

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 2 AUGUST 1983

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Legislative Assembly

THIRD SESSION OF THE FORTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT

Appointed to meet

AT BRISBANE ON THE SECOND DAY OF AUGUST, IN THE THIRTY-SECOND YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1983

TUESDAY, 2 AUGUST 1983

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

Pursuant to the Proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, dated 30 June 1983, appointing Parliament to meet this day for the dispatch of business, the House met at 11 a.m. in the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

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

The Clerk read the Proclamation.

COMMISSION TO OPEN PARLIAMENT

Mr SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received from His Excellency the Governor a Commission appointing me and Mr C. J. Miller, Chairman of Committees, or either of us, Commissioners to open this session of Parliament.

I now call on the Clerk to read the Commission.

The Clerk read the Commission.

Mr SPEAKER, as the Senior Commissioner, said: Honourable members, we have it in command from His Excellency the Governor of Queensland to communicate to you that Parliament has been summoned to meet this day to consider legislation, the granting of Supply to Her Majesty and such other matters as may be brought before you; that the customary Speech will not be delivered at the Opening of this the Third Session of the Forty-third Parliament of Queensland and that, nevertheless, it is His Excellency's desire that you proceed forthwith to the consideration of the aforementioned business.

DEATHS OF MR T. MOORES AND MR A. J. SMITH

Motion of Condolence

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (11.6 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 Thomas Moores, Esquire, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland and Minister of the Crown, and Alfred James Smith, Esquire, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.

2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the families of the deceased gentlemen 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.”

I am sure that all of us were saddened by the deaths of the two former members to whom I have referred. Of course, I knew both of them very well.

In the case of Tom Moores, I was associated with him for the whole period of his parliamentary service of eight years. Norm Smith had been a member of this Assembly for six years before my election in 1947. Our association as parliamentarians was to last 13 years.

Tom Moores was born in Gympie. He received his early education there and then went on to the Brisbane Industrial High School.

He worked in the plumbing industry in England for two years in 1935 and 1936, and later became a manual training teacher at Brisbane's West End, South Brisbane and Dutton Park Opportunity State Schools. He was the youngest trade union leader of the Plumbers Union when he was its president in the early 1930s.

Mr Moores served with the Australian Military Forces in World War II, and also on the Queensland Rugby League Committee.

He entered the political arena when he was elected alderman for the Brisbane City Council ward of Kurilpa in 1939. He served as an alderman until 1949, when he was elected to State Parliament as the Labor member for the electorate of Kurilpa at the by-election that was held following the death of the Labor member, Mr P. K. Copley.

One of the ablest of the Labor back-benchers, Mr Moores had a rapid but brief rise to ministerial rank in 1957, following the resignation of Mr J. E. Duggan from the Transport portfolio in the Gair Ministry. He was appointed a member of the Executive Council and Minister for Transport on 7 May 1957.

Following the general election held on 3 August 1957, with other members of Mr Gair's Ministry, Mr Moores resigned as a member of the Executive Council and as Minister for Transport on 12 August 1957. His total period of administration was 43 days, which was the shortest on record in Queensland since the six-day Dawson Labor Ministry in 1899.

The 1957 election also ended Mr Moores's career as a parliamentarian, as he was defeated for the Kurilpa seat by the Liberal candidate.

On behalf of the Queensland Government and, I am sure, all honourable members of this House, I express sincere condolences to his family.

Honourable members will also be saddened to hear of the recent passing of Mr Alfred James (Norm) Smith.

He was born in Brisbane on 23 March 1901 and received his education at a number of Queensland schools. In due course, he obtained his ticket as an electrician and as a diesel and refrigeration mechanic.

In his early working life, Norm Smith worked as an assistant tapper at the Kuridala copper smelter until it closed in 1918. He then assisted his father in carrying mail between Selwyn and Boulia, out in the Far West.

He was to spend several years as an employee at the Mt Isa mines until 1934, when he took over his father's Mt Isa business, which involved running of a hotel, a theatre and an iceworks.

He entered municipal politics in 1935, when he was elected as a councillor for the Cloncurry Shire. He was to serve on that council for 10 years.

In March 1941, he was elected to State Parliament as the Labor member for the electorate of Carpentaria and he retained the seat—renamed “Burke” following a redistribution—until May 1960.

Mr Smith was the founding president of the Mt Isa branch of the ALP, but supported the QLP following its establishment in 1957.

Norm Smith will be remembered as a pioneer of the North West and a very capable politician. Even after he left politics, and as late as this year, he was still championing the cause of Queensland and the North West.

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

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (11.12 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the Premier and join with him in expressing sympathy to the families of the late Thomas Moores and the late Alfred James (Norm) Smith, both of whom were former Queensland parliamentarians.

As the Premier said, Thomas Moores entered State Parliament in 1949, just as the Australian economy was emerging from the effects of World War II. He was a very dedicated and able member of Parliament and he gained the respect of all who knew him.

I understand that the Premier is the only member of this Parliament who served with Tom Moores. As he said, Thomas Moores quickly gained recognition as one of the most able members of the Labor Party. His ability was acknowledged with his brief rise to ministerial rank in the final Gair Government, and he was interested in every subject relating to people, no matter what their political or other beliefs were. He will long be remembered for his service to this Assembly.

Over the past few years I met Mr Moores a couple of times. My colleague the Minister for Transport, Mr Lane, hosted dinners celebrating the retirement of Mr Jack Neeson and Mr Goldston. Mr Moores attended those dinners. I found him to be a thorough gentleman and I enjoyed talking to him and hearing of his past experiences. He had a total commitment to Queensland and to the people of Queensland.

As the Premier said, Norm Smith was another great Queenslander. He left his mark not only on this Parliament but also on his home city of Mt Isa and on the north of the State. He reached the age of 82 years and he retained a keen interest in the development of Queensland, particularly the North West. Recently I received a letter from him, in perfect handwriting, relating to some matter in which he was interested. As late as May this year his opinion was sought by the Press when the Bradfield proposal to supply water to inland Australia was being debated.

Mr Smith, the only son of a Mt Isa pioneer businessman, helped his father establish the city's first hotel, its iceworks, its picture theatre and its first electricity plant. The Smiths arrived in the town, of miners' shacks and tents, in September 1923, soon after news spread that rich lead ore had been struck there. His death, therefore, severs a very tangible link with the early days of Mt Isa, a city to which he made a great personal contribution.

As the Premier indicated, four years after arriving in the town and while working in the Mt Isa mines, Mr Smith was one of a team of eight who founded the local branch of the FED & FA, the second union to be formed in Mt Isa, and later he received a gold medal for his service to that union.

During the bitter Labor split, he joined the Democratic Labor Party, and although he never rejoined the Australian Labor Party, such was the calibre of the man that he retained the respect of many of his former colleagues both in his home city and throughout Queensland. He served the people of this State with great distinction. He had the respect and admiration of persons from all walks of life. I join with the Premier in extending sympathy to the families of Thomas Moores and Norm Smith.

Mr WRIGHT (Rockhampton—Leader of the Opposition) (11.15 a.m.): The Opposition joins with the Premier, Deputy Premier and Government members in this expression of sympathy and sorrow to the families of the late Mr Thomas Moores and Mr Alfred James Smith. Unlike the Premier, I did not know either of those gentlemen as I was not in Parliament at that time. As the Deputy Premier said, I did not have the opportunity of meeting Mr Moores. I am advised that both members served their electorates well.

Mr Moores served as a Brisbane City Council alderman and was the member for Kurilpa from 1939 to 1949. He was Minister for Transport for a short period. He was known as a very hard-working person. He was respected and had a very pleasant personality. Everyone described him as a hard worker and a very conscientious member of Parliament. I am told by those who knew him that he was a great Rugby League enthusiast and that he was an extremely strong supporter of Souths Leagues Club. He always attended functions organised by that club. He was interested in the community, in sport and in local government. He was held in high respect at all levels of Parliament. Following his defeat in 1957, he returned to work as a manual training teacher. On behalf of the Opposition, I extend this message of sympathy to his family.

Mr Alfred James Smith was a former member for Carpentaria, which subsequently became the electorate of Burke. As the Deputy Premier said, Mr Smith came from a pioneering family. He worked and fought extremely hard for the North, particularly Mt Isa. He was regarded as a conscientious member because of his efforts on behalf of the northern people during the 20 years he served in this Parliament. Like Mr Moores, he had local government experience and that gave him a deeper understanding of the problems in his electorate. As I have said, the Opposition joins with the Government in this expression of sympathy.

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (11.17 a.m.): Although I was not in Parliament during the service of the late Mr Moores, I knew of him through my reading of the events of those years, particularly the split in the Labor Party in 1957. More recently, I got to know Mr Moores as a former Minister for Transport. As the Deputy Premier mentioned, I have had occasion to convene more than one dinner to farewell railway commissioners and deputy commissioners of long standing. On those occasions I have been able to gather together many Ministers for Transport, including Jack Duggan, who was present with Mr Moores, Sir Gordon Chalk, Sir William Knox, Dr Edwards, who has been Acting Minister for Transport, and Mr Tomkins. On those occasions Mr Moores reminisced about when he was Minister for Transport for three months. He told me that three months was not long enough to learn where the bodies were buried in such a large department. I certainly share that feeling with him. He was a man with a great personal humour. He was a very pleasant gentleman. He occupied a seat in this Parliament during a very dramatic period. Of course, following the split in the Labor Party, when that famous public contest took place between the group led by Mr Duggan and the group led by Mr Gair, he lost his seat.

Mr Norm Smith was a gentleman with whom I had many years of very close personal contact in Mt Isa, because I resided in that city for about three years and have visited it on a number of occasions since. I often sat on the front veranda of Norm Smith's home in Mt Isa. We talked about politics, local events and the history of the area. Norm was probably the political guru of North-west Queensland. He was respected by persons on both sides of the political fence. He had something to do with most of the big events that took place.

I sat on his verandah chatting to him during the famous 1964 strike that was led by Pat Mackie. Norm was one of those trying to bring the two opposing sides together in that conflict. Because of the public positions he held, he was enormously respected in the town. During that strike, he contributed a great deal of common sense.

Norm Smith played a role in political events until his death. Being interested in politics, he corresponded with politicians of all political persuasions, and he also wrote to newspapers. He was never frightened to make a public statement based on his many years in public life.

To the relatives of those two gentlemen, Mr Moores and my old friend Norm Smith, I extend my deepest sympathy and condolences. I am very happy to be associated with the motion moved this morning.

Mr BERTONI (Mt Isa) (11.21 a.m.): I express my sympathy and that of the people of the Mt Isa electorate to Mrs Smith and the family of the late Alfred James Smith, better known in Mt Isa as "Norm". I concur with the remarks made by honourable members who have preceded me in speaking to the motion.

Norm Smith really was a man of the people. He loved the North West. Every time I spoke to him he referred to the history of Mt Isa and events that occurred in Kuridala, Cloncurry and elsewhere in the North West.

I have never known a politician who was so well liked and well respected by the everyday worker as Norm was in Mt Isa, especially in his later years in politics. He always spoke well of people. I spoke with Norm on many occasions and was happy to receive his opinions. He kept in touch with what was happening politically in Brisbane, and on many occasions he wrote to Ministers in order to keep himself abreast of what was happening in Parliament.

He championed the cause of gougers in the North West and for many years was president of the gougers association. He seemed to take upon himself the job of assisting the workers in the area, always fighting for a fair go for the battler. For that he was well respected. He loved Mt Isa and put his whole heart into the job of building it and the North West. Everything he said or did was related to the area and the way in which it should develop.

I appreciated his companionship whenever I had discussions with him. He always said that he intended tape-recording his recollections of the history of Mt Isa. I sincerely hope he did that. Once again, I express my condolences to his wife and family.

Mr KATTER (Flinders) (11.23 a.m.): In common with many others in North-west Queensland, I knew Norm Smith all my life. He was probably the most prominent personality in the area during the last 50 years. As the member for Mt Isa said, until the day Norm Smith died he reflected the rough, Australian working-class personality of the bush. He had been a contractor and a battler in small business all his life. I think he was president of the local copper gougers association of North-west Queensland until the day he died.

He did not fit the image one has when one hears the word "businessman". He was a fairly rough but typical westerner. However, he was largely responsible for securing the supply of electricity for the people of Mt Isa. He put the first moviehouse into Mt Isa. He built a large number of shops and was involved in the building of one of the first hotels in Mt Isa. He was one of the people responsible for turning what is one of the most barren and harsh wildernesses anywhere in the world into what today is a thriving city in which we can all take a great deal of pride.

Probably the person who saw most of Norm Smith till the day he died was the old Kalkadoon Aborigine who worked for him at the picture theatre. Norm always had that Aborigine by his side, because he was one of his best mates, which reflects his egalitarian spirit.

At the time of the split in the Labor Party his attitudes were reflected by his actions. Various reasons existed for people to take up positions on one side or the other of the fence. However, I have never had any doubt that Norm Smith had very close friends in the Parliament. Throughout his life the overriding principle was to stick to his mates and, whether right or wrong at that time, that was his decision.

As the member for Mt Isa said, Norm Smith was one of the country's great historians. He had a great working knowledge of Aborigines. Although he never wrote very much down, like the Aborigines, he verbally related stories concerning them. I was not surprised to hear that the Treasurer received a letter from him about the Bradfield scheme, which he long and ardently advocated. He was a great historian, an egalitarian and typical westerner, who accomplished a great deal for the people of North-west Queensland.

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

AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

Approval

Mr SPEAKER reported that, pursuant to the instruction given by the House on 16 March, he presented to His Excellency the Governor the amendments to the Standing Orders and the new Standing Orders which were adopted by the House on 13 April 1983, and that His Excellency was pleased, in his presence, to approve the same.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL

Judge for Remainder of 1983

Mr SPEAKER announced the receipt of a letter from the Honourable the Chief Justice intimating that the Honourable Mr Justice James Burrows Thomas would be the judge to preside at the sittings of the Elections Tribunal for the remainder of 1983.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Resignations

Mr SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that Mr Casey and Mr D'Arcy have resigned from the Standing Orders Committee.

Appointments

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

“That Mr Wright, member for the electoral district of Rockhampton, be appointed a member of the Standing Orders Committee to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr Casey, and that Mr Warburton, member for the electoral district of Sandgate, be appointed a member of the Standing Orders Committee to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr D'Arcy.”

Motion agreed to.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S SPECIAL REPORT ON STANWELL POWER STATION CONTRACT

Mr SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of his special report on his special audit of certain operations of the Queensland Electricity Generating Board relating to the letting of a contract with respect to the new power-station at Stanwell.

Ordered to be printed.

Suspension of Sitting to a Later Hour

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

“That, in order to enable members to peruse the report of the Auditor-General, the sitting be now suspended until 2.15 p.m. this day and the House do then consider the report.”

Motion agreed to.

[Sitting suspended from 11.30 a.m. to 2.15 p.m.]

STANWELL POWER STATION CONTRACT

Opposition Leader's Allegations of Malpractice

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (2.15 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

- “(1) That, in view of the findings of the Auditor-General's report into the letting of contracts for Stanwell Power Station, this House deplores the actions of the Leader of the Opposition in making malicious and unsubstantiated allegations of malpractice against loyal and impartial officers of the electricity supply industry.
- (2) That this House condemns attempts made by the Leader of the Opposition and the ALP to encourage the union movement in Queensland to take industrial action against the successful tenderer.
- (3) That this House calls on the Leader of the Opposition to make a full public apology for his actions.”

The report of the Auditor-General into the Stanwell Power House allegations tabled in this House today destroys for ever the credibility of the present Leader of the Opposition in this State. “Someone is on the take,” he said. “There must be an investigation,”

he said. "The credibility of the Government is at stake," he claimed. Today the Opposition Leader and all those in the ALP who supported his allegations must eat their words. They are utterly discredited.

The Leader of the Opposition has demonstrated he will stoop to anything, including lying, for his own political ends not only on this issue but also on many others. As the Leader of the Opposition travels round this State, he makes unlimited promises that he knows he cannot fulfil, following the policy of every other State Labor Party in an attempt to gain power. Of course, the people of Queensland will not be fooled by such deceit.

This investigation has cost the taxpayers of Queensland more than \$40,000—an expensive way indeed to score cheap political points. Now the whole thing has backfired on the Leader of the Opposition. He is a knocker in the traditional Labor Party mould. He and other members opposite have used every means available to them to prevent the project going ahead. It is a project that would create thousands of job opportunities for people in the Leader of the Opposition's own electorate. They tried to have unions black ban this project. They knock the Iwasaki project, the proposed oil-seed plant, the electrification of the rail lines and many other projects that can only assist the development of Central Queensland. They are obviously against jobs, against progress, and against achievement. Again and again the Leader of the Opposition has demonstrated that he is completely opposed to anything constructive that is put forward by the Government.

Over the past weeks and months the people of Queensland have witnessed an incredible sequence of side-steps, back-flips, fob-offs and political somersaults as the Leader of the Opposition has unsuccessfully attempted to extract his foot from his mouth on the Stanwell issue. It astounds me that he can stand up and make the most serious allegations of impropriety without any clear understanding of the nature and complexities of the tender-evaluation processes in contracts of this type.

Honourable members will recall that when the Leader of the Opposition made his original allegations he was invited to submit to the Commissioner for Police any evidence that he had so that it could be investigated. Of course, he backed away from that very quickly. On 28 May, in the "Daily Sun", the Leader of the Opposition said that he would see the Commissioner for Police with his allegations and name the person allegedly at the centre of the controversy. It was reported the very next day in "The Sunday Mail" that the Leader of the Opposition had changed his mind and that he would not be naming anyone. Two days later, when confronted by the media outside Police headquarters, he treated television viewers to the most pathetic "go to water" performance ever given by any politician in recent years. Asked whether he stood by his accusation of someone "on the take", he turned and walked away like the two-faced coward that he really is.

