing Orders.

Mr CASEY (Mackay—Leader of the Opposition) (4.42 p.m.): As a driving force of this Parliament for a long time to update the Standing Orders, I was absolutely disgusted with the debate this afternoon. It was totally unnecessary. Two and a half hours were spent debating what should be a standard procedural motion of this Parliament. I think that is what the member for Ashgrove has just said. The procedural motion should have been adopted straight away. After that anybody could have discussed the various amendments to the Standing Orders at the Committee stage.

I was also disgusted with some of the speakers in the debate. It was obvious that very few speakers had properly looked at the Standing Orders or the report of the Standing Orders Committee. They had not taken the trouble to peruse "Hansard" to see what occurs when Standing Orders of this Parliament are amended and the way in which to go about it. In 1958 an amendment to a Standing Order was introduced. It related to one aspect of speaking times. It was decided to tidy up that Standing Order. That was done. The matter was discussed by the Standing Orders Committee. The members of the committee reached unanimity in their report. The report was tabled. It was immediately moved that the report be agreed upon. Debate ensued and it passed through the Assembly straight away. It was as simple as that. All the hassles were removed beforehand.

I would be the first to admit that one of the problems experienced by the Standing Orders Committee is that a long time has elapsed since a report was last presented to the Parliament by a Standing Orders Committee. The last time was in 1962. Mr Speaker, the report prepared by the committee under your chairmanship is clearly set out as the first report of the Standing Orders Committee. The committee was established under a charter given to us by this Parliament in March 1981, at which time the first meeting was held.

When Parliament resumed in August 1981 I endeavoured as quickly as possible to present a report that would eliminate the necessity to bring in Sessional Orders. The first thing to do was to write those Sessional Orders into the Standing Orders of the Parliament and then get on with the next job without the nonsense that usually takes places in the Parliament after a recess. However, that was not to be. The decision of the Standing

Orders Committee was that it deliberate further before a report was submitted. We deliberated further. Before Parliament rose for Christmas 1981, because I felt that the report had been compiled sufficiently, I endeavoured to have the report placed before Parliament. That, too, was not to be. Some members of the various political parties in this House, not the members of the Standing Orders Committee, objected. Their objections were taken back to the Standing Orders Committee and they were taken back to you, too, Mr Speaker. That is why we held another meeting and decided that we would not present a report prior to the Christmas recess.

Consequently, this year saw us follow the same procedure again. You will recall, Mr Speaker, that on the last day of the previous session I endeavoured to move that Standing Orders be suspended to allow the House to debate our report. At that time I felt it was necessary that Parliament resume this month with at least some reforms having been made. That is all the Opposition tried to achieve—some reforms.

I do not disagree with some of the comments made today. The Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administration Services said that he was trying to seek a "contemporary" Parliament. However, we will never get a contemporary Parliament if we continue to sit around and procrastinate as we are doing this afternoon. We will never get a contemporary Parliament if we continue to consider Standing Orders at the present slow rate.

Mr Miller: Playing with words.

Mr CASEY: I fully agree with the honourable member. That is all this Parliament has been doing so far. It has not even got into the meat of the report. The debate so far has been an absolute waste of time.

Mention has been made of caucusing and other things that went on. I would agree with the honourable member for Pine Rivers, who expressed the belief that every member of the Standing Orders Committee was his representative on that committee. I accept that. I would inform the honourable member that I believe that without exception every member of the committee acted as if he was the representative of all members of this Parliament. However, it is only natural that the Premier would be more aware than I was of the attitude of members of the National Party, just as I would be more aware than he was of the attitude of the members of the Labor Party. It follows from that that when it came to a point we would express an opinion on behalf of those whom we represent in this Parliament. It appears, however, that the only member of the committee who did not do that was the leader of the Liberal Party. The objections this afternoon are coming from the members of his party. It appears that he did not take back to his members a proper report of the proceedings of the Standing Orders Committee.

If in the future members of the Liberal Party would care to invite me to attend their meetings and to discuss Standing Orders with them, I would be quite happy to do so.

Mr Gygar interjected.