After that we had the spectacle of a very nervous Opposition Leader out of his depth, shifting from one foot to the other, hoping to hand the issue to someone—anyone at all—in the false hope that it would go away. He said he would give it to a judicial inquiry. He thought that that was the ideal way of handling the matter—in fact, that the only way it could be handled was by a judicial inquiry. Then he changed his mind, saying later that he wanted to hand it to the Solicitor-General. I am not quite sure why that was, but he changed his mind. Some time after that, he wanted a royal commission.

Mr Wharton: Then he wanted a parliamentary inquiry.

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes. Then finally, after all that backing and filling, he suddenly said, "I think I've found the right man—the Auditor-General. He's the man I need to investigate the matter."

All this comes from the Leader of the Opposition, the same man who pretends to concern himself greatly with honesty and integrity. He continually talks about honesty in Government and so on, yet he is the man who knows that he still owes the people of Queensland \$3,042. He is the man who talks about integrity and honesty in Government, but he refuses to pay that money back. He has owed that for a number of years. He is indebted to the Crown for that amount for air tickets paid for by the Crown that he converted to his own unauthorised use. He was found out by the then Auditor-General, as shown in the Peel report; now he has been found out by the present Auditor-General on this issue. The Auditor-General has informed me in writing that the Leader of the Opposition still has that amount in his possession and owes it to the Crown.

Every allegation that the Leader of the Opposition has made about the Stanwell contract has been found to be false. As honourable members know, the Leader of the Opposition has no regard for honesty or integrity. He would not care whose reputation he ruined, as long as it meant a few headlines or he thought that he could use it for political purposes to score points against the Government.

His accusations were made without proper research and at the terrible cost of the reputations of all officers and members of the Government who took part in the decision-making process and performed their duties with the highest degree of professionalism and propriety.

In his report on page 2, the Auditor-General says in part—

“... no evidence exists to suggest that any influence was brought to bear either during or at the conclusion of the evaluative process . . . to alter, vary or amend decisions which emanated directly from what, in my view, was a complete, honest, accurate and objective evaluative process worked through systematically by the Board's engineers and other suitably apprised staff.”

In the same section of his report the Auditor-General also states—

“Recommendations made to the Board and The State Electricity Commission of Queensland and information submitted to the Cabinet were, in my view, at all times in complete accord with the formal results produced during the evaluative process.”

In other words, the correct decision was made without fear or favour.

There can be no clearer condemnation of the Opposition Leader's stand on this issue than that statement of the Auditor-General. The Leader of the Opposition has demonstrated an amazing ignorance of the normal tender evaluation processes and a total lack of understanding of even the most basic economic and cost factors related to acceptance of the successful tender.

The report notes that, because of the voluminous nature of the documents associated with the tender submissions, they could not be contained in the usual tender box but instead had to be held in a specially secured room; yet the Opposition Leader claimed he knew it all and could prove someone was “on the take”. Perhaps this Labor loudmouth would care to explain to the House how he was able to assess in just a few days the relative merits of the tenders when a team of more than 50 experts took seven months to perform the same task.

The Leader of the Opposition has been exposed for what he is—inept, irresponsible and inconsistent. No doubt he will try to draw a red herring across the trail of the report's findings as he continues his desperate attempts to get off the hook on this issue. That just won't work. Again he has been caught by his own big mouth.

After posturing and procrastinating for weeks he got the investigation he finally decided he wanted. On 3 June, Mr Wright said he had requested the Auditor-General to investigate his allegations because the Auditor-General was “the only independent authority in the Queensland Government capable of conducting a full, impartial inquiry.” Mr Wright is the same man who owes the Government \$3,000-odd. The following day, in “The Courier-Mail”, Mr Wright is reported as saying—

“I have left it in the hands of Mr Craven because that is where the matter should be. He is the only public servant who cannot be directed and is completely independent.”

We now have the results of that independent and impartial inquiry. Mr Wright is found guilty on every count. Without any shadow of doubt, he has made a complete fool and ass of himself. Let me deal with his accusations one by one. Firstly, I will consider his statement that someone was “on the take”. Of course, by the time he got to the Auditor-General, he had cold feet and watered his statement down to an allegation that someone was “compromised”.

What does the Auditor-General's report say? I quote from page 8—

“My inquiries have revealed that no evidence exists to suggest that any instruction or direction, implied or otherwise, was given by any of such officials with the intention of influencing the outcome of the evaluative process. In my view, a complete, impartial, honest and objective assessment of the likely full cost to the Board of accomplishment of the project was carried out.”

Then there was Mr Wright's claim that insufficient or inaccurate information went to Cabinet. Again, the Leader of the Opposition showed his ignorance of the process involved. The report finds that the information presented to Cabinet was in complete agreement with the results of the evaluations. The report also clearly shows that there was no departure from proper processes in relation to the board's request for a change in boiler size by the successful tenderer.

The Auditor-General also finds no truth in the allegation that a combined discounted offer from the successful company was admitted after the close of tenders. It finds unfounded the claim that the successful tenderer was permitted to vary percentages of local and overseas manufacture content from what was contained in the original tender.

The report also throws out the allegation that the board's evaluators had not acted impartially during the evaluation process. The Auditor-General states—

“No grounds exist, in my view, for the holding of such a belief.

Indeed, my inquiries have shown that in all respects the Board's evaluators have acted in complete conformity with the law and in accord with the normal tenets of public tender evaluation to arrive at an honest and complete assessment of all tenders. . .”

Finally, in a last attempt to rescue his lost credibility, the Opposition Leader claimed that Cabinet was not informed of a counter trade offer made by one of the unsuccessful companies, involving the purchase of Queensland coal. Again, the proper decision was made. The report finds that offers of this kind were not solicited in the original tender. To consider the offer as part of the negotiations would have given rise to calls from other tenders for a recall of tenders.

In summary—the report completely vindicates the Government's approach to the awarding of this important contract to the Japanese company. The report was compiled by an officer of the Parliament who, in Mr Wright's own words, was the only independent authority capable of conducting a full, impartial inquiry.

All that remains now is for the Leader of the Opposition to give a full, public apology to the people of Queensland and, in particular, to those people who have suffered personal and family hardship and distress because of the considerable publicity that followed his baseless accusations. I call on him to make that apology forthwith.

I commend the motion to the House.

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (2.30 p.m.): I have pleasure in seconding this important motion. I do not believe that in the history of this Assembly any previous Leader of the Opposition has made such widespread accusations or innuendos over such a long period about so many issues. On many occasions Ministers have made statements in this House contradicting such statements by the Leader of the Opposition, and I will refer to some of them in a moment.

A few days after the decision had been made to accept a certain tender the Leader of the Opposition began to criticise the actions of the Government and the State Electricity Commission. Over the ensuing days, as the momentum of his statements about this decision built up, the same Leader of the Opposition began to cast aspersions, firstly on the Government—I do not deny his right to do that provided he accepts ministerial explanations which are supported by documentation—and secondly, in a most despicable way—I say that in the kindest way I can—on public servants in the Treasury Department and the Co-ordinator-General's Department and on members of the State Electricity Commission and the electricity generating board. He did that in such a way that the positions of those public servants and other Crown employees were placed in grave jeopardy.

The Premier referred to allegations made on television, such as “people are on the take” and “people had compromised themselves”. He went on to say that some companies had been given unfair advantages, and that he would put those allegations before the people of Queensland. He said that tenders had been accepted after the closing date. He said that one company's tender had not been considered. If I had time, I could list for this House and the people of Queensland all of the allegations that he made over a period of two or three weeks aided, I might add, by inaccurate information fed to him by one or two persons who should be named in this Parliament.

As a result, the Leader of the Opposition decided, without the concurrence of his friends on the other side, that he was on a winner politically. He was prepared to downgrade the character of a number of people because of his ambition to win politically in this State. But he has been found out, and I will go into that in a moment.

What else did the Leader of the Opposition do? He went to the Police Department, saying that it was the body that should make this investigation. And he is the greatest knocker of the police in our history! He has continually bashed the police. Over the 13 years that he has been a member of Parliament he has attacked the police unmercifully, yet, when it suited him for political purposes, he went to the Police Commissioner. When the Police Commissioner said that he would have to make public some of the statements made by the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Opposition was not prepared to continue with his allegations. The Leader of the Opposition then suggested, as the Premier said, that he might go to the Solicitor-General. Goodness only knows why he would do that. He then said that he might go to the Parliamentary Commission for Administrative Investigations to see what could be done. Finally, in what, to his mind, was a moment of great political triumph, he went to the Auditor-General. He said clearly that the Auditor-General, as an officer of Parliament, was the only person who could investigate the matter.

At the outset it is important to understand the responsibilities of the Auditor-General. He is responsible to this Parliament, not to the Leader of the Opposition or to the Government of the State. That must never be forgotten. Without reference to the Government—and rightly so—the Auditor-General, of his own volition, under his own terms of reference, and considering the allegations made to him by the Leader of the Opposition, undertook an inquiry. I have one or two comments to make on that.

What has the Leader of the Opposition been telling the Press since the report was tabled? He said that the terms of reference were not wide enough. Who set the terms of reference? The Leader of the Opposition, by his innuendo and accusations, set the terms of reference. The Financial Administration and Audit Act was passed by this Parliament with the support of the Leader of the Opposition when he was the Opposition Treasury spokesman. He supported that measure. The statement by the Leader of the Opposition that the terms of reference were not wide enough indicates his ignorance and lack of knowledge about an Act that he supported in this Parliament.

The Financial Administration and Audit Act gives widespread powers to investigate complaints made not to the Government, but to the most independent person. The Leader of the Opposition said on radio and T.V. and through the printed media that he would accept the report when it was handed down. When it was handed down he said that the terms of reference were not wide enough.

Today, he said, "I am not questioning the integrity now. I am questioning the tendering mechanism." When it suited him politically he made accusations against public servants who could not defend themselves publicly. Today, after the tabling of the report that blasted his accusations, he said, "I am not concerned about that. I am concerned about the conditions of tendering." If he was concerned about the conditions of tendering why didn't he say so in the first place? He is trying to mislead the people of Queensland.

I should record that the Leader of the Opposition had been virtually on his own in making these accusations. The only two people who have been bleating continually are the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Wright, who seems to be always wrong, and Mr Beattie, who never knows what he is saying. Mr Beattie, who is the echo of the Labor Party at Breakfast Creek, is the spokesman on everything on which the Leader of the Opposition has nothing to say.

A Government Member interjected.

Dr EDWARDS: The faceless men! Look at them. We never hear from them. We hear only from Mr Beattie or Mr Wright, who is always wrong.

The way in which the tenders were assessed left nothing to be desired. I say that as the Minister in charge of the Treasury and the person responsible for some of the discussions with the Premier and with the Minister for Mines and Energy. We were given the responsibility to make recommendations on this matter. I make it very clear that my Treasury officers were fully involved in the assessment of the financial package and

in the assessment of these projects put forward to us by tender, in the assessment of costs and in the escalation of costs. I say without a shadow of doubt that these matters were assessed with the absolute integrity for which State Treasury officers are known, as has been stated by members of the Opposition on a number of occasions. Nothing was hidden from any officer of the State Electricity Commission, the Queensland Electricity Generating Board, the Treasury Department or the Co-ordinator-General's Department. All of the information was assessed and collated. It was then passed on to other Ministers who were responsible for further collation and assessment, in detailed form, not in three pages as the Leader of the Opposition suggested.

The recommendation of the State Electricity Commission was accepted by the Government, and there is no way that that decision was wrong. Indeed, the Auditor-General's report that was presented today has vindicated the decision of the State Electricity Commission and the Queensland Electricity Generating Board.

People who continually attack the character of other people should pay a price. I am sick and tired of it. We have seen it happen continually in this chamber, and it has been done only for political purposes. On a number of occasions the various publications were made available by the Minister for Mines and Energy. All that the Leader of the Opposition needed to do was ask for the information, and it would have been provided. What did he do? He immediately began casting aspersions.

Mr Fouras: Ha, ha!

Dr EDWARDS: The member for South Brisbane may laugh; but he cannot even count, let alone understand the documents relative to this matter.

The Leader of the Opposition continued to make allegations in regard to this matter. On no occasion was he able to substitute his allegations, and I challenge him to prove otherwise. He could not even substantiate them to the Auditor-General. If he did, either the Auditor-General is misleading the House by his report or the Leader of the Opposition is misleading the House. If the Leader of the Opposition says anything different, he will be judged by the people of this State.

I shall go a little further and refer to a letter from the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party in the Federal Parliament. I have never seen a Federal Government act in such an irresponsible way as the present Federal Government has acted over the last few months. Secret and classified information has been leaked across dinner tables by Federal Ministers. They have paid a price for that, and rightly so. Correspondence between Governments has been passed to the Leader of the Opposition and to other people, and that is a despicable disregard of the political system in Australia.

Mr Hinze: You had better watch out. This might be taped.

Dr EDWARDS: That is possible, but I have nothing to hide in that regard.

Classified and other information is being passed to the Opposition, and the Opposition is using part of the information. That is despicable behaviour and something on which I hope the Leader of the Opposition will take a stand for the sake of integrity of government and democracy.

The Auditor-General tabled a letter from the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia to the Leader of the Opposition concerning a so-called confidential matter, a counter-trade that was allegedly offered by Ansaldo Australia S.p.A., and my colleagues will refer to that in a moment. On the one hand, the Leader of the the Opposition expects the Government to maintain the integrity of the tendering system; on the other hand, he expects favourable consideration to be given to one tenderer because it offered a counter-trade, which was not sought in the tender documents. The Leader of the Opposition stands condemned for his inconsistency in that regard.

He made the allegation to the Auditor-General that that matter was not considered by the Government. I want to say from the kindness of my heart—on many occasions I am kind to the Leader of the Opposition—that that is totally inaccurate. In fact, on two occasions the Minister for Mines and Energy and I met with our officers for lengthy periods to discuss the possibility of that matter being considered. But because it had not been offered by any other company and because it had not been sought by the Government in the tender documents, that matter could not be considered by the Government, and the Leader of the Opposition should recognise that fact. If he is to be

consistent with one argument, he must be consistent with the other. The tabling by the Labor Party of a private letter that had been sought and obtained from the Deputy Prime Minister does not reflect great credit on the parliamentary system.

The documents in question have been assessed properly. No doubt has been cast on them other than by the Leader of the Opposition. Have the companies complained? Not one. The company that is alleged to have complained to the Leader of the Opposition is Clyde Riley Dodds. The Leader of the Opposition had some secret meetings with various people in that regard, and I hope that he will name the people with whom he met. If he does not name them, perhaps I will. As I say, the Leader of the Opposition had meetings with certain people and was given information. That information, of course, has been found to be totally lacking, as is outlined in the report of the Auditor-General.

In lengthy discussions with me and the Minister for Mines the companies involved indicated to us very clearly that they believed that the consideration of the tenders was carried out in the fairest manner possible. They believed that they lost out either because they were inadequate in their pricing or because they were inadequate in other respects. As the Leader of the Opposition would know—or should know—the Clyde Riley Dodds tender was found to be lacking in technical details and, as well, was a much dearer tender than others.

Then the Leader of the Opposition went off on another tack. When he was found out, he went off at a tangent. What did he say then? He said, "We need to have Australian content." He did not recognise the fact that the Australian content in the tender that was accepted is as much as that in the Clyde Riley Dodds tender, which related only to boilers, anyway, and had nothing to do with turbo-generators. The suggestions put forward by the Leader of the Opposition show that he is totally irresponsible and that he certainly has not handled this matter in a respectable manner.

I turn now to another matter. The way in which the Leader of the Opposition blatantly and flagrantly breached the ethics of Parliament, principles and integrity is a great disappointment to me personally. I do not mind a political attack on any day of the week. I have been the subject of political attacks over the past 12½ years while I have been in this Parliament. I accept such attacks as part of our political system and I have no doubt that they will continue. However, attacks based on downright inaccuracies and made simply for the purposes of political expediency must be treated as being damnable.

The member for Ipswich West smiles. He is one of the greatest culprits when it comes to inaccuracies, and he knows that full well. Later this afternoon my colleague the Minister for Health will deal with him in relation to a few aspects of the Health portfolio. I hope that the member for Ipswich West recognises that he is wrong. Last night the medical superintendent of the Princess Alexandra Hospital told the correct story concerning the honourable member's allegations.

The fact that the Leader of the Opposition was prepared to make accusations not based on fact and, when found wanting, was prepared to be reported in the media as trying to justify his accusations shows that politics in this State have reached a very low level. For that, the Leader of the Opposition stands condemned.

I put it to the House that this afternoon it should accept the report of the Auditor-General. The Government is on record as stating that it would accept any criticism levelled at it by the Auditor-General. I remind the House that the Government made no input whatever into the Auditor-General's findings. Likewise, the Government expects everybody else to abide by the Auditor-General's report. The Leader of the Opposition must abide by it. If he is not prepared to do so, he must stand condemned. Either I accept the Leader of the Opposition's word or I accept the Auditor-General's word. My bet is always with the Auditor-General.

Finally, I say that it is a sad day when the Leader of the Opposition can, throughout the State of Queensland, continue to denigrate officers of the Crown, who have a responsibility to their Minister. I do not mind how much politics or dirt the Leader of the Opposition throws around—that is his nature—but he has no right to throw dirt upon people who cannot defend themselves in the public arena.

I stand by the decision that was made and I identify myself with the decision-making process involved. With the greatest of respect to the Leader of the Opposition, I believe that the consideration given to the various tenders in this instance was the fairest undertaken by the Government and the departments concerned. I pay a tribute to the officers of the State Electricity Commission.

An Opposition Member: What about Winchester South? Why don't you talk about that?

Dr EDWARDS: Usually the honourable member is half asleep, and I am surprised that he is awake now. At times an electric shock would help him.

The officers of the State Electricity Commission, the Queensland Electricity Generating Board, the Treasury Department and the Co-ordinator-General's Department are people of the highest integrity. No slur has been cast upon them in this matter, and I believe that this Parliament will endorse that view this afternoon.

Mr WRIGHT (Rockhampton—Leader of the Opposition) (2.50 p.m.): Before I came into the Chamber this afternoon I was told that the Deputy Premier lost his cool when he was asked a few tough questions at a Press conference. Having seen his efforts in this debate, I know why he lost his cool.

The House has before it a motion of censure against me as Leader of the Opposition because, as a member of Parliament, I dared to pursue a number of allegations made to me and made publicly about the Government's tendering system. It is an amazing situation that the coalition Government would dare come into this Chamber and move such a censure motion because a member of Parliament saw it as his right and responsibility to pursue these issues.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I find it almost impossible to hear the Leader of the Opposition.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I give the House an assurance that members will be leaving the Chamber if that attitude continues.

Mr WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I notice that the most vociferous person on the other side was the so-called new Whip, the one who was going to bring some discipline into the Government. It seems that she ought to begin with herself.

The Auditor-General's report vindicates the stand made by me. It vindicates the allegations made by Ansaldo and by Clyde Riley Dodds. The Deputy Premier said that I now had an excuse that the report was not acceptable to me because it was incomplete and because there were limited terms of reference. I suggest that had the hyenas on the other side bothered to read the report, they would have seen that on page 8—which questions the honesty of the Deputy Premier—the Auditor-General stated in reference to a specific allegation—

"This allegation is not a matter falling within the ambit of my authority and the special audit was not directed towards its investigation."

That is a clear statement by the Auditor-General that, regardless of the allegations made by me, he was not able, within the terms of reference as Auditor-General and within the powers that he has under the Act, to investigate those matters.

Let me return to some of the rather strange comments made by the Premier. I shall return to what took place when I made these allegations. The first thing that the Premier did was to soothe the police on to me. He said that he was going to send police to meet with me. What he did not bother to say publicly was that I rang the office of the Commissioner of Police on the morning that I returned from Canberra. I had been to Canberra to have discussions with the Federal Government, because this State Government seems to want confrontation rather than consultation. On my return, I rang the Police Commissioner. It was arranged for me to meet the Police Commissioner on Monday or Tuesday of the following week upon his return from Darwin. That meeting was held when a lawyer, a member of my staff and I sat with the Police Commissioner. I challenged him and questioned him as to whether or not he, as Police Commissioner, had authorised police officers to see me. His reply was, "No."

The first thing we have in Queensland is a Premier interfering politically with the Police Force although he has no power to do so. The Premier's action was backed up by the Deputy Premier, because the Police Commissioner said that he did not direct anyone to see me.

A record of everything that was said was kept. It is on record that the Police Commissioner told me that he was unable to advise me whether he could investigate those allegations and that what he would do would be to seek an opinion from the Solicitor-General.

I do not know whether there was further political interference, but the Police Commissioner came back not to me but to the Minister for Police (Mr Glasson). I will have something to say about him later. Mr Glasson wrote to me and advised me that the Police Commissioner could investigate certain matters and that the result would be made public.

Dr Lockwood: It's got to be, sooner or later.

Mr WRIGHT: Does the honourable member really think so? What was being said then—and the member for Toowoomba North agrees—is that, if somebody is interviewed by the police, the substance of the interview, regardless of what it is about, would finally be made public. If that is the way the Government wants to run the Police Force, it is no wonder the people of this State are concerned about the invasion of their privacy and the erosion of their civil rights.

I return to the point—the joke—about the Solicitor-General. I rang him and asked if he would see me. He said that he would not do so without the approval of the Attorney-General, who was not in the State. When I was finally able to follow it up, the Solicitor-General said that he had spoken to the Attorney-General, and he would see me, but only if I could present to him evidence of criminal actions. How ridiculous!

Mr DOUMANY: I rise to a point of order. Let us get some truth back into the Chamber. The Solicitor-General told the Leader of the Opposition that he would see him in the company of the Crown Solicitor and me, and that the Leader of the Opposition could present any material he liked. The statement was not conditional. What he said to the Leader of the Opposition, however, was that he would not see him on his own. The reason would be quite obvious.

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

Mr WRIGHT: Mr Speaker, at a later stage I shall present to the Parliament the transcript of what the Solicitor-General said. It may be that the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General is not completely aware of what the Solicitor-General said to me. The Solicitor-General made it very clear to me that what I had to present to him—

Government Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the members for Carnarvon and Mt Isa under the provisions of Standing Order 123A.

Mr WRIGHT: I repeat that the Solicitor-General said that I must present to him—in the company of others, I agree—evidence of criminal actions. I was not going to put myself up as judge to determine whether someone had broken the criminal law.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr WRIGHT: Of course I was not.

When it was obvious that I could not induce any action from the Police Commissioner without facing some sort of action for defamation because anything I said, including the naming of people, would be made public, irrespective of the confidence in which it was given, and when the Solicitor-General informed me that he could not see me unless I was able to present to him clear evidence of criminal actions, I considered the matter with my colleagues—and I emphasise that for the benefit of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. It was determined that I ought to go to the Auditor-General. Why? Because under the Financial Administration and Audit Act he is seen to be an independent person.

I know that some aspersions are cast on that office because of the Peel report. I know that sugar farmers throughout the State have asked why the office of the Auditor-General did not do something about the millions of dollars illegally spent by Ron Camm and the Sugar Board some months ago and over a number of years. I

know of their concern that the Auditor-General's office did not cite those issues in any report. I know that questions have been asked about the actions of the office of the Auditor-General.

I believed that, because of the terms of reference that could be set down, he would be the person to see. Again, I have a transcript of the conversation held with the Auditor-General. He said he was unable to say whether he could investigate these matters. It was not a matter of my saying, "Yes, please do this" or "You shall do that." It was a matter of his first referring it to his advisers—and I understand that the Solicitor-General was involved—to ascertain whether or not he had the power under the Act to investigate the allegations.

Having put that to rest, I will now deal with what the issue is all about. We are talking about the Stanwell contracts. We are talking about a contract that is part of the on going anti-Queensland policy of the Government in awarding contracts. We are talking about something that we can add to the Wivenhoe Dam gates contract that went to Korea, the police boat contract that went to Hong Kong and the refrigerated vans contract that went to New Zealand. Now the contract for the boilers and generators at the Stanwell Power Station is going to Japan. It shows the ongoing willingness of this Government to export the jobs of Queenslanders and the ongoing decisions of this Government to give away our profits. Regardless of the attempted smother up and cover up, not by the Auditor-General, but by this Government, Queenslanders will not forget the Stanwell issue. It is this Government that said that no company thought that it was dealt with unfairly. I have the Press cutting showing that it was the Premier who stated publicly that those companies the Opposition was talking about—he did not name them—said it was OK. Of course he would not name them, because he knew that I had met and spoken with them and had documents from them. But he tried to smother it up and cover it up.

Regardless of what the report says, the people of Queensland will not forget. If honourable members do not believe my assessment of the report, let me refer to the "Daily Sun" of 28 July. The opinion of that paper is expressed in the headline to its editorial.

Mr Bjelke-Petersen: Can you tell us how you got that?

Mr WRIGHT: This is the opinion of the newspaper.

Honourable Members interjected.

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

Mr Hinze interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing under the provisions of Standing Order 123A. I will have discipline in this House.

Mr WRIGHT: He probably wants to go to the race-track where he spends most of his time, anyway, so he will not be missed.

Mr Hinze: Would you like me to tell the House where you spend most of your time?

Mr WRIGHT: I am simply waiting for the Minister to be dealt with, that is all.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I give the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing his final warning.

Mr WRIGHT: I criticise the incompleteness of the report and the fact that the terms of reference did not allow a full inquiry, and even a newspaper with which I do not have much truck because it gives me a hard time, stated in its editorial: "Power probe unconvincing". I repeat that the following report is not an article by a reporter, but the editorial opinion of the newspaper—

"The Auditor-General's clean slate after his investigation into some aspects of the granting of the Stanwell power station tender will leave many people unconvinced.

No aspersions on the integrity of the Auditor-General are intended, but his brief from the beginning was not particularly wide."

I emphasise the last part. Yet the Deputy Premier had the audacity to state that I am wrong in saying that the investigation was limited! The editorial continues—

“It is not sufficient to be told that there was no improper conduct by electricity authorities during the tender round.

Nor is it enough to be told that the matter was conducted in accordance with the Queensland Electricity Generating Board's assessment procedures.

What the public wants to know is whether those procedures guarantee that the best offer wins the tender.

There have been many suggestions, as this affair has bubbled along, that counter-trade deals should be considered when such tenders are open.

Losing companies in the tender round have also insisted that there are inadequacies in the methods used for projecting inflation and interest rates on to the financing deals offered.

A full examination of the Stanwell deal should consider the political and social ramifications for Queensland, the adequacy of the tender measurement arrangements and the QEGB's interpretations of the rules.

Clearly the Government had no doubts about the awarding of the much-disputed double tender for the Stanwell power station.

It thumbed its nose at the Auditor-General's inquiry by officially sealing the deal several weeks ago.

It only leaves us to wonder what the Government would have done had the Auditor-General raised doubts about the awarding of the contract.

It is unlikely that the affair will stop here.”

That is a clear statement that, in the opinion of that newspaper, this probe, to use that term, is unconvincing because of its limited terms of reference.

Under the terms of reference, the Auditor-General was empowered only to investigate whether the tendering procedures of the Financial Administration and Audit Act in this case were complied with. He could only investigate whether the established procedures were followed. He could not consider alternative procedures. It simply was a matter of his going to the QEGB or the commissioner and asking about the normal procedures—not whether they are right or wrong—and whether they were stuck to. That is all the Auditor-General could do. The terms of reference also stated that the Auditor-General was not empowered to investigate the decisions themselves or the reasons behind the decision to award the particular tender. He could only comment on whether the procedures had been followed.

The only body which would be empowered to fully investigate whether a decision is the correct one from the point of view of economic efficiency, cost benefit, etc., is a parliamentary public accounts committee. It could investigate the reason behind the decision. It is this Government that does not want a public accounts committee. It is the National Party and the Premier who say, “We do not want any part of this.”

Let us go back to the document. It says that the Auditor-General cannot do that. He can only comment on whether established procedures for the investigation and determination of contracts have been followed properly, not on the reasons behind their award. When one adds that to the fact that the Auditor-General himself says that he was prevented from doing so, that it was not within his ambit of authority to investigate certain allegations, I stand by the claim that the report can be judged only in part. There is clearly a problem here.

I do not believe that anyone wants to cast aspersions on the Auditor-General, but it is clear that he has limited powers. We would agree that he must act within the limitations laid down by the Act. I know also that the Auditor-General has now been placed in the spotlight, not by me but by the Premier, who has called for an investigation into the Auditor-General's office because of some leak. I wonder, when one refers to leaks, how it was that a senior Minister—I certainly will not cast aspersions on everybody; we all know who he was—was somehow able to say that, when the contract was signed by C. Itoh, there was nothing in the report. How was it that three weeks ago a Minister of the Crown, although his name was not mentioned, was able to say publicly that there was nothing in the report?

Is it not amazing, Mr Speaker, that although the Premier wanted to investigate you, Sir, and your office here, and the office of the Auditor-General, that he could walk into a Press conference moments after this report was tabled in the House and say that he knew all about it? How come? It took me an hour and a half just to read it. I know that there are some members of this Parliament who have still not read it; yet somehow, using a magic wand, with his tremendous intelligence and ability, the Premier could walk out of here—in fact, it was not even tabled to start with; we had to go and chase it—

Sir William Knox: It was done by hypnotism.

Mr WRIGHT: Is that how it was done? The Minister would probably know something about that, too, but I will not go into it.

We saw the Premier giving a Press conference moments after this report was tabled. I went before my Press conference at 1.45 p.m., after I had very carefully considered the report. But no, not the Premier. Somehow, magically, he knew about it. Somehow he was briefed about it; yet he is the one calling for an inquiry. I put it to you, Mr Speaker, that the Premier knew what was in the report before you received it. He must have known about it. There was no way he could have gone into a Press conference within moments of this report's being tabled and speak the way he did unless he was fully briefed or, alternatively, unless his officers had seen the report. If that is so, it is an indictment on the system that members of Parliament cannot obtain a report before the Premier's officers get hold of it. So if there is going to be an investigation into the leaking of this Auditor-General's report, let us start with the Premier's office, not with the offices of the Speaker or of the Auditor-General. The spotlight has been placed on the Auditor-General, and no doubt that will continue. However, we need to go further than this, because the secondary issue here is the role and the powers of the Auditor-General. The real issue is not the Auditor-General but the Government's tendering system, particularly the role played by the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr Ivan Gibbs). It is because of that that I move the following amendment—

“Omit all words after the word—

‘deplores’

and insert in lieu thereof the words—

‘the Minister for Mines and Energy, Mr Gibbs, for:

- (a) His failure to properly inform the State Cabinet of all aspects of the tenders and offers made by certain companies in relation to the contracts for boilers and turbo-generators for the Stanwell Power House;
- (b) His rushing through the recommendations relating to the successful tenderer in such a manner and with such haste that members of Cabinet were not given the desired opportunity to consider all aspects of each tender;
- (c) His refusal to explain publicly, circumstances that surrounded the Stanwell tender; and
- (d) His overall incompetence in dealing with this issue.’”

I will hand that amendment to the Leader of the House and have it circulated for all members to see.

I focus attention on Mr Gibbs—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I want to see a copy of the amendment.

Mr WRIGHT: You shall, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: I am not sure that it qualifies as an amendment. It appears to me to be completely contradictory. It is a new motion.

Mr WRIGHT: I will explain why I believe that it should be allowed. I ask you to consider this point. The motion moved by the Premier deplores certain actions by me surrounding the Stanwell contract. The substance of my amendment also deplores certain actions by another member of this Chamber, in this instance the Honourable Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr Gibbs), relative to the Stanwell contract.

The Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) is central to the whole issue. I make it very clear that when this matter arose I thought I would do the proper thing by writing to him and asking him to explain 25 aspects of the tenders. Despite what the Premier may say about how people go public and stir these things up without trying to get information, I point out that I wrote to the Minister and set down 25 major points for him to answer. To this day he has not had the decency to reply, yet he is the man who is supposed to be accountable to the public. He has not had the decency to provide any information to the public. He has not been willing to make public the material that was central to the whole Stanwell issue.

It is very important to understand why the allegations had to be made. I was given information, admittedly by people in the industry. I admit that I met and spoke with certain persons at a very high level in the industry and the tenderers. Surely that was not wrong. They knew that Ministers, such as Sir William Knox, were given the information that I was given and that they were not willing to act on it or did not believe that they had a responsibility to pursue the issue. As the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations and the other four Cabinet Ministers who were given the information did not feel that they had a responsibility to fight for an Australian firm, surely any member of the Opposition had the right to raise the matter. Surely members had a right to come to me or to any other member of Parliament with a request that the issue be pursued.

I wish to table all the allegations, including the Ansaldo report. There is no question of hiding anything. I will present every allegation made to me. The only thing I have done is to delete the name of the electricity officer. He has not been mentioned in the report.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr WRIGHT: He has been compromised. I do not believe that divulging his name would solve the problem, and I have deleted his name. The allegations include the information from Clyde Riley Dodds and Cabinet documents, which I am not supposed to have but which are official! As I said, the report from Ansaldo is included. It came from the Federal Government because it was raised with the Federal Government. It did not come to me because of contact by myself, but because it was raised with the Federal Government, and a senior Minister sent the information to me.

It was under great duress and as a last resort that the industry people came to me. When I spoke to the industry heads they admitted that the last thing they wanted to do was to embarrass the Government, but they had no choice. They conveyed to me their fear that if they were to go public they would not win another contract. That is the way the system works. They said to me quite emphatically that although they were afraid to be known publicly they had reached the point where they had no choice. They made it very clear that, before coming to me, they honestly tried to get through to the Government and Cabinet the information that they had.

The allegations are very serious. First and foremost it is alleged that following the public declaration of the tenders and when the prices were known, C. Itoh was allowed to submit another tender. It is also alleged that the tender submitted originally by C. Itoh was non-conforming. Despite that C. Itoh was given an opportunity to submit another tender. It is also alleged that even though on a combined-tender basis this company should not still have won the contract, it was given a chance to discount the price. I emphasise to all members that the report backs those allegations because it agrees, first and foremost, that a combined tender was allowed to be considered after the public opening of the single tenders.

I know the report tends to make out that, when the advertisements appeared, combined tenders could have been submitted. I believe that to be incorrect. I am willing to table this material and show it to members. It contains two advertisements in "The Courier-Mail" in late March. That is referred to in the document presented to the Chamber by the Auditor-General. The advertisements call for two tenders for separate items, one for the turbo-generators and the other for the boiler. No advertisement that I can find provides that tenderers were allowed to submit a combined tender. Therefore, my allegation is true.