Mr CASEY: The member for Stafford puts on his best Charlie Chaplin grin. I assure him that he would get more information from me than he has been getting from his leader.

It has been claimed that no minority report was submitted. That is correct. As you will recall, Mr Speaker, various discussions became rather heated. Nevertheless, the committee decided that it would follow the forms of this Parliament and would ensure that we reached agreement at our meetings before we brought any recommendations to this Parliament. The ideas that were put forward were not your ideas or those of the Premier, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Chairman of Committees, mine or anybody else's; they were a compromise. That very important aspect has been missed by many members.

The report will not allow Parliament to be conducted in the way in which I would like it to be conducted. It does, however, provide for the best operation possible, in line with the views expressed by everybody concerned. But it is up to the Parliament to make the decision.

The word that I would use to describe the way in which honourable members have been behaving this afternoon is unparliamentary but Australian. However, I shall just say that there are six of them in an over and the last part of the word is the opposite of "down" That is really what happened here this afternoon.

A solution has to be found to the problems facing this Parliament, and I believe that it is to be found in this report. A further amendment has been moved this afternoon but it refers mainly to matters that the committee already has in hand.

Without revealing what happened at our committee meetings you, Mr Speaker, know that I raised the next matter that the committee is to consider. Certain matters are already being investigated by the Clerk of the Parliament, who is the committee secretary. Those matters include some of the questions raised by the member for Mt Gravatt and other honourable members. Those matters will be considered by the committee and included in subsequent reports to the Parliament.

If we are to get somewhere in amending our Standing Orders, we must do something today. We do not want to send all the matters back to the Standing Orders Committee so that they can be bashed round again. If we want the Parliament to work more satisfactorily, we have to do something. We do not want to wait another six months or nine months or until the next Parliament meets, and that is what will happen if these matters are referred back to the committee.

I am disappointed that the Premier and Deputy Premier, as the leaders of their parties, did not participate in this debate and tell Parliament exactly what I have said about what happened with the Standing Orders Committee.

I wish to thank you, Mr Speaker, for the part that you played on the committee. Initially, you were not warmly receptive to some of the matters that we were raising but, as we moved along, you recognised where we were going and what we were trying to achieve and you became a good chairman. The motion before the House is that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the amendments. I support the report and the motion. The sooner the motion is carried, the sooner we will get some changes in this Parliament.

I move—

"That the question be now put."

Question put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 23

Blake	Mackenroth	Wilson
Burns	McLean	Wright
Casey	Milliner	Yewdale
D'Arcy	Prest	
Davis	Shaw	
Eaton	Smith	
Fouras	Underwood	*Tellers:*
Gibbs, R. J.	Vaughan	Hansen
Hooper	Warburton	Kruger

Noes, 50

Ahern	Harper	Prentice
Akers	Hewitt	Randell
Austin	Innes	Row
Bertoni	Jennings	Scassola
Bird	Katter	Scott-Young
Bjelke-Petersen	Kaus	Simpson
Booth	Knox	Stephan
Borbidge	Kyburz	Sullivan
Doumany	Lane	Tomkins
Edwards	Lester	Turner
Elliott	Lickiss	Wharton
FitzGerald	McKechnie	White
Frawley	Menzel	
Gibbs, I. J.	Miller	
Glasson	Moore	
Goleby	Muntz	*Tellers:*
Greenwood	Nelson	Gygar
Gunn	Powell	Neal

Pairs:

Scott	Hinze
Jones	Warner

Resolved in the negative.

Dr SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (5 p.m.): I support the amendment moved by the honourable member for Mt Gravatt because I consider that it is time that a public accounts committee was established in this House. Every other Parliament has one.

In the near future, the administrative problems confronting the Parliament will be much greater. The escalation in the complexity of Government means that the Parliament has very little control over Government departments that endeavour to supply the Parliament with information. Recently the Auditor-General's Department, over which the Parliament has very little control, supplied incorrect information to the House. That is an example of what can happen when we depend upon one small section of the administration. A parliamentary public accounts committee should consider the audited accounts and balance sheets of all enterprises owned or controlled by the State or functioning on behalf of the State, the Auditor-General's Report, and balance sheets and other financial statements of the Government.