Then there is the allegation that one tender was non-conforming. The report says, "So what? That can happen." The fact is that the non-conforming tender gave C. Itoh an advantage. It was then able to come back with a price that did not include any additional money for that extra-sized boiler.

Mr Bjelke-Petersen: How did you get a transcript of your talk with the Auditor-General?

Mr WRIGHT: I told the Auditor-General that I had a stenotypist with me and that she would take down every word spoken. I then sent a copy of the transcript to him, and he has not written to me to say that anything in that transcript is wrong, incorrect or misleading. So I did the correct thing again.

I turn to the other statements about the non-conforming tender. That company, C. Itoh, was given an opportunity to resubmit with new sized boilers at no additional cost. Surely that is an advantage. The company was also given an opportunity to retender with a discount. The report states that under no circumstances was that discount taken into consideration. If members turn to page 7 of the report they will see the following—

"As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the question of the discount was not taken into account during any calculations leading up to the final tables and decisions denoting comparative net present worth costs."

It is stated that the discount was not taken into consideration; yet a discount of \$8.8m was deducted in the calculations for the final price.

Is somebody trying to ask the people of Queensland to believe that what happened here was that the company submitted a tender not for \$331m but for \$339m, that that was accepted by the Government, and then, in its great generosity, the company turned round and said, "You have awarded us the contract. We know you didn't consider our discount, even though we mentioned it, so we are going to give it to you anyway."? Do honourable members really believe that a company would give this State back \$8.8m when it did not have to do so? I suggest that that is boloney. I suggest that, although the report says that the discount was not considered, in fact it was considered. The tables prepared by the State Electricity Commission clearly deducted \$8.8m.

Mr Harper: Are you disputing the Auditor-General's word?

Mr WRIGHT: What I am saying to those who need to have it stated in three-letter or four-letter words is that in one part of the report the Auditor-General said—no doubt he took it from the comments of the other side, that is, the electricity industry—that at no point was the discount considered when the tender was accepted. I know that the honourable member for Auburn has difficulty in understanding what is said, so I will go through it again very carefully. The report states—

"... the question of the discount was not taken into account during any calculations leading up to the final tables and decisions . . ."

Has the honourable member got that little bit? The Auditor-General obviously said that on the advice of the State Electricity Commission. I do not blame him for saying that in his report; he was told that. Even though the commission said that, it is clear from the table on page 6 that the discount was taken into consideration. In fact, the final price was \$8.8m less than the original offer made by C. Itoh. If honourable members believe that the company came back later and said, "You have been wonderful to us, so we are going to give you an \$8.8m discount", they do not know what they are talking about. So the allegations are true.

Let any Minister stand up and deny that Cabinet decided to award this contract for \$331m to C. Itoh after only 10 minutes discussion. That has never been denied. The matter was brought in at the last minute. It was not even set down for discussion on that day.

A Government Member: How do you know?

Mr WRIGHT: I happen to have some friends in Cabinet. I happened to get a pretty good report of what went on in Cabinet, and I am thankful for it. On the Government benches there are members who do not like what is going on.

Was it because the Minister for Mines and Energy, whose actions I deplore, arranged for very senior people of the Clyde Riley Dodds group to see him that afternoon? He made a specific appointment for those people to see him at 2.30. What happened? They came all the way from Sydney, walked into his office, and he said, "I am sorry, but the decision has already been made. It was made this morning in Cabinet. Thank you very much." He handed them a Press release.

How would you be! Here is a Minister who, after having considered a contract for 12 months and after having given everybody else an opportunity to reconsider the matter and to resubmit tenders, invites one of the main tenderers—the only Australian tenderer—to come to see him at a specially prearranged meeting and when its representative gets there he says, "I am sorry, mate, but we did it this morning." Why did the Cabinet Ministers do it that morning? Because he rushed it through.

The Cabinet Ministers sitting in the Chamber this afternoon are to be indicted for their actions. It took them 10 minutes to decide something that the QEGB and the State Electricity Commission had been looking at for 10 months. It took them 10 minutes to decide to send overseas \$331m, 4900 jobs and 4.1 million man-hours. That is an indictment of the Cabinet Ministers, and in particular the Minister for Mines and Energy, Mr Gibbs, stands condemned because he allowed that to happen.

He stands condemned also because of the choice that was made. I would not have agreed that the contract had to go to Ansaldo, but I put it to the House that if the Government could not give the contract to an Australian firm it should have done the best possible deal for Queensland. It is apparent from the Company's report that the difference between the Ansaldo tender and the C. Itoh tender was marginal—a matter of only \$9m. The report also points out that Ansaldo said that, if it was given the tender, contracts for the purchase of from 10 million to 20 million tons of coal would have come in trade to this State. Ansaldo estimates that trade as being worth between \$150m and \$300m. It also points out that if it had been given the contract on a counter-trade offer, 250 jobs of miners in Queensland would have been saved. Yet Mr Gibbs said that he did not brief Cabinet on that matter; he did not think it was necessary.

Surely the job of Cabinet is not only to consider the financial aspects to ensure that something that is set down adds up properly; its job is also to consider and make an economic evaluation of any decision that is arrived at. It was the Premier himself who, on the very day that Cabinet awarded the contract, was reported in the Press as saying that he told the C. Itoh Co Ltd executives that the tender was a way for the Government to show its appreciation of the Japanese Government's decision to import Queensland products. What is going on here? The Minister for Mines and Energy said that the Government does not consider counter offers and that it is not interested in any trade arrangements; yet on the very day that the contract was signed the Premier stated publicly, "The reason you mob got it is that you have done the right thing in buying our goods." The Government cannot have it both ways. It cannot have a deal going on with the Premier and not with the Minister for Mines and Energy.

I wonder whether Cabinet Ministers here, many of whom are responsible men, would, if given the chance again, have accepted that tender in 10 minutes. They did not have the Ansaldo report before them. If they had been given it and if they had known all the facts, would they have wanted more time to consider the matter? Would Government back-benchers who represent mining electorates—Vince Lester and his colleagues—have wanted the additional \$300m from coal sales to Italy? Would they have preferred that if the difference in the price was only \$7m? That is what the document says; it is not Keith Wright saying it. I am suggesting that this is not a matter of some business people hiding behind a secret meeting; this is set out in a written document with that company's letter-head and it is signed by senior officials. Again I say that the Minister for Mines and Energy stands condemned and his actions ought to be deplored.

Ministers know what happens when questions are thrown at them at Press conferences. In answer to a quick question at a Press conference, I made a passing remark. I was asked whether I believed someone was "on the take". I answered, "Yes." Within moments I was asked what I meant. I said that I believed from information given to me that someone had been compromised and that they had received hospitality. It will be noted that the report substantiates my claim. The seriousness of this will, no doubt, be canvassed by other members of the Opposition. The situation is very serious when men who are

senior officials who will sit down and decide what happens about a contract may be overseas being compromised, having a holiday, playing golf and having all their accommodation and expenses paid by a tenderer. If that is the way business is conducted in this State, it is no wonder that companies will have nothing to do with it. As I have said, other members of the Opposition will canvass those points.

Mr Innes: How many Opposition members have stayed at Iwasaki's resort?

Mr WRIGHT: I do not know of any member of the Opposition who has ever had a free trip from Iwasaki or anyone else. However, I do know that when Iwasaki offered money, we knocked it back. That is not so of Government members. I will not go into that. Unlike the Premier, who wants to bring up the Peel Report and tell lies about some money that I owe, I do not want to go into that.

The more serious allegation comes back to the documents that have been presented. I return now to the Ansaldo report. It is vitally important to place on record what that company is saying. It is made very clear in Ansaldo's tendering that a deal was offered. The deal was subsequently defined as being a sale of 10 million to 20 million tons of steaming coal to be purchased by the electricity authority ENEL at a rate of two million tonnes annually over a five-year to 10-year period.

Page two of the report states—

"Having seen wide divergencies in short term forecasts based on different economic assessments, it appears to us that a ten year forecast cannot be much better than a guess."

They are the ones challenging the evaluation system used by the authority, not Keith Wright. They are experts. They are saying that it is wrong. The report continues—

"Therefore we believe that the assessed price difference of \$73 million instead of the actual of \$28 million, alternatively \$9 million, is at best debatable."

The assessments are very clear. They are saying that the difference in the final price— it must be remembered that they were given a chance to come back with an alternative offer—was \$9m. They said to the Government that what it should have done was to assess that \$9m extra and compare it with the advantages.

The headline on page three reads, "Qld declines an opportunity." It further states—

"It is clear, therefore, that—

1. The future additional cost, however assessed, of the combined ANSALDO plant is small when compared with the immediate advantages to Queensland of:
 - new sales of coal totalling 10-20 million tons
 - saving of the jobs of 250 coal miners
 - additional state revenue of \$150-300 million
2. The ANSALDO offer for turbine plant is directly comparable in price with Hitachi so that the benefits of commensurate counter-trade could have been of great importance to Queensland."

However, the Cabinet Ministers were not told.

The report further states—

"By virtue of its decision for the Stanwell tenders, Qld"—that is the Queensland Government—"has compromised its participation in the largest European market for imported steaming coal. Italy has of course a number of regular suppliers of steaming coal—such as Poland, South Africa and the USA, all of them situated closer to this large market, and all much less subject to industrial unrest interrupting supply, and to ocean freight costs. No wonder then that ENEL was only prepared to consider Queensland coal if the country could derive some benefit from it such as a major contract for generating plant."

The report contains a criticism by industry in the following terms—

"Nevertheless Japan has a virtual monopoly on the supply of large power station equipment to Australian electricity Authorities and it is not unlikely that European manufacturers may lose interest in bidding for this plant, especially in view of the astronomically high cost of tendering."

Whichever way one looks at it, the report contains ongoing criticisms of the Government, of the authority and of the Minister by a very respected firm.

Is it any wonder that I took the opportunity to raise this matter publicly? I do not apologise for taking the matter to the Auditor-General, because he is the last resort in this State. We do not have a public accounts committee. We do not have the right to evaluate such matters properly, not just on financial grounds but on an economic basis. We have not had an opportunity, for instance—as was suggested by the Clyde Riley Dodds group—to consider the jobs of the 4 900 men who would have been employed had an Australian contractor been awarded the contract, the 4.1m job-hours involved and the profits that would have stayed in Australia.

It has been assessed that out of a \$331m contract something like \$40m is straight-out profit. That could vary. It could be \$30m. Irrespective of that, what the Government has said is that those profits are to be exported overseas; that Queensland taxpayers are to send the money outside the State. I suggest that if the profits were \$40m, the contract could have been given to the Clyde Riley Dodds group, because its tender was nothing like \$40m dearer. That would have meant not only the jobs, the payroll tax, the income tax, the use of their expertise, the multiplying effect of that investment and the foreign exchange advantages; it would also have meant that the profits stayed in Queensland and in Australia. Those profits, in turn, would have resulted in the employment of other people and the purchase of other materials. But, no, the Minister for Mines and Energy would not even let the other Ministers see what it was all about. I find that deplorable. He is the one who ought to be copping the crow here.

I could say things about Joh Bjelke-Petersen, but on this occasion he has simply read a brief. He would not have read the documents. He could not have read the documents. I do not say that about Llew Edwards. I do not know whether he had the chance to. However, I doubt very much whether Bjelke-Petersen did, so we cannot blame him for some of the things that he said. He was merely playing politics, and we must expect that here.

I return to my point: if we could not give it to Clyde Riley Dodds because of some evaluation process, surely there was an obligation on the Cabinet and the Government to get the best deal for Queensland. I put it to the House that the best deal would have been Ansaldo's. The difference was only \$9m. In that context, I refer to the suggestions made of a counter offer.

I am now concerned about a monopoly. I am told that, because of Gibbs's support of this and because he rushed it through and Cabinet Ministers did not have a chance to consider these aspects, the C. Itoh group, a Japanese company, now has a monopoly over the electricity industry in the State. When monopolies occur—for example, the one the Government gave to the Port of Brisbane Authority—the control of a competitive market is lost. No-one has a chance any more. The Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr Gibbs) should be condemned by the Parliament. I could call for his resignation. In Queensland Ministers do not resign their commissions. They can do what they like here. They can be part of decisions, but they are not held responsible. As the member for Callide (Lindsay Hartwig) says, a council can spend \$380,000 on putting a road to the property of a son of a member of Cabinet, only 20 people use the road each day, but nothing is ever said or done about it. That is not a Labor Party accusation. That is from Lindsay Hartwig, an independent member who used to be on the Government benches.

There needs to be a complete overhaul of the tendering system in the State. A mechanism ought to be set up within the Treasury to re-assess the deal. Llew Edwards says he will take the blame. I am surprised that he would dare do that. I am surprised that, when the facts are known, Llew Edwards is not the little mouse hiding under his chair somewhere, as he is depicted by Alan Moir. He should not be game to take the blame on this one. If he reads through the Auditor-General's report, especially on page 7, he will note a veiled criticism of Mr Gibbs. I know that that could be claimed as drawing the long bow, but I see veiled criticism of Mr Gibbs in the statement about information given to Cabinet.

The "Daily Sun" was unconvinced, I am unconvinced and it is my belief that the people of Queensland are unconvinced. It is very clear that the Auditor-General carried out the job as best he could within the terms of reference he had. On page 8 he admits that he could not look into all allegations because they did not come within the ambit of his authority. He admits that there were aspects that were not involved.

I make a final criticism about the way in which the report came about. I see this as something like a court case in which only one side is allowed to give evidence. There is nothing in that report of any evidence coming from anyone but the electricity authorities themselves.

Dr Lockwood: Put your case here. This is the highest court in the State.

Mr WRIGHT: Unfortunately this Parliament rarely sits. I think it has sat for only 10 days this year. I haven't heard the honourable member saying too much, but he will not be here much longer. I know what Peter Wood will do to him.

I am not convinced that the report is really the substance of the issue. It does not give a clear indication of the final issue. Because the Auditor-General did not have sufficient power, I do not believe it tells all the facts. As I started to say before I was rudely interrupted by the honourable member for Toowoomba North, can honourable members imagine a prosecutor presenting an indictment against an accused and not presenting all of the evidence? In this case, the only people brought forward were the people charged. That is what the Auditor-General did; because that is all he was allowed to do. He did not ask the accusers, he did not ask Ansaldo or Clyde Riley Dodds for their opinion of the evaluation procedure, he spoke only to the QEGB people and asked them if they stuck to their assessment procedures. He was not allowed to ask whether there were any different ones; he simply had as witnesses those who were accused.

If our justice system provided that the only witness allowed to be called in a criminal trial was the accused, there would never be a guilty verdict. Under that sort of system we certainly could not have expected the Auditor-General to bring down a verdict of guilty against anyone, because all the evidence was not presented to him; it was a one-sided affair.

I wish to ask the Minister for Mines and Energy by way of interjection if he holds to the evaluation procedures used by the QEGB on this issue? Will he nod or something? In other words, does he stand by the Auditor-General's assessment that these evaluation procedures are correct? Let the media record that the Minister refused to answer. He refuses to say that he stands by the evaluation process used by his own people. What an amazing situation! I will put it two ways. If he does not stand by the evaluation procedures used, my allegations are totally founded.

Mr Lester: Why don't you give him a chance to speak?

Mr WRIGHT: That is if he has the courage to speak. Everybody knows that he rarely speaks. Before the member for Peak Downs rushed in—

Mr Lester: What about the electric trains in Central Queensland?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Peak Downs under Standing Order 123A.

Mr WRIGHT: What the member for Peak Downs does not know is that the Labor Party pushed for the electrification of the system even before he entered Parliament.

I return to the issue I was about to address. If the Minister does not stand by the evaluation procedures, the Auditor-General's task was impossible, because if the evaluation procedures are not what the Minister believes to be proper, what is the issue all about? That substantiates my claims.

If the Minister says that the evaluation procedures used by the officers of the QEGB are proper, exacting and correct, I ask him to explain how it was that his Government rejected those evaluation procedures and the QEGB's decision on the power-station at Millmerran. The Minister's experts, using the evaluation procedures, determined that a power-station be constructed at Millmerran. But what did the Government do? It decided to construct one at Tarong. By simply playing politics the Government has imposed on the people of Queensland an additional debt of \$259m. I suggest to the Minister that he cannot have it both ways and I would like to hear his views on the matter. If the Minister agrees with the evaluation process used in this case, an inquiry should be held into the Tarong decision.

I am pleased that the investigation was carried out and the report made. I believe that we should have a parliamentary public accounts committee. I believe that the report

will not convince the people of Queensland. My allegations of improper action by certain members working within the QEGB are true. They have admitted that they were compromised; that they had a holiday and were out playing golf, all expenses paid.

Mr Bertoni interjected.

Mr WRIGHT: I hear the honourable member for Mt Isa laughing. I wonder whether that is the way he plays it as well.

The fact is that people were compromised. They have admitted it and the Auditor-General could not condemn them any further because he could judge the issue only on what they said they did, not what anyone else said.

Everything that was said by way of allegation has been shown to be accurate, although its importance is a different matter. The fact is that although separate tenders were called for, a combined tender was accepted. It is a fact that a resubmitted tender was allowed. It is a fact that a discount was allowed. It is a fact that information was withheld from Cabinet. I believe that the Minister for Mines and Energy stands condemned. His actions ought to be deplored, and the Opposition has moved the amendment to do just that.

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

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate) (3.41 p.m.): I have great pleasure in seconding the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. At the outset I must say that it is a measure of the importance and seriousness of this debate that the mover and seconder of the motion, Mr Bjelke-Petersen and Dr Edwards, have not even seen fit to stay in the Chamber and listen to the response of the person they accuse of impropriety.