One weakness in a parliamentary public accounts system is that when the accounts are presented to the committee they usually are one or two years old. It is extremely difficult to have accounts put before a public accounts committee immediately. If a public accounts committee is established, that should be kept in mind so that its operation does not become like that of any other committee.

The Australian Senate has a number of extremely good committees, but they, too, suffer because of a delay in obtaining facts and figures. Other Parliaments that have established public accounts committees have fallen into the trap of not requiring a quick presentation of information. Public accounts committees also suffer because of a lack of time in which to sit and a lack of means of interrogation. However, the proposal to establish a public accounts committee is sound.

The House should not fall for political expediency of the type that we saw in recent months when the ALP moved to form a public accounts committee and the House as a whole voted against it. On this occasion we are not involved in party politics. We are sitting as a House that should determine its own affairs and register an apolitical vote.

Mr MILLER (Ithaca) (5.4 p.m.): As a member of the Standing Orders Committee, I support what is before the House today. The time devoted by the committee to a consideration of the proposals was not wasted, and the suggestions that it has put before the House are sensible and will allow the House to be a forum in which debate will take place with dignity and decorum.

The Chair has before it two amendments to the question being debated by the House. I want to deal with them. Firstly, I assure the honourable member for Mt Gravatt that I am just as interested in the Standing Orders Committee as he is, but I will not be supporting his amendment. I believe it is an insult to the committee. I am a very simple sort of a fellow—certainly not a legal man—but if any member of this Chamber can interpret the amendment as anything other than an insult, I would like to hear from him. It proposes to add to the motion the words—

> "This House is of the opinion that it should be given the opportunity to consider the greater use of committees including a public accounts committee and the provision of regular private members' days and accordingly requests the Standing Orders Committee to formulate recommendations thereon. "

I can only interpret that to mean that, unless the amendment is passed, this Parliament will not have the opportunity of considering the establishment of such a committee. I want to assure the House that such a proposal will most certainly be coming before the Parliament, but not because of an amendment such as this one. Mr Speaker made this quite clear on the inside of the first page of the report where he said—

> "The Committee still has before it a large number of proposals, all being carefully considered, and proposes to submit and recommend to the House further changes to the Standing Orders."

Why anybody should believe, after reading that quite clear statement by Mr Speaker, that we are not going to consider the Standing Orders further is beyond me. Perhaps somebody would like to explain it to me. As I said earlier, I am a very simple sort of fellow, but I interpret the amendment to mean that its supporters have no faith in the committee.

Mr Scassola: You would agree, wouldn't you, that the committee did have an opportunity to consider those matters during the recess, and it chose not to?

Mr MILLER: This is the first report of the committee. I hope it is the first of many. I hope that the committee is not to submit one or two reports and then disappear. I would like the Parliament to consider further reports, but when I see how members have considered the first report I am not so sure. It has been said a number of times this afternoon by members of the committee that as individuals they had to give way to achieve a consensus, but when I see what has happened this afternoon I wonder if any recommendations of the Standing Orders Committee will ever be accepted.

The first thing I want to do this afternoon is pay tribute to the Premier, the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for Port Curtis. Each in his own way has had to give way on his view of the Standing Orders, but we thought it was necessary to chop and change until there was a consensus. We have come before the Chamber today with recommendations which we hope members will accept, but all I have heard for most of the afternoon is that a proposal for the establishment of a public accounts committee has not been put up for consideration.

Mr Innes: What about Mr Powell's amendment?

Mr Wright: Will you support Mr Powell? That is the test.

Mr MILLER: I will not support the honourable member for Isis, not at all. I want the member for Isis, or the Minister for Commerce and Industry whom I have heard is now to move the amendment, to explain the reasons why they want proposed Standing Orders 67A, 69A, 69B, 69C, 70A and 108A deleted. I want to know why they want everything pulled out of that report other than——

Mr Powell: And at the right and correct time I will do that.

Mr MILLER: I am very pleased to hear that either the honourable member or the Minister will explain the reasons why he does not want these recommendations to come before the House.

Let us look at exactly what the recommendations are. What does the proposed Standing Order 67A mean? It means that members will have one hour in which to ask questions. The Commonwealth Parliament and the New South Wales Parliament do not have that restriction. I have mentioned those two because I do not want to be political in this argument. Neither of those Parliaments has the restriction of one hour, but they both have lists of unanswered questions. I do not believe that in our House of Parliament questions can be asked and ignored as they are in the Commonwealth and New South Wales Parliaments. We have restricted question-time to one hour to give honourable members an opportunity to ask questions that will be answered within 24 hours. I see nothing wrong with that. If any member wants to change that hour I hope he will give his reasons for doing so.

Mr Wharton interjected.

Mr MILLER: The Leader of the House just told me that nobody wants to do that.

Mr Wharton: The draft report does not say that that will be done.

Mr MILLER: I point out to the Minister that the amendment circulated by the honourable member for Isis proposes the withdrawal of Standing Order 67A.

Mr Powell: That has not yet been moved.

Mr MILLER: We are getting down to technicalities now. I thought that this place was a forum in which I could say anything about any matter that is before the House. Before me I have a piece of paper with the name of the honourable member for Isis

on it. It discloses that he wants all of these recommendations removed for further consideration. Surely no Parliament will say to a member of Parliament, "Although we know a matter is to come up for debate you cannot discuss it because you are speaking to it before it comes up."

I move now to proposed Standing Order 69. It says exactly what the House of Representatives Standing Order says and exactly what most other State Parliament Standing Orders say. Why cannot Queensland be like the House of Representatives? Why cannot Queensland act in the same way as every State in Australia? The proposed Standing Order provides protection for Ministers of the Crown and individuals in this Parliament. Surely if there is any constant complaint about this Parliament in the news media it concerns how low we can get at times in personal reflections. This proposal is designed to ensure that personal reflections do not occur, yet a recommendation is being made that the proposed Standing Order be withdrawn. I, for one, want personal reflections removed from this Chamber. We are here to debate legislation—to either accept or reject it in the interests of the people of Queensland. We are not here to be personal with individual members of Parliament.

Proposed Standing Order 69A is the most important of all the recommendations, because it gives members of this House, for the very first time, an opportunity to ask supplementary questions. For the life of me I cannot understand why a back-bench member of Parliament would want it removed. It was formulated to give every member of Parliament an opportunity to ask a Minister a supplementary question, at the discretion of Mr Speaker, for a period of one hour. I saw one Minister standing on the floor of the House of Commons being questioned for a whole hour. That seemed strange in the House of Commons, but it is standard procedure there. Yet we are contemplating withdrawing the proposal for further consideration. That recommendation is designed to give every member of Parliament a chance to ask questions.

When I think about it, questions have been answered in this House in a way that has not been satisfactory to the member who asked the question or to many other members who were present. But no member has had an opportunity to ask a further question about the matter, because that would have entailed a supplementary question. This proposal will really allow debate.

Mr Burns: Be careful; you will drag yourself into the 1870s if you are not careful.

Mr MILLER: It is a form of debate through questioning. Surely we should be able to draw out from a Minister all the relevant facts about an issue that is important to the community.

I strongly support proposed Standing Order 69A. I would hate to think that honourable members would vote against something that will give them more strength.

What are we doing with proposed Standing Order 70? The committee believes that by it we will be saving time. Is there something wrong with saving time? This afternoon many members spoke about the waste of time. The committee has come forward with recommendations that will save time. We are being told to remove proposed Standing Order 70 for further consideration. I am totally against that.

Mr Wright: Who suggested that?

Mr MILLER: We will have to wait and see.

Mr Wright: Put it on the record—the National Party. That is what you are saying.

Mr MILLER: I don't believe it is the National Party. I do not intend to become political. I do not believe that the National Party is moving this.

Proposed Standing Order 70A refers to more time for questions. I do not need to dwell any longer on it.