I would like to remind the House that a similar situation occurred earlier in the year in our rather confined sitting of two weeks when the same two gentlemen saw fit to move a motion concerning the Hawke Government's Statement of Accord. The record will show their dismal failure in that debate, just as the record will show their dismal failure in respect of this matter that they decided to bring before this Parliament today. I simply reiterate that it is to the detriment and shame of the Premier and the Deputy Premier that they have not seen fit to wait for the responses to their accusation against the Leader of the Opposition today and the personal attacks on him.

I have had occasion in the past to correspond with the Auditor-General on certain matters. Mr Speaker, you might recall my concern about the reports of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, particularly the financial reports of 1980 and 1981, and the false reports, one of which was altered by the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts, who is still responsible for the administration of that corporation. That experience showed me clearly that the Auditor-General's area of responsibility is very confined.

I want to confine my early remarks in this debate to supporting the amendment and to discussing the economic evaluation referred to in the Auditor-General's report. It is very clear to me from the Auditor-General's special report on the letting of the contracts for the Stanwell Power Station, which we are debating today, that no economic evaluation of the relevant tender proposals was undertaken—if we can believe what is contained in the Auditor-General's report. The only evaluations of the tender proposals that were undertaken were in regard to engineering and financial considerations—again, I repeat, if one can have faith in the report we are debating today. No economic study was made of the likely impact of the various tender proposals on the Queensland and Australian economies, and that is a statement that was well thought out and put forward in this House today by the Leader of the Opposition.

It is amazing to me that, under the Electricity Act, the letting of contracts should be solely on the basis of administrative procedures, with a view to overall costs. It seems that no economic evaluation of the tenders is required by the Electricity Act. That disregard for economics, particularly in such an important area, in favour of a purely technical evaluation, or what might be called a commercial evaluation, with the problems resulting from that particular bias, has clearly been shown by the Victorian parliamentary investigation of quangos in Victoria, particularly into the State Electricity Commission, and the study undertaken by Professor Peter Swan into the economics of electrical authorities in Australia.

Within the Generation Design Division and the Contract Services Department, there does not appear to be any economist to evaluate the situation. At the same time, it appears that there was no economic input into the evaluation procedures. Perhaps the Minister, if he takes part in this debate, will explain why that should be so. The chief engineer headed the investigation into the technical and engineering aspects of the tenders, while the financial, legal and commercial evaluation was handled by the Contract Services Department. Because of the contents of the Auditor-General's report, I can only assume that no economic evaluation was mentioned or even thought of.

I now quote from page 4 of the report, in these terms—

“The expertise required to develop these forecasts is not held by the Board as the cost of training and computer facilities is high.”

Because the board did not have sufficient financial expertise to estimate the effect of exchange rate fluctuations and inflation on the likely present worth of the project, the Henley Centre for Forecasting, an international forecasting group, was commissioned to undertake the financial economic studies to determine the rather simple and outmoded concept of the break-even point. In addition, computers using the Prosper Star Financial Modelling language were used to assist in determining the likely effect of exchange rate fluctuations and inflation on the net present value of the tenders, using a cash flow discounting formula.

It is important to make the point that these calculations are subject to considerable margins of error and in no way constitute an economic evaluation. I stress that point and, at the same time, ask for an explanation from the Minister. I can come to only one interpretation after reading the report. I point out that I accept and welcome the report because it shows very clearly the deficiency in the system that members of the Opposition have been trying to put before the Government. I repeat that I welcome debate on this report today.

An economic evaluation of the tender proposals would have to include a benefit/cost study of the various proposals. It would investigate the multiplier or the flow-on effects for the Queensland and Australian economies. It would also have to investigate the likely monetary and employment multipliers, both of which are very important.

Instead of being subjected to this stunt by the Petersen-Edwards team—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! I have pointed out to members in this House before that they will refer to the Premier as the Premier and to the Treasurer as the Treasurer.

Mr WARBURTON: I repeat: instead of being subjected to the stunts of the two gentlemen who moved and seconded this motion today, I would have been happier if we had gnawed at and debated the most important issue facing Queensland and this nation today, and that is providing jobs for workers and contracts for employers. Of course, this debate is in some small way, thankfully, a little relevant to the point that I make.

I make the point again that, if the details in this report are correct, apparently no such economic study was done. Such an economic study would need to investigate the various linkages that may flow from tender proposals. As I say, no such study was done, or, if it was done, we have not been told about it. An economic evaluation would need to look at the opportunity/cost factors involved in the use of resources for a particular tender. Once again, no such study was done. If it was done, we have not been told about it in this report. The economic study would need to look at resource allocations. Again, no such study was done. If it was done, there is no reference to it in this report.

What the Auditor-General's report does highlight is the almost total absence of economic considerations in the evaluation and determination of contract proposals by the QEGB and the SEC. Such an admission clearly supports the trenchant criticisms made by the Victorian parliamentary investigation into the operation of Victorian quangos. It clearly supports the criticisms of Professor Swan, to whom I have referred, and his remarks about the absence of economic evaluation by Australian electricity authorities.

It is clear that engineers and accountants dominate decision-making in the QEGB and the SEC and that economists have virtually no input into important decisions of this kind. In his report, the Auditor-General stated—

“Each of the evaluation streams was staffed in the main by qualified engineers

... ”

The New South Wales and Victorian Governments have recently taken measures to rectify this bias and it is absolutely clear from this report that urgent measures need to be taken by the Queensland Government to rectify the bias in the evaluation procedures within Queensland electricity authorities.

Surely the conclusion must be that there is a need to carry out an immediate and complete investigation into Queensland's electricity industry. Obviously the Auditor-General does not have the power to investigate the merit of the actual decision; he can only investigate the procedures followed in the evaluation of tenders. That point comes out loudly and clearly in the report. I repeat what I have said on numerous occasions: Only a public accounts committee can look beyond the decisions and judge whether the reasons given for making the decisions were correct and proper.

A point made by the Leader of the Opposition needs to be reiterated. Certainly, to this stage, the Government has not given a reasonable explanation of this matter. I refer to the amazing decision by C. Itoh to grant a \$8.8m discount. So that everybody may be clear on this point, I refer to the SEC's letting of the contract for the turbo-generators and boilers to C. Itoh, and to the company's being so grateful that it offers an \$8.8m discount as a mark of its generosity. That is my interpretation of what is contained in the Auditor-General's report. I can well imagine the thoughts of the other tenderers when they found out about that generous offer of the company that won the contract. I can well understand why the Queensland public and sections of the media are and will continue to remain suspicious of and concerned at the way in which this Government and its cherished quangos conduct their business affairs.

The tabling of this report and the Government's allowing members time to peruse it have clearly brought out into the open the urgent need for an all-party public accounts committee. Such a committee needs to be established by this Parliament. If the Liberal members were to have the courage of their convictions and not be prepared for purely political and opportunistic purposes to kowtow to their National Party colleagues, and if they were prepared to bite the bullet, Queensland would have had a public accounts committee today and there would have been no need for the suspicions, the innuendoes and the reasons behind this move by the Government. However, those suspicions and innuendoes will continue, because the people of Queensland and certain sections of the media are suspicious of this Government's dealings. It is apparent from the report that there is every reason for that suspicion.

As I indicated, Queensland should come into line with the Commonwealth and all other States in relation to open government and accountability through a public accounts committee. Opposition members have been saying it and the Liberal members have been saying it. However, Liberal members have not been doing anything about it.

The Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Dr Edwards, saw fit to second the Premier's motion and then to run. As soon as accountability is expected, he utters his now familiar cry, "It is an administrative nightmare." That was his cry when he managed to spend only \$1m of the \$15m wage pause funds that the Federal Government gave to Queensland over a six-month period. That was also his cry last night when he was asked why the Queensland Government was considering non-participation in the community employment program. The Treasurer says, "It is an administrative nightmare." What that means is that he is afraid of accountability to the people of Queensland.

By way of the Auditor-General's report, members now have details of tenders and contracts that are of great concern to Queensland. Usually, as members of Parliament, we would not see those details and would not have an opportunity to debate them. Why has it come about that a censure motion has been moved against the Leader of the Opposition, who saw fit to accept his responsibilities? Why was it that this debate was instigated on some of the most important contractual arrangements that this Government has handled over quite a lengthy period? It is because of the secrecy indulged in by this Government, and it is also because the Government is dominated by Executive Government. The back-bench members of the Government realise that and some of them have been trying to do something about it. That secrecy and domination are the reason for this debate today.

There is no questioning the fact that the Queensland Government's method is to operate behind a veil of secrecy. The list of deals and of improprieties on the part of the Premier and others in the Government is a long one. Those deals and improprieties cause people to be suspicious of this Government's activities.

As the Leader of the Opposition asked, quite correctly, how can the people of this State be confident in respect of this contractual arrangement, having heard some of the accusations that have been made, when they know about such things as the Wivenhoe Dam gates? How can they be satisfied in their own mind that this Government is doing the best for Queenslanders in providing jobs when events of that type are occurring? The Queensland Premier's attempt in 1980 to have his Kingaroy land exempted from the provisions of the Mining Act is a matter that comes to mind when people hear these accusations. They have good reason to be suspicious.

It is the job of the Opposition, and particularly the Leader of the Opposition, to probe those issues. Nobody in this Chamber—I have in mind particularly the Premier and the Deputy Premier—will stop the right of the Opposition to carry out its duty to the people of Queensland. I stress that point, because the censure motion that has been moved against the Opposition is for doing exactly that. The Leader of the Opposition is being censured for carrying out his responsibilities as a member of the parliamentary Labor Party.

In 1980 a gentleman by the name of Ralph Nader visited Queensland. Most people will remember him as a great advocate in the area of consumer affairs. He lives in the United States of America. His comments and his work are respected. When he visited Queensland in 1980 he made this important observation about the Queensland Government. He said, "The Queensland Government has an international reputation as a repressive Government, a Government that does not trust its own people." I believe that in the latter part of that statement lies the real problem. When a Government does not trust its own people, one is bound to see the sort of things that are happening today. One is bound to see a government that will not confide in people; a government that will try to prevent the Parliament of this State from participating in the decisions in which it should be participating. That is what is occurring.

There is no doubt about the Government's reputation as a wheeler-dealer, if I may use that term, even though Government members may protest and continue to protest. I mentioned the Wivenhoe Dam gates. That matter is relevant because the report contains a mention of a particular company that was concerned with the Wivenhoe Dam gates scandal. Page 5 of the Auditor-General's Report states—

"Consulting Engineers, Preece Cardew International Pty. Ltd., reported that the balance of merit in design and equipment lay with C. Itoh & Co. Ltd. compared with the other three designs checked in respect of the short-listed tenders."

That is a relevant matter to raise in this Parliament. Many people may say that the consulting engineers referred to in that report are engineers who have an international reputation and that they must be right and that their recommendation would naturally have to be agreed to by the Government and its quango. What are parliamentarians and the public to believe when they know that Preece Cardew International Pty. Ltd. is the very same firm of consulting engineers retained by the Queensland Government to be entirely responsible for the overseeing of the Wivenhoe Dam gates? The dam gates were manufactured in South Korea and found to be so defective that they were dumped unceremoniously in Brisbane scrap-metal yards. The same company is again popping up and making recommendations to the electricity industry of this State on the very matter we are debating today. We know because the evidence is there—it has been admitted in this place—that it is the same firm of consulting engineers that was supposed to oversee the construction of the dam gates in South Korea. We know what happened there. We have not been able to find out in this place or anywhere else, particularly from the Minister, exactly how that firm of consulting engineers failed Queensland on that occasion. Why did they not carry out their responsibilities? Why were those gates that arrived on Brisbane's doorstep so defective that they are regarded by people in the boiler-making and fitting trade as some of the worst work of that type that they have ever seen? Are those consulting engineers the sort of people advising the electricity industry of this State? Are we simply to accept the comment made in this report, "This firm of consulting engineers gave the advice and we followed it."? That is not good enough for members of this side of the Chamber. We know what the consulting engineers did in respect of the Wivenhoe gates. We know what a mess they made of that project. We wonder and the public wonder what sort of a mess they might have made of their advice to the electricity industry in this State in the present instance.

This is our House. This is where we are supposed to be able to quiz relevant Ministers about issues of the day. This is where I would expect to find out from the Minister whom we are now censuring through our amendment why it was that that firm of consultants did not meet its responsibilities in regard to the Wivenhoe gates that were built in South Korea. Was somebody sent from the firm's base in Japan or from its base in Brisbane? What happened? The Minister has been asked before, but he has never seen fit to respond. Therefore, is it any wonder that the Opposition has to resort to other means to probe the Government in an endeavour to extract the truth and to get to the bottom of just what it is all about? Is it any wonder that the people of this State look at the Minister with suspicion and wonder what on earth he will get up to next?

I have indicated that the dealings I have outlined give the Opposition reasonable cause to carry out the investigatory processes that it has seen fit to undertake on this occasion. I repeat that the Opposition in Queensland has every right to use every available means at its disposal to probe the activities and indiscretions of the Government. That is what the people of Queensland expect of the Opposition. It is what we on the Opposition side will continue to do. In the absence of other recognised means, the Opposition had every right to ask the Auditor-General to investigate allegations of suspected impropriety. It is a responsibility of the Opposition to do so. The parliamentary Labor Party is interested in jobs for Queenslanders. It is interested in contracts for Queensland and Australian employers. It doubts the Government's probity concerning the contract we are debating.

We are sick and tired of the excuses of this Government and its failures to explain why in such troubled economic times—in times of economic downturn—this State, and this State alone, refuses to look after its own. Despite the fact that Queenslanders are often critical of other States, if one looks at the arrangements under which they operate, one sees that they are looking after their own. For some reason this State does not look after its own. The Opposition wants to know why that is so and why, when the facts before us are supported by the Auditor-General's report, this contract was let to a Japanese company rather than to some other tenderer. I refer again to the matter raised by me and by the Leader of the Opposition, that is, the very generous gift of \$8.8m that was given by the company to the QEGB.

I am concerned at what the public might think. I cannot blame any of the other contractors, whether from this State, from this nation, or, for that matter, from overseas, for believing that some shenanigans went on and that something went astray. The Auditor-General's report is not grounds for criticism of the actions taken by the Leader of the Opposition. I refute that completely; rather, it is an expose of the deficiency of the Queensland parliamentary system and of the failure of this Government to make quangos more answerable to the Government.

I welcome the report of the Auditor-General, because if it does anything, it will revitalise the public call for accountability through the establishment of a parliamentary public accounts committee.

I support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I think it is only right and proper that the Minister for Mines and Energy, who has been so silent on these matters right from the beginning, and who in fact did the very things of which he has been accused in the amendment, should now be in a position to explain to the House, as he should have done ages ago, exactly what occurred so that honourable members and the public can understand the way in which the Government worked on this occasion.

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy) (4.13 p.m.): I have never seen anyone squirm so much like a worm as the Leader of the Opposition did when he delivered his speech. The report that he requested the Auditor-General to make condemned him and his actions. If ever there was a chance of the Leader of the Opposition and the party to which he belongs becoming the Government, his actions over the contracts for the Stanwell Power Station have killed it. His action could have serious consequences for the future of Queensland. However, he has no chance of leading the Government, so we will never know.

The fact is that no Japanese interests could have any confidence in the Leader of the Opposition or any Government led by him. He has made serious allegations against

one of the largest and most reputable firms in Japan, namely, Hitachi Limited, and also against one of the country's most important marketing groups, C. Itoh. Without any foundation, he has accused these major groups of corruption of the most serious kind. He made his allegations without any evidence to back them, and he pursued his campaign of denigration for more than two months.

If the Leader of the Opposition was ever seen as a serious contender for the position of Premier of Queensland, his campaign over the letting of the tenders for the Stanwell Power Station would have had serious repercussions for Queensland's relations with Japan. It raises the point, of course, that an ALP Government would put our entire future trading relationship with Japan in jeopardy.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition started out by accusing the Japanese of involvement in corruption. In more recent weeks he has switched his tack, suggesting instead that the State Government should consider ignoring fair play in competitive tendering procedures and award contracts to Italy in the hope of securing more coal contracts. This latest argument seems to suggest that our massive trade in coal with Japan is not necessarily worth worrying about.

Just to ensure that the honourable Leader of the Opposition is properly informed for his future forays into darkness, I mention that Queensland exported more than 17 million tonnes of coal to Japan in 1982. I also inform him that we do already have a substantial coal trade with Italy—well in excess of a million tonnes a year, and one that we are currently building on. Our total exports to Italy last year were the third highest on the list after Japan and Korea.

I want to put on the public record that the Queensland Government values greatly its trade relations with both Japan and Italy. They have been established over many years in many areas and have been the basis for great progress within our State. The Queensland Government is not directly in the business of international trade in minerals and energy, but it does ensure that private enterprise is given the best possible chance to take advantage of trading opportunities. I want to assure those people involved in trade between our State and other nations that we are not about to embark on the course of action suggested by the honourable Leader of the Opposition. The Government will not pressure Queensland companies or statutory authorities to award contracts to a particular country because of some "outside" deal that might be in the offering.

It might be of interest to the House that the Italian tender, which the honourable Leader of the Opposition has been championing of late, would have cost Queensland electricity consumers an additional \$70m approximately, as distinct from the \$9m that he referred to. It would take quite a few million tonnes of steaming coal to make up that difference. Because the coal trade is totally in the hands of private enterprise, it also would have been of no direct benefit to Queensland electricity consumers, who would have had to meet that additional \$70m or so by paying more through tariffs. The Leader of the Opposition has shown very clearly that he has no real knowledge of the facts of the coal trade, the Queensland electricity industry or the very ethics of business practice.

I believe the actions of the Leader of the Opposition must be condemned because of the irresponsibility he has shown in making and pursuing these accusations over the Stanwell contracts. At his very first news conference to launch this campaign to make a scandal out of Stanwell one way or another, he demonstrated the inconsistencies which have marked his utterances and actions ever since. At a news conference here at Parliament House on 24 May he first accused me of, as he put it, "being on the take". His words to journalists were, "I want to know Mr Gibbs's advantage in this and I come straight out and say it." However, that seems to be the one and only time he actually accused me of "being on the take." Later at the same news conference in reference to someone being "on the take" over the Stanwell contracts, he said quite clearly, "I'm saying it is an Electricity Commission official." Interestingly enough, that seems to be the last time he pointed the finger at anyone in the Electricity Commission.

At this stage I want to read and table a letter dated 4 July 1983 from Macrossan Douglas, solicitors, to Morris Fletcher & Cross, solicitors for the Commissioner. It reads—

"Dear Sirs,

Re: The Honourable Keith Wright and Mr Neil Arthur Galwey

As you know, we act for the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition in Queensland, The Honourable Keith Wright.

On 24th May last Mr Wright made certain remarks regarding the Stanwell Power House Contract on the television program 'State Affair'. Mr Wright has instructed us to inform you on behalf of your client the State Electricity Commissioner, Mr Neil Arthur Galwey, that Mr Wright's remarks in that program could not in any way refer to your client.

Mr Wright has absolute confidence in the integrity of Mr Galwey as the State Electricity Commissioner and he instructs us that at no time has he made any adverse statements concerning Mr Galwey. Consequently, it goes without saying that our client was not referring to Mr Galwey."

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the letter on the table.

Mr I. J. GIBBS: The Leader of the Opposition, after accusing workers in the electricity industry in general, switched, instead, to making accusations against an unnamed person in the Queensland Electricity Generating Board. I should have thought that the Leader of the Opposition would base his accusations on reliable information and on evidence that he believed could prove his allegations. If he had done so, he would at least have been able to pin-point in which section of the industry the accused person or persons worked. Instead of doing that, he chose to smear the reputations of many hard-working, honest people throughout the electricity industry, simply to serve his own political cause and that of the ALP. His initial action and the campaign that he has kept up over the past two months or more have been nothing short of despicable. They cast an unfortunate reflection on the image of politics and politicians generally.

I have a few more points to make to remind the House of the important aspects of this major \$331m contract. Firstly, after a full evaluation of all aspects of the tenders—and that was a major task that took some 60 people six months to carry out—the C. Itoh-Hitachi tender was the lowest conforming tender. Secondly, most of the work that is to be carried out under the contracts for boilers and turbines cannot be done in Australia. That is one important point on which Opposition members have been misleading the people. Thirdly, the C. Itoh-Hitachi contract provides for subcontracting work, where possible, to be done in Australia. As a result, one of the main beneficiaries will be the Queensland-based firm of Evans Deakin.

In summing up, the Government wanted three main criteria satisfied: the first was the need for high-quality workmanship of conforming standards; the second was the lowest comparative price; and the third was the provision that as much work as possible be done in Australia.

I am staggered that the Leader of the Opposition should spend the past two months dredging up unfounded allegations to knock a project that represents a \$1.4 billion investment in the area he represents in the Queensland Parliament.

I have some comments to make about jobs created by the Stanwell project. The boiler/turbine contract will mean 185 000 man-weeks of work for Queensland and a further 20 000 man-weeks of work within Australia. If that is translated into actual jobs, it means that if the work is done over a five-year period, an additional 710 jobs will be created in Queensland in each of those five years. It should be borne in mind that I am speaking only about the \$331m contract for boilers and turbines, which is about one-quarter of the total cost of the Stanwell Power Station project.

Another important point to bear in mind is what would have happened had the Government ignored fair play in evaluating the tenders and deliberately awarded the contract for the boilers to the nearest Australian competitor. Much of the work would still have had to be done overseas, and the gain in jobs for Queensland would have been only about 36. However, the additional 36 jobs would have cost the electricity consumers an additional \$29m. If that sum were spent on local investment, it would have the capacity to provide about 120 jobs for Queenslanders.

To sum up, I point out that well over half the work associated with these two contracts will flow into the Australian economy. Looking at the entire Stanwell Power Station contract, which, on the latest estimates, is costed at more than \$1,400m, up to 65 per cent of the work will be done in Queensland, some of it will be done in other parts of Australia, and it is expected that about 20 per cent, or a little more, of the work will be done overseas.

I believe that an enormous amount of misleading information has been given about Clyde Riley Dodds (Qld) Pty Ltd. The Leader of the Opposition referred to an appointment made by some spokesman from that company. I assure him that the appointment was not made by me; it was made by the company's spokesman. We did not refuse to see anyone at any time during the tender process. If any persons wanted to come and see us, they were quite welcome. Certain people from Clyde Riley Dodds rang up and made an appointment. However, when they arrived to keep the appointment the tender had already been awarded. That is a fact and I make no apology for it. It was just one of those things that happen.

I shall go a little deeper into this matter and refer to some comments attributed to Clyde Riley Dodds and to the Leader of the Opposition. On one occasion an interviewer said to me, "Mr Gibbs, you have published that some of the work of Clyde Riley Dodds was to be done in Korea. Clyde Riley Dodds, or some spokesman, and the Leader of the Opposition have said that that is not true, that they were not getting any work done in Korea." In that regard, I refer to page four of the Auditor-General's report, where it is stated—

"The tender of Clyde Riley Dodds (the third lowest) was of particular concern to the evaluators as vital financial schedules were not completed and a significant proportion of technical detail was omitted. The financial data was not submitted until 30th November, 1982, some two months after the closing date of 29th September, 1982."

I now refer to a couple of other documents. The first document is Schedule C, which refers to the country of manufacture. It is an important document. It allows the people evaluating a tender to ascertain details about the factory and the country in which equipment is manufactured. It also allows them to consider economic factors as well as technical matters. For about 10 or a dozen items of equipment the document states, "Mitsui Engineering Japan or alternatively Korean source". Clyde Riley Dodds, or its spokesman, has been guilty of giving rather false information to the media.

I also refer to a document dealing with tender information requests. It contains the following request from the Queensland Electricity Generating Board—

"Please advise into what column of Schedule C you have included Schedule II tendered amount for—Duty, Transport, Erection, Other costs in Australia."

The tenderer's reply was—

"Tendered amounts for duty are included in Brisbane Statistical Division. Tendered amounts for Transport, Marine Freight, Marine Insurance and Erection are not included in Schedule C as it is the Tenderer's understanding that Schedule C requires 'Manufactured and Base Material values' only to be listed."

The tenderer, Clyde Riley Dodds, was requested to nominate the alternative Korean source. It should be remembered that the company referred to a Korean source in its original tender. The answer from the company was—

"Mitsui Engineering, Japan, or alternatively, Hyundai Heavy Ind., Samsung Heavy Ind. Korea."

I table those documents because they refute some statements made by the Leader of the Opposition and some representatives from Clyde Riley Dodds.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid on the table the documents referred to.

Mr I. J. GIBBS: The Leader of the Opposition began his speech by saying that he saw it as his "responsibility". What is the responsibility of the Leader of the Opposition? I believe that his first responsibility is to act responsibly. However, he has acted totally irresponsibly.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to this place as if it were a court and as if he were the judge. Through the media, he set himself up as being not only the judge but also the jury and the executioner. He hanged approximately 60 people who had participated in the evaluation process. Probably some of those 60 people are Labor supporters. I wonder whether they will continue to be Labor supporters. He condemned for ever a number of people who work in the electricity industry and he blackened their name.

From my experience in business I know that the people who evaluated this contract and their expertise are A1 and second to none. They are of world standard. Each week those people evaluate millions of dollars worth of material. This contract is only one example of their work. It is a big one and it has to do with a power-station. Its evaluation is a big responsibility.

Much has been said about economics. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition talked about economics. All he proved was that he knows nothing about economics. He referred to the Henley people and their system. The Treasury Department contains experts on economics and their normal procedure is to evaluate something over a lengthy period. In fact, the Auditor-General referred to a period of 10 years. As he pointed out, tenders have to be judged on economics and on what is expected to happen in the future. The Henley people offer the best economics expertise in the world. When needed, the Treasury and Co-ordinator-General's officers did the job based on that expertise. The whole exercise was one of co-operation.

The Leader of the Opposition attempted to claim that the dam gates, the boilers and the turbines could have been manufactured in Australia. He knows very well that plant and equipment of that nature are not manufactured in Australia. Boilers of that type certainly are not made in Australia, neither are turbines of the type envisaged. They certainly will not be manufactured in Australia in the foreseeable future, because their enormous size and the limited opportunities for selling them on world markets make it almost impossible for Australia to manufacture them.

I refer now to the leaked letter from Ansaldo. This was the Leader of the Opposition's last-ditch stand. He ran out of puff and made a last-ditch stand by talking about Ansaldo. I assure the Leader of the Opposition that Ansaldo is a marvellous company and that its technology and machinery are world class.

The Leader of the Opposition also mentioned ENEL, the electricity concern in Italy. It, too, is a marvellous concern and the Queensland Government enjoys a wonderful relationship with it.

All the companies that failed to win the contract are disappointed. However, I want to concentrate for the moment on Ansaldo. In its original tender it made a trade offer and indicated that it was willing to negotiate. "Negotiate" is the operative word. It was willing to do that on a counter-trade. However, I repeat that it was behind the eight ball to the tune of \$70m. If it had won the tender that would have been the time at which the Queensland Government could have discussed a counter-trade with the company. In fact, the Treasurer and I met with the company.

It was decided that, in the circumstances, a counter-trade offer could not be considered without the relevant information and unless every other tenderer was given the opportunity to provide a counter-trade offer, as it was not called for in the original applications for that tender. It turned out that Ansaldo's proposition could have been a favourable and attractive proposition. In all the circumstances, it could not be considered and could not be taken into account at that time unless that company had first won the contract. Only then could the Government have taken action at a secondary stage. That company was over \$70m behind the eight ball before it got into the system.

Members of the Opposition have referred to the editorial in the "Daily Sun" on 28 July. That editorial was based on a document that was not released until this morning. However, a man has written a supposedly authoritative editorial based on the Auditor-General's report that was released today. I wonder who has the greatest credibility—the editor of the "Daily Sun", or the Auditor-General? The attitude of the Opposition is amazing when an examination of those matters is made.

As I have said before, I have not seen anyone squirm so much in the last few days as has the Leader of the Opposition. According to a lunch-time news bulletin, he accused me of being on the take. By five o'clock on the same day, from the lips of the same person, I became a very responsible Minister. I think that he might have received some legal advice during the day. I am not a person who chases other people with writs. I do not believe that it is worth pursuing actions of that type.

There is no doubt where the Leader of the Opposition stands. I have the evidence recorded on tape. The Leader of the Opposition has no worries because I do not lower myself to those sort of tactics. I take insults from a person at the level of respect I have for that person. On this occasion I have no respect for the Leader of the Opposition, so I take no insult from him. He has lost his credibility.

The Leader of the Opposition made reference to having sent me a long letter with 25 questions in it. He said that I have not answered it. That is right. He sent in those questions long after he made his accusations, long after he blackened the names of 50 or 60 people in the electricity industry, and long after he made his innuendoes on the Government and other persons. He finally limps in on a crutch, receives a letter from Mr Bowen and thinks he has a great deal of new information. That information has been public knowledge for many months. What a galah he is! However, one could look at that in a different light.

Mr Warburton: What about the \$8.8m?

Mr I. J. GIBBS: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made a 20-minute speech and said nothing. His speech was empty and lacked heart. It was interesting to note that only two Opposition members spoke about the motion, namely, the Leader of the Opposition and the de facto leader, Mr Beattie. I do not blame the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The Auditor-General's report on the \$8.8m is quite clear. It related to a discount that was offered well before any decisions were made. That discount was not taken into account in the evaluation or the tenders. It was taken into account finally when there was a clear winner. In his report, the Auditor-General is quite clear about that matter. C. Itoh was awarded the contract because it won it fairly and squarely. There is no doubt about that.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about Australian content, jobs for Queenslanders, economics and Treasury evaluations. I assure him that any number of people within the Treasury Department and the Co-ordinator-General's Department are capable of making an evaluation.

Mention was made of Preece Cardew International in relation to the Wivenhoe Dam gates. That firm was rather critical of Samsung, which was responsible for the gates that were rejected and is presently constructing new gates. However, the honourable member spoke about the Government's not giving this contract to Clyde Riley Dodds. Guess where that company was to have the boilers made? One of the companies nominated by them was Samsung. That appears in the papers I have just tabled. Boilers of that type are not made in Australia. The Opposition knows that, but it attempts to mislead the public by making other statements.

The fact is that the best possible chance for Queenslanders to get jobs was through C. Itoh winning the contract. Its tender consolidates more Queensland jobs than any other, although that was merely a side issue in its being nominated.

The Leader of the Opposition has called for further investigations, but he has wrung as much out of this as he possibly can. On his way through the washing machine, he has not finished up very well. He stands condemned for his irresponsible statements. He does not have the right to blacken the names of people who have carried out an extremely demanding task with great distinction.

Finally, I will quote from three sections of the Auditor-General's report. On page 8 the Auditor-General says—

"Indeed, my inquiries have shown that in all respects the Board's evaluators have acted in complete conformity with the law and in accord with the normal tenets of public tender evaluation to arrive at honest and complete assessments of all tenders so adjusted, as far as is practicable, to a basis fully conforming with the specification requirements."

Then on page 7 he says—

"The implications flowing from such comment were listed for discussion with C. Itoh & Co. Ltd. on 2nd December, 1982. By letter dated 3rd December, 1982, the company advised that in relation to the matter in question a discount approximating 2.6 per cent (approximately \$8.8 million) of the total tender price for turbo-generators and boilers would apply; later determined to be the precise amount of \$8.8 million.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the question of the discount was not taken into account during any calculations leading up to the final tables and decisions denoting comparative net present worth costs.

Having established through the application of thorough and exhaustive analyses that C. Itoh & Co. Ltd. offered the best proposals for the boiler and turbo-generator

plant, then it was appropriate to suggest that the substantial additional savings to be gained by accepting a combined offer be recommended."

The Leader of the Opposition says that we, on behalf of the electricity consumers in the community, should not accept that \$8.8m.

In the second last paragraph of page 8 the Auditor-General states—

"In my view, a complete, impartial, honest and objective assessment of the likely full cost to the Board of accomplishment of the project was carried out."

In reply to the question of the Leader of the Opposition, I repeat publicly that in relation to the evaluation of tenders for the Stanwell Power Station, I have always maintained and will continue to maintain that I stand rock solid behind the evaluating team and the Queensland Electricity Generating Board and congratulate them for a job well done in their evaluation of the tenders for boilers and turbines for the Stanwell Power Station. I heartily congratulate them; I stand rock solid behind them and I condemn the Leader of the Opposition for his irresponsible attitude and I think that, in the eyes of the people, he stands condemned.

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

"That the question be now put."

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that I clearly beat the Leader of the House to the jump and I had the call. Mr Speaker, you passed me over in favour of the very deliberate move by the Leader of the House to gag this debate. I ask that my call be respected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is an interesting point of view, but I called the Leader of the House.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I rise to a further point of order. I move—

"That the member for Wolston be heard."

Question put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 26

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

Noes, 51

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

Resolved in the negative.

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 50

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

Noes, 26

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (Mr Wright's amendment) stand part of the question—put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 50

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

Noes, 25

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the motion (Mr Bjelke-Petersen) be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 52

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

Noes, 25

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

SITTING DAYS

Sessional Order

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

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

Motion agreed to.

PAPERS

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

Report of the Registrar of Co-operative and Other Societies for the year ended 30 June 1982.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamations under—

Construction Safety Act and Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment Act 1982.
Private Employment Agencies Act 1983.

Orders in Council under—

Factories and Shops Act 1960-1982
Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1961-1983
Workers' Compensation Act 1916-1982
Workers' Compensation Act 1916-1983
City of Brisbane Act 1924-1982 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982
City of Brisbane Act 1924-1982
Racing and Betting Act 1980-1983
Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1971-1983
Queensland International Tourist Centre Agreement Act 1978
Public Service Act 1922-1978
State Development and Public Works Organization Act 1971-1981 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982
Supreme Court Act 1921-1979
Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971-1981
Jury Act 1929-1982
District Courts Act 1967-1982
Common Law Practice Act 1867-1981
Trustee Companies Act 1968-1980
Magistrates Courts Act 1921-1982
Art Unions and Amusements Act 1976-1981
Industrial Development Act 1963-1981
Small Business Development Corporation Act 1980-1983
Industrial Development Act 1963-1981 and the Local Government Act 1936-1982

Regulations under—

Bail Act 1980-1982
Co-operative Housing Societies Act 1958-1974
Construction Safety Act 1971-1982
Door to Door (Sales) Act 1966-1973
Factories and Shops Act 1960-1982
Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1961-1983
Industry and Commerce Training Act 1979-1982
Inspection of Machinery Act 1951-1982
Private Employment Agencies Act 1983
Weights and Measures Act 1951-1983
Workers' Compensation Act 1916-1982
Workers' Compensation Act 1916-1983
Local Government Superannuation Act 1964-1978
Public Service Act 1922-1978

Rules of Court under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1961-1983.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Delegation of Authority: Minister for Primary Industries

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (5.12 p.m.): I desire to inform the House that His Excellency the Governor, by virtue of the provisions of the Officials in Parliament Act 1896-1982, authorised and empowered the Honourable Claude Alfred Wharton, MLA, Minister for Works and Housing, to perform and exercise all or any of

the duties, powers and authorities imposed or conferred upon the Minister for Primary Industries by any Act, rule, practice or ordinance on and from 29 July 1983 and until the return to Queensland of the Honourable Michael John Ahern, BAgrSc, MLA.