Proposed Standing Order 108A is an important inclusion. It presents an opportunity for Parliament to be fully informed. Parliament should be able to hear both sides of the story. A Minister has a discretion to give the Leader of the Opposition or the Opposition member in charge of the appropriate shadow portfolio an opportunity to answer what he has put before the Parliament by way of a ministerial statement. This is a forum in which the Opposition should have as much right to put its point of view as we have to put ours.

Sir William Knox: Yes, but they gagged it.

Mr MILLER: Somebody wants to gag it, because someone is asking for its withdrawal.

I fully support the recommendations put forward by the committee. I hope that the House supports them.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I shall put the amendment moved by the honourable member for Rockhampton.

Mr SCASSOLA: I rise to a point of order. With respect, Mr Speaker, the amendment before the Chair is not the one moved by the honourable member for Rockhampton but the one moved earlier by me.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is incorrect. The amendment moved by the honourable member for Rockhampton shall be put first. The amendment moved by the honourable member for Mt Gravatt shall be put subsequently.

Question—That the words proposed to be added (Mr Wright's amendment) be so added—put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 23

Blake	Mackenroth	Wilson
Burns	McLean	Wright
Casey	Milliner	Yewdale
D'Arcy	Prest	
Davis	Shaw	
Eaton	Smith	*Tellers:*
Fouras	Underwood	
Gibbs, R. J.	Vaughan	Hansen
Hooper	Warburton	Kruger

Noes, 48

Ahern	Harper	Prentice
Akers	Hewitt	Randell
Austin	Innes	Row
Bertoni	Jennings	Scassola
Bird	Katter	Scott-Young
Bjelke-Petersen	Kaus	Simpson
Booth	Knox	Stephan
Borbidge	Kyburz	Sullivan
Doumany	Lester	Tomkins
Elliott	Lickiss	Turner
FitzGerald	McKechnie	Wharton
Frawley	Menzel	White
Gibbs, I. J.	Miller	
Glasson	Moore	*Tellers:*
Goleby	Muntz	
Greenwood	Nelson	Gygar
Gunn	Powell	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

Question—That the words proposed to be added (Mr Scassola's amendment) be so added—put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 19

Akers	Innes	Scassola
Austin	Knox	Scott-Young
Bjelke-Petersen	Kyburz	White
Doumany	Lickiss	
Edwards	Moore	*Tellers:*
Greenwood	Nelson	Gygar
Hewitt	Prentice	Kaus

Noes, 50

Ahern	Goleby	Smith
Bertoni	Gunn	Stephan
Bird	Hansen	Sullivan
Blake	Harper	Tomkins
Booth	Hooper	Turner
Borbidge	Jennings	Underwood
Burns	Katter	Vaughan
Casey	Kruger	Warburton
D'Arcy	Lester	Wharton
Davis	Menzel	Wilson
Eaton	Miller	Wright
Elliott	Milliner	Yewdale
FitzGerald	Muntz	
Fouras	Powell	
Frawley	Prest	*Tellers:*
Gibbs, I. J.	Randell	
Gibbs, R. J.	Row	McKechnie
Glasson	Simpson	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—

"That the debate be now adjourned."

Question put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 43

Ahern	Greenwood	Powell
Austin	Gunn	Randell
Bertoni	Harper	Row
Bird	Hewitt	Scott-Young
Bjelke-Petersen	Jennings	Simpson
Booth	Katter	Stephan
Borbidge	Kaus	Sullivan
Doumany	Knox	Tomkins
Edwards	Lester	Turner
Elliott	Lickiss	Wharton
FitzGerald	McKechnie	White
Frawley	Menzel	
Gibbs, I. J.	Miller	*Tellers:*
Glasson	Moore	Gygar
Goleby	Muntz	Neal

Noes, 29

Akers	Kyburz	Vaughan
Blake	Mackenroth	Warburton
Burns	McLean	Wilson
Casey	Milliner	Wright
D'Arcy	Nelson	Yewdale
Davis	Prentice	
Eaton	Prest	
Fouras	Scassola	*Tellers:*
Gibbs, R. J.	Shaw	
Hooper	Smith	Hansen
Innes	Underwood	Kruger

Pairs:

Hinze	Jones
Warner	Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House adjourned at 5.41 p.m.