I lay upon the table of the House a copy of the Queensland Government Gazette of 30 July 1983 notifying this arrangement.

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

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

First Report

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): On behalf of the Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, I lay on the table of the House the first report of that committee to the Third Session of the Forty-Third Parliament, and I move that it be printed.

Whereupon the report was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Electrification of Central Queensland Railway Lines

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (5.16 p.m.): I wish formally to record the decision announced yesterday by the Premier, the Deputy Premier and me to proceed immediately with electrification of major central Queensland rail lines at an estimated cost of \$584m. The project will be undertaken in two stages and is expected to take eight years to complete. It will service up to 18 existing coal mines and a further six mines that are presently being proved.

The lines involved are from Blackwater to Gladstone and from the Goonyella system to Hay Point. The total distance is nearly 1 500km. Detailed design studies have been completed for the line from Blackwater to Gladstone and tenders will be called as soon as possible. The line will be electrified and operating by 1987. Detailed design studies will now proceed for the line from the Goonyella system to Hay Point, and tenders will be invited as soon as sufficient design work is completed. The estimated costs of the two major stages are Blackwater to Gladstone, \$269m, and Goonyella system to Hay Point, \$315m.

In the longer term, the Newlands to Abbot Point line of 170 km will become economically feasible after the 5 000 000 tonne haulage presently envisaged is substantially increased.

Funding for the project will be provided through off-Budget infrastructure sources, probably raised on overseas finance markets. Treasury studies prove that the project is economically viable, with a positive return on funds invested. A major saving of \$250m will be made on diesel-electric replacements between now and 1994-95. Other major benefits will be in fuel-cost savings, locomotive-maintenance savings and crew-cost savings—the latter because of shorter ground-trip times under electric traction.

Electrification will save 90 million litres of diesel fuel, or half the present total annual diesel fuel consumption of the Queensland railways. In other words, it will save almost \$28m a year. The project will create jobs and development, which is what the Queensland Government is all about. I regret to record the condemnation by the Leader of the Opposition of a program that will provide many thousands of jobs to Queenslanders, bring new technology to this nation from overseas and establish new industries throughout our State.

Queensland Housing Commission

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.19 p.m.): There has recently been some public comment about the Queensland Housing Commission. I take this opportunity to set the record straight on a number of matters.

The Housing Commission has established a fine record of helping those people who need assistance both through rental accommodation and through loans approved to help low-income and moderate-income earners into their own homes.

One of the gauges of the Commission's effectiveness is seen in its wait list for rental accommodation. Together with Victoria, Queensland has the lowest per capita wait list of any Australian State and a fraction of that of other States, such as South Australia and New South Wales. Queensland's wait list for such accommodation, as a percentage of its population, is 0.38 per cent, compared with 1.8 per cent in South Australia and 0.9 per cent in New South Wales. This performance has been achieved despite the fact that Queensland, unlike most other States, is undergoing rapid population growth whilst others are seeing their populations drop.

The Housing Commission has just completed a record year in terms of providing housing through both its rental and home-ownership assistance schemes. Each and every week during the past financial year the Housing Commission was helping, on average, to provide housing for more than 100 families or individuals. As Housing Minister, I will be seeking to expand even further on the record housing year just completed.

The commission's innovative policies, both in the rental and home-ownership areas, are proving very successful. The income-g geared policies adopted in both of these areas are helping to ensure that the welfare housing dollar is spent where it is most needed—to help those most in need.

Two points illustrate the effectiveness of the rental policy. Under that policy 95 per cent of all welfare tenants of the commission are paying less than 22.5 per cent of their income in rent. Fifty per cent of Housing Commission welfare tenants are, in fact, paying less than \$29 a week in rent.

The interest subsidy home purchase scheme which I introduced last year has, despite forecasts and claims by the ALP, proved a great success and I am pleased to see the public support given to this scheme by coalition members. The public demand for this type of assistance continues to increase and I am pleased to see the Treasurer's recent undertakings to maintain the scheme, which, with its interest subsidy and income-g geared provisions, has broken down the barriers to home-ownership for many people who would not otherwise have been able to consider home-ownership as a housing alternative. Under the scheme low income earners are being given a far greater opportunity for home-ownership than they have had for many years. In fact, if a person has the required deposit and can meet interest payments of as low as 5 per cent, he can qualify for loans through the interest subsidy scheme. Under this scheme, we have, in fact, been able to help into home-ownership people on incomes as low as \$100 a week.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr SCASSOLA proceeding to give notice of a motion—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has already given one notice of motion. He is permitted to give one notice of motion a day.

Mr SCASSOLA: I rise to a point of order. With respect, Mr Speaker, I understood that Standing Orders provided that the number of notices of motion that any one member could give was restricted to one until all other members had given one notice of motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Standing Orders provide that all other members of the House must be given an opportunity to give notice of a motion before the honourable member is entitled to give notice of a second motion.

Mr WRIGHT proceeding to give notice of a motion—

Mr INNES: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, as this motion is one that stood in the name of the member for Mt Gravatt during the last session, I would ask you for a ruling as to whether the provisions of the Copyright Act apply in this Chamber and whether the Leader of the Opposition is in danger in that regard.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no valid point of order.

Mr UNDERWOOD (Ipswich West): I table a copy of questions raised by parents and friends of intellectually handicapped citizens that must be taken into account by the Parliament in legislating for the intellectually handicapped citizens, in particular in the redrafting of the Intellectually Handicapped Citizens Bill.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr WRIGHT (Rockhampton—Leader of the Opposition): I seek leave to move the suspension of Standing Orders to enable the House to debate a number of issues that have arisen since Parliament went into recess on 30 March this year.

(Leave not granted.)

Mr WRIGHT: I therefore move, if leave is granted, that so much of Standing Orders be suspended to enable——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Leave has not been granted.

QUESTION-TIME

Statement by Mr Speaker

Mr SPEAKER: Before beginning questions, I state that I believe that some members may not be fully conversant with what is intended in the new Standing Orders. To prevent confusion, I will read from a document that has been prepared for the information of honourable members.

I draw the attention of all honourable members to the rules that are to be followed during question-time.

Firstly, the duration of one hour for question-time has not been changed. However, on Wednesdays, question-time will cease at 12 noon to allow private members' business in the form of matters of public interest. On Address-in-Reply days and on days allotted for Supply, that is, Estimates days, question-time will finish at 12 noon also.

Secondly, the total number of questions that may be asked by any one member shall not exceed two on a sitting day. Any supplementary questions that a member may ask following his first question, or another member's question or questions, will be counted as one of the two questions allowed to that member on that day.

Thirdly, I suggest that unnecessary background explanations, arguments, or opinions be not included in any question, in accordance with Standing Order 68. I advise honourable members that I shall direct the clerks at the table to apply these rules to all questions placed on the Notice Paper. A question should seek information in a precise, direct way; as far as is possible members should not ask lengthy, multiple-part questions, especially when they are asked without notice.

Fourthly, the general rules for answers should be noted and I quote them from Standing Order No. 70—

“(i) In answering a Question a Minister or Member shall not debate the subject to which it refers.

(ii) An Answer shall be relevant to the Question.

(iii) If, in the opinion of the Speaker, the Answer is too long, he may direct the Minister or the Member to cease speaking.”

I ask that all members co-operate in these particular matters for the benefit of the smooth running of the Assembly.

Finally, I wish to explain the procedure for asking questions. I intend to follow the usual arrangement, calling upon each member who rises in turn.

Each member has a choice as to how he will ask his questions. A member may ask questions without notice and should indicate this clearly before asking the question. A verbal question without notice will receive an immediate reply, as has been the practice.

A member may place questions on notice in two ways. One is by reading the text of the question in full and having it collected by the attendant. This has been the previous practice and members will be familiar with it.

Alternatively, the member may ask a question or questions by indicating to me at his turn that he intends to ask the question or questions on notice of a particular Minister or Ministers, and that he will table them. The member need not then read out each

question in full. It will be recorded and then collected in the usual fashion by attendants in the Chamber and passed on to the clerks at the table for editing together with other questions on notice.

Questions which comply with the rules will be included on the Notices of Questions Paper for a subsequent sitting day.

Under Standing Order No. 69C, such questions will appear in the order in which they are received by the Clerk, not in the order of asking, as was the previous practice.

Mr WARBURTON: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I draw to your attention that I wrote a letter to you this morning. I understand that the letter was delivered to your office at least an hour before the House met.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no need for further explanation. I have taken on board the contents of the letter from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I have decided to deal with that letter immediately following questions.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Premier's Support of Dr Shrian Oskar

Mr WRIGHT: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the patronage that he bestowed on Dr Shrian Oskar during his attempts to set up business in Queensland. Specifically, I refer to the Premier's comment that he intended to pursue the issue of Cabinet approving a \$6m loan guarantee for an oil-seed crushing plant more relentlessly than he would a State election. Given the history of failures of business ventures that Dr Oskar had been associated with prior to his coming to Queensland and in view of revelations that the Government is implementing proceedings to extradite him, I ask: Will the Premier explain why he refused to divulge the whereabouts of Dr Oskar when he was being sought by police and will he now announce an unqualified withdrawal of support for Dr Oskar's attempt to do business in this State?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I understand that that matter is now sub judice.

Mr WRIGHT: Mr Speaker, may I ask the basis of your understanding?

Mr SPEAKER: I have been informed that the matter being discussed by the Leader of the Opposition is now before a court.

Mr WRIGHT: In Queensland?

Mr SPEAKER: I understand so.

Mr WRIGHT: Can we have an explanation from the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, as I do not understand that to be correct? I draw to your attention that the Attorney-General is saying, "No".

Mr SPEAKER: The other day I received correspondence indicating that this matter is before a court. I am in no position to know, as the Leader of the Opposition would realise. Matters suddenly arise and I am not informed. I had information that this was before a court and I rule in accordance with the information I have received. If that is not correct, I will alter my ruling.

Mr WRIGHT: Mr Speaker, are you able to tell the House who advised you about this matter?

Mr SPEAKER: I appeal to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General to indicate whether he has any information that would allow me to determine the matter.

Mr DOUMANY: It is a matter for you, Mr Speaker, to determine.

Mr SPEAKER: In the light of the confusion, I direct the Leader of the Opposition to ask another question.

Conviction of Milan Brych

Mr WRIGHT: In directing a further question to the Premier, I refer to the conviction of Milan Brych in the United States of America last week and the comments of a Los Angeles Superior Court judge when sentencing Milan Brych to six years' imprisonment on charges of defrauding cancer and arthritis patients in California. The judge commented that he considered Brych to be a "devious, callous and cunning human being". The prosecutor in the case said that Brych had displayed a "lack of moral consciousness and regard for humanity, cared little about patients and was motivated by greed". In view of this I now ask: Does the Premier still stand by his previous unequivocal support for that man in his cancer therapy practice? Does he regret the fact that he was prepared to contravene immigration laws in the nation by flying to the Cook Islands and using a Government aeroplane to ferry that man to Brisbane?

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: I maintain the stand I have taken in the past. I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition ought to ask people—there are a number in this State who went to the Cook Islands—who are still alive today what they think of Milan Brych and what they think of the Leader of the Opposition. This is also a matter before the courts, Mr Speaker.

Mr Wright: In America? You've got to be joking! You're unbelievable.

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: It is unbelievable? The Leader of the Opposition is unbelievable.

The question indicates very clearly the magnitude, or whatever other expression one may use, of the honourable member's vision, his thinking and his attitude. No matter what it is—whether it is a new electrification scheme for the inland or something such as the Stanwell Power Station that will make an important contribution to the progress of this State—the honourable member has a negative attitude. Again and again he has demonstrated that he is not the person who should be leading the people opposite—the Communists, the socialists and all the rest of them who make up that party.

Mr WRIGHT: I rise to a point of order. In view of your statement a moment ago, Mr Speaker, that answers must be relevant to the question, would you rule on what the Premier is saying?

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Leader of the Opposition can give it, but he can't take it. If he asked some sensible questions, perhaps we could answer them in a way that is more becoming to the conduct of the House.

Mr WRIGHT: In view of your earlier ruling, Mr Speaker, I will put my other question on notice.

Proposed Petrol Levy

Mr DAVIS: I ask the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts: As the Premier and the Minister for Transport have recently been very vocal in condemning a proposed petrol levy in lieu of registration and third-party insurance charges, does he support their statements, or does he stand by the policy of his party, for which he is the transport chairman, page 56 of which reads—

"... the elimination of registration, nominal defendant and third party should be replaced by a more efficient fuel tax designed as a replacement and not as an additional tax."?

Mr ELLIOTT: All I can say in answer to the honourable member is that his good looks belie his lack of intelligence, because he does not seem to realise who is the Minister for Transport.

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

Mr DAVIS: I was going to ask a question of the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing without notice, but since he is not here I will put it on notice for tomorrow. It is very unfortunate.

A Government Member: He's answering the phone.

Mr DAVIS: He is always answering the phone. His job is in here.
The honourable member proceeded to give notice of a question.

Sand-mining, Moreton Island

Mr WARBURTON: In asking a question of the Minister for Mines and Energy, I refer him to the Brisbane mining warden's recommended rejection of applications for sand-mining leases on Moreton Island and the relevant provision in the Mining Act that gives the Minister the right to override that recommendation. I now ask: As the mining warden's recommendation has been with him since April this year, will he give an unequivocal assurance that sand-mining will not be allowed on Moreton Island? If not—and I am sure that the Minister will agree that there is a need for Queenslanders to know before the forthcoming State election his Government's intentions—when will he announce his final decision on the matter?

Mr I. J. GIBBS: My officers are still studying the report that has come in. They are looking at all aspects of mining in that area and all the points made by the mining warden. At this stage I have nothing to report.

Electrification of Central Queensland Railway Lines; Attitude of Leader of the Opposition

Mr LESTER: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Is it true that the Leader of the Opposition is now knocking one of the most visionary projects ever announced by this Government, that is, the proposed electrification of Central Queensland coal railway lines? Is he not aware that that project would provide employment for hundreds of people? Is he not aware that the electrification of the coal lines would mean that coal won by the sweat of Central Queensland people would be used in power-stations to generate the power needed to drive the trains? Is the Leader of the Opposition unaware that electrically powered trains would be more efficient and cheaper to run? Is he not aware that the new transport efficiency would help Central Queensland to be more competitive on world markets and thus create more jobs? Has the Opposition Leader bowed to the whim of Mr Wran and Mr Hawke and sold out Queensland, particularly Central Queensland?

Dr EDWARDS: I could easily solve all the problems by answering "Yes" to every question that the honourable member asked, but his questions are so important that they deserve sensible and proper answers.

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, in terms of the statement you read to the House before question-time started, may I ask if it is correct for a member to ask a Minister for his opinion on what another member thinks?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Dr EDWARDS: I was very pleased to hear the honourable member. I am sure that everyone will agree that he does not think at all.

In reply to the honourable member for Peak Downs—I say very clearly that the scheme announced yesterday by the Government, which was ridiculed by the Leader of the Opposition, is one of the most ambitious programs ever undertaken by a Government.

Mr Burns interjected.

Dr EDWARDS: The honourable member for Sandgate put up that document in 1978. That indicates the incompetence of the Opposition. The program was started—

Mr Burns interjected.

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

Dr EDWARDS: The honourable member can hold the document up. That will give me more time to answer the question. He does not recognise—

Mr Burns: Tell us about the Western Australia—Bowen line; tell us about the Gold Coast railway line.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Lytton will come to order.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Dr EDWARDS: Not for a long time have I seen members of the Opposition as rattled as they are today.

Mr Burns: Tell us about the electric trains to Toowoomba, too.

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

Dr EDWARDS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. We might now get some sanity and I may be able to deal with this important question.

The honourable member for Sandgate keeps holding up a piece of paper as if he were a statue.

Mr Warburton: I rise to a point of order. The Treasurer has claimed that the Opposition is in a state of turmoil but, obviously, he is in a state of turmoil. He incorrectly referred to me and I ask that he withdraw his comment.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Dr EDWARDS: I am well aware that the honourable member for Sandgate does not like to be associated with the member for Nudgee. I apologise; I meant to refer to the honourable member for Nudgee.

The inference that the honourable member for Nudgee is drawing is perfectly true. The Government, two years ago, started a feasibility study into this matter. The announcement made yesterday by the Government was a great embarrassment to the Opposition.

I point out to the member for Peak Downs that tenders will be called in the next month or so and that the design and the documentation are completed. The financial package is in place and electric trains will be running by 1986. Through this program, 96ML of fuel will be saved. In addition, there will be enormous savings in operational costs. The program will cost \$600m—

Mr Burns interjected.

Dr EDWARDS: The babbling member for Lytton—

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Lytton under the provisions of Standing Order 123A.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I now ask the honourable member for Lytton to withdraw from the Chamber.

Mr Burns: And I should get the same warnings as they got today.

NAMING OF MEMBER

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I now name the honourable member.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (7.26 p.m.): I move—

“That the honourable member for Lytton be suspended from the service of the House for 24 hours.”

That is a light sentence, and I am sure that the honourable member appreciates that fact.

Question put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 47

Akers	Hewitt	Randell
Austin	Hinze	Row
Bertoni	Jennings	Scassola
Bird	Katter	Scott-Young
Bjelke-Petersen	Kaus	Simpson
Booth	Knox	Stephan
Borbidge	Lee	Sullivan
Doumany	Lester	Tenni
Edwards	Lickiss	Warner
Elliott	Lockwood	Wharton
FitzGerald	McKechnie	White
Frawley	Menzel	
Gibbs, I. J.	Miller	
Glasson	Moore	
Goleby	Muntz	<i>Tellers:</i>
Gunn	Nelson	Neal
Harper	Powell	Turner

Noes, 23

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Whereupon the honourable member for Lytton withdrew from the Chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Dr EDWARDS: Continuing my reply to the honourable member for Peak Downs, I point out that this program will be of tremendous value to Central Queensland. The honourable member knows full well its value to that area, to the whole mining industry and to the whole freight industry in Central Queensland. A large number of jobs will be provided. Documentation and design on the first stage has been completed and tenders will be called as soon as possible. Documentation on the second stage is now proceeding. Examination of the third stage from Emerald to Blackwater and other areas is taking place under a feasibility study. A feasibility study will also be undertaken on other electrification programs.

The Government's proposal is well accepted and well founded. Work on the project will begin in the very near future.

Purchase of Boeing 707 Aircraft by Federal Government

Mr LESTER: I ask the Premier: Is he aware that the Federal Government has purchased two additional Boeing 707 aircraft, not from Qantas but from World Airways of Canada, for \$9.1m. Is he aware that the stated reason for purchase is that they will be used to refuel the RAAF F18 aircraft while in flight? Is the Premier also aware that the F18 will not arrive in Australia for at least another four years and that these 707 aircraft will be placed with the two existing 707 jets that have VIP units attached to them? Is it correct that in 1981 the then Leader of the Opposition (Mr Hayden) called on the Federal Government to sell its two 707 VIP jets? Is it correct—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to reduce the length of his question.

Mr LESTER: In view of the election promise made by the Federal Labor Opposition at the time that, if elected, it would sell the aircraft, and the fact that it has purchased two additional aircraft, I ask: Is that another broken election promise?

Mr SPEAKER: Have you finished your question?

Mr LESTER: Yes.

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: In reply to the honourable member, who is always on the ball and who knows what goes on, I say that it is true that the Commonwealth Government has purchased another two aircraft from an overseas company and that the purchase price was \$9.1m. That goes against the statements made by the Federal Government when it was in Opposition that it would sell the two jets used for VIP flights. It clearly demonstrates how contradictory, untruthful and unreliable are the statements of the Labor Party in the Federal sphere. All State Labor Governments in Australia and the Commonwealth Government have gained power and control by deceit and deception. They have said one thing before an election and done entirely the opposite after it. As the honourable member has pointed out, it is true that the Federal Government has done exactly the opposite of what it promised. That shows that one cannot rely on the word of the Australian Labor Party.

Liberal Party's Newspaper Advertisements on Housing

Mr MACKENROTH: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Is he aware of the Liberal Party's newspaper advertisements on housing, and in particular the claim that it was the seven Liberal Ministers who introduced the new interest subsidy home loan scheme? Could the Minister advise me whether the statement in that advertisement is correct?

Mr WHARTON: Yes, I am aware of the advertisement. I have seen it in the Press on a number of occasions.

Mr Mackenroth: Did they introduce it, not you?

Mr WHARTON: I merely say that it is Government policy. What goes in their advertisements is their business. It is Government policy to introduce a scheme of subsidised interest rates, which all honourable members would know about. It was introduced into the Parliament some time ago. As well as that, we introduced a commercial scheme and a subsidised scheme. In view of some of the statements that the member for Chatsworth has made on rentals—

Mr Mackenroth: Are you aware that the Liberal Party is trying to take the credit for it?

Mr WHARTON: The member for Chatsworth asked me a question. I am answering him as best I can in the limited time available.

Ninety-five per cent of our rentals are based on 22½ per cent. The member for Chatsworth has been talking about bringing in some new basis. Also, the Labor Party talks about building 2 000 houses a year. We are building that many now.

Liberal Party's Radio Advertisements on Housing

Mr MACKENROTH: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Is he aware of the Liberal Party's radio advertisements on housing, and in particular its claims that the Liberals are working to reduce monthly repayments on Housing Commission home loans? Could the Minister advise me whether the original proposal on the housing interest subsidy scheme that he submitted to the Treasurer for Treasury approval recommended that the interest rate for the scheme be the same as bank interest? Is it true that the Treasurer was responsible for changing the proposal so that the interest rates were the same as those of building societies?

Mr WHARTON: I am aware of the advertisements referred to. The interest subsidy is geared to income.

Mr Mackenroth: Was your proposal for bank rates?

Mr WHARTON: My proposal, which was accepted, was that the geared rental would be a quarter of the income. On that basis, the rate is not varied. It remains constant.

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise to a point of order. I asked the Minister a question about interest rates, not about the percentage of income to be used to repay a loan. I asked: Was the Minister's proposal to Treasury that interest rates be the same as bank rates? He has not gone close to answering the question. He should answer it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Local Authority Loan Program

Dr LOCKWOOD: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: When will he be in a position to advise the Toowoomba City Council of its total loan and grant programs to enable it to organise its Budget?

Dr EDWARDS: A decision on the loan program for local authorities is being considered at the present time. I hope that local authorities will be advised within the next 10 days.

Toowoomba Showgrounds; Toowoomba TAFE College

Dr LOCKWOOD: I ask the Minister for Education: What stage have negotiations reached between the State Government and the Royal Agricultural Society concerning the Government's offer to purchase the Toowoomba Showgrounds? Is the site being considered for a TAFE college? Is the redevelopment of the Toowoomba TAFE college dependent upon a Commonwealth Government allocation of funds for the next triennium and, if so, what priority has the State Government given to the Toowoomba TAFE?

Mr POWELL: The negotiations between the Government and the Royal Agricultural Society in Toowoomba are proceeding. Like most negotiations involving land, they are of a fairly delicate nature. If the Government is able to purchase that piece of land at a reasonable cost, it will be used for TAFE purposes.

The funding of the new buildings is dependent on the Commonwealth Government, as is the case with all other new TAFE buildings. The Government believes it is important that the Toowoomba TAFE college be relocated somewhere in the centre of Toowoomba and therefore it is anxious to purchase that land. As soon as I can make a more definite statement on that matter, I will do so.

Value of Tourism

Mr BORBRIDGE: I ask the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts: What was the worth of tourism to the Queensland economy for the last financial year? How much does the Government estimate it received in charges and taxes from the industry for that year and how much has the Government invested in the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation for that period?

Mr ELLIOTT: In answer to the honourable member—

An Opposition Member: I bet you have the figures.

Mr ELLIOTT: Because I am a well prepared Minister, naturally enough I do have some of the figures available.

The first thing I wish to say is that the value of tourism to Queensland is quite considerable; in fact it is worth \$2.25 billion, made up in the following way: In 1982 tourists to Queensland contributed about \$485m. Of that amount, \$318m was contributed by interstate visitors and \$166m by overseas visitors. Queenslanders put another \$387m into circulation.

The Australian Bureau of Industry Economics has calculated that every \$1 spent by an Australian tourist is worth \$2.60 to the economy and every \$1 spent by an international tourist is worth \$2.50 to the economy. So, when the multiplier effect is taken into account, the combined expenditure of interstate and overseas visitors and Queenslanders travelling in their own State amounts to \$2.25 billion.

The other point I should make is that direct taxes and charges are calculated as being worth \$110m to this State. In addition Queensland receives about \$211m from revenue sharing with the Commonwealth. The State Government contributed \$9m—

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, in your statement to the House regarding questions you implied that Ministers were to be brief in their replies.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I take the honourable member's point, and I do appeal to Ministers to be brief in their comments.

Mr ELLIOTT: Finally, it is important to realise that the State Government contributed \$9 million, and that, of course, has had a real effect on producing the increased revenue that I have just indicated to the honourable member is coming into this State. Everyone realises the great importance of the industry to Queensland, but the most important fact is that it is creating a tremendous number of jobs. Even more importantly, it is creating jobs for young people where they live.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Minister that there should be no debate on questions.

Cost of Franklin Dam Case in High Court

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: What has been the total cost to Queensland taxpayers in meeting costs incurred by the Queensland Government's intervention in the High Court proceedings over the Franklin Dam, and, of that total cost, what quantum was paid to Mr David Jackson QC for his professional services?

Mr DOUMANY: I do not carry figures such as that in my head.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: The case ended a month ago.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Wolston will cease interjecting.

Mr DOUMANY: I will certainly convey those figures to the honourable member; but I would wonder how the honourable member would express such implied concern about those costs when one looks at the implications for this State—

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I rise to a point of order. I have asked the Attorney-General for an answer to a question without notice. He has intimated to me very clearly that he does not have those figures available to present to the House this evening. Frankly, Mr Speaker, I interpret it as an infringement of the Standing Orders of this Parliament that he should now be allowed to continue to make a political speech—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr DOUMANY: I am absolutely amazed at the honourable member. Usually he exhibits somewhat better judgment than some of his colleagues, but on this occasion he has fallen into the same rut. The first fact is that it may well be that the costs of that action are not yet finalised. The second fact is that any Minister worth his salt who is looking after day-to-day work does not carry a lot of trivia like that round with him like a basket of wares.

But let me get back to the real reason for the action. Queensland intervened in that court action because it is vital to the future of the Federation, and in the next year or two we will see where the State Labor Party stands. We have not yet found out where the Leader of the Opposition stands in the matter of the external affairs power or where he stands on the question of Federation, and one can only assume that he stands right

behind Mr Hawke, with the honourable member for Wolston and all the other members of the Opposition who want to dismantle the Federation, dismantle the States and have Australia governed from Canberra by one House.

Register of Foreign Ownership of Land

Mr PRENTICE: In asking a question of the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police, I refer to his response to a question I asked him regarding the Government's stated intention of establishing a register of foreign ownership of land in which he said that work was proceeding but would not be completed in the 1982-83 financial year. I now ask: Can he give an assurance that the Government's decision to establish the register will come to fruition before the end of this parliamentary session?

Mr GLASSON: I said that investigations were taking place into the formation of a land register. As to the second part of the honourable member's question, the investigations will not be completed before the end of this term of Parliament.

Effect of International Treaties and Conventions on State Legislative Power

Mr SCASSOLA: I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: How many international treaties or conventions in which Australia has an interest are awaiting adoption or ratification by the Commonwealth Government? How many of those relate to matters within State legislative power and, in the light of the recent High Court decision in the Tasmanian dam case, what effect will the ratification or adoption of any of those treaties or conventions have on the legislative power of the States?

Mr DOUMANY: The honourable member asked first how many existing treaties there are. I understand that about 1 400 treaties are in existence.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr DOUMANY: I am carrying the statistics around.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I now warn the honourable member under the provisions of Standing Order 123A.

Mr DOUMANY: These are worthwhile statistics to carry around, because the 1 400-odd treaties probably are full of opportunities for use of the expanded external affairs power. Approximately 134 treaties are under negotiation. That is as many as we know about. Probably there are more.

Those treaties cover nearly every aspect of human activity. One is a convention on the Recovery Abroad of Maintenance; another is on the Recognition of Divorce and Legal Separation; yet another concerns International Administrative of Estates of Deceased Persons. There is a convention on the Law Applicable to Agency, a convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods and another on Hotel Keepers Contracts. Another is a convention on Law applicable to International Consumer Sales. That means that my colleague could well find himself overridden by the external affairs power. Another convention is the Plant Protection Agreement for South East Asia and the Pacific Regions, and so they go on. They cover virtually every conceivable aspect of Government and community interest.

Really, it boils down to the fact that, after the High Court decision on the Tasmanian dam case, the Commonwealth Government has the door open to extend its power into virtually every function of Government covered by State and local governments and every aspect of life that is currently the province of local communities. If that is to apply in a country 3 million square miles in area, I do not know where we are going.

Effect of Source Tax on Small Business

Mr SCASSOLA: I ask the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations: What effect will the imposition by the Federal Government of the so-called "source" tax have on small business in the several industries affected by it? In particular, will not the very serious cash-flow difficulties that it will cause result in many small business people joining dole queues?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The tax, which is to apply from 1 September, provides some very serious problems for small business. The 10 per cent tax on the gross appears to be a 10 per cent tax on the outside, but it is more like 60 to 70 per cent on the working funds available to industry at the time. As it is a tax in anticipation of transactions taking place, it takes out of circulation vital funds that the construction industry, in particular, requires.

The number of jobs that will be placed in jeopardy throughout the nation could run into thousands. The people who will have to pay the tax are not the ones who are taxable, and that is the regrettable part of it. Those who are taxable are the ones on whose behalf these people are paying the tax. They will become tax agents for the Government. From 1 September until such time as these people are able to catch up with the situation, many hundreds of millions of dollars will go out of circulation in the construction industry in this country.

The construction industry has asked the Federal Government not to abolish the tax but to defer it and to look at the machinery involved in the application of the tax. That is a very sensible suggestion. The people who will suffer will be those who work in the industry. The employers will not suffer because in some cases all that they will do is close up shop and redesign their arrangements. In fact, some of them are taking that action now. The employees in these firms will certainly have difficulty in getting jobs if the ability of the employers to pay wages is inhibited by this tax. That is regrettable.

The Federal Government has been asked to defer the tax. The Deputy Commissioner of Taxation has gone round Queensland explaining the position to everybody. His explanation has given no joy to anybody. As usual, the bureaucracy is interfering in this matter. It does not understand how society or private enterprise works. The whole scheme is becoming complex and difficult to administer on behalf of the bureaucracy. The people who have to collect the taxes on behalf of the Commissioner of Taxation are finding it impossible to administer the scheme. As I say, those paying the tax are not the taxable people. There should be a deferral and redesign of this tax. I am sure that it could be redesigned in a way that would be acceptable to the public.

Mr FITZGERALD having placed two questions upon notice—

Mr HINZE: I rise to a point of order. If honourable members were to indicate the Ministers to whom they wish to direct their questions it would make it easier for Ministers.

Mr SPEAKER: I think the Minister is being somewhat sensitive.

Prosecutions of Companies for Failure to Lodge Annual Returns

Dr SCOTT-YOUNG: I direct a question to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. In the light of his announcement earlier this year that a task force would be established, I ask: How successful has the Corporate Affairs Commissioner's Office been in prosecuting companies for failing to lodge annual returns? Further, has the Government recouped much in the way of revenue through this task force, and are any further plans in hand to update the companies register?

Mr DOUMANY: The campaign to secure the lodgment of annual returns has been very successful. In recent times the Government established a task force using Commonwealth and State funds from the wage pause. The results to date since last year have netted a considerable amount of money. I understand that we are looking at literally hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines and in costs recovered as the result of actions that flowed from the crash campaign that we conducted. I am sure that the results, when finally summated, will justify the action of setting up the task force and the recent exercise of setting up 65 young people in temporary jobs over the next 12 months.

Bush Fire Fighting Services

Mr AKERS: I ask the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services: Has his attention been drawn to statements by firemen's unions in Victoria that their off-duty members were not called on to join the fight against the disastrous Ash Wednesday bushfires that raged in that State? Will he give an assurance to residents of areas of Queensland such as Mt Nebo and Samford that if a bushfire threat eventuates a maximum effort will be made by all fire-fighting services to protect lives and property?

Mr HEWITT: I have read the reports concerning the allegations that professional fire-fighters in Victoria were not called upon to provide a back-up service when bushfires were raging in Victoria. Those allegations are substantially untrue. The reality is that the equipment at the disposal of those men did not lend itself readily to the fighting of bushfires. However, a number of professional men were enlisted and they participated. I believe that to the greatest extent possible a back-up force was provided to fight the bushfires.

In Brisbane a high level of co-operation exists. I assure the honourable member that every available fire-fighter would be enlisted if a bushfire outbreak occurred. I advise him that the State Emergency Service and the Rural Fires Board are investigating the possibility of conducting a simulated bushfire exercise in the Mt Nebo area in the hope that people will be able to understand the reality of the situation when a true emergency arises.

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

I wish to report that I have received the following brief written statement from the honourable member for Sandgate—

“Dear Mr Speaker,

In accordance with Standing Order No. 137, I desire to propose today (2nd August, 1983) that the following definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely the serious unemployment problem confronting Queensland and the effect this problem is having on individual Queenslanders and families throughout the State.

Yours sincerely,

N. G. Warburton, M.L.A.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition.”

Not fewer than five members having risen in their places in support of the motion—

Mr SPEAKER: I call the member for Sandgate.

Mr WHARTON: Mr Speaker, in line with the Sessional Order that has been passed, which provides that Government business shall take precedence of all other business, I move—

“That the House do pass to the next business.”

The honourable member will have ample time to discuss his problem during the debate on the Appropriation Bill.

Mr WARBURTON: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I understood that you called on me to initiate a debate on this issue. Are you now changing your ruling?

Mr SPEAKER: I understand the honourable member's dilemma. This is the first day on which the new Standing Order 137 has applied. If the honourable member reads it, he will see that the matter has been taken out of my hands and that it is submitted to the House for determination. The new Standing Order 137 states—

“At any time during the discussion a motion may be made by any Member ‘That the House do pass to the next business’.”

That is not what is happening. The Leader of the House has moved that the House do pass to the next business.

Question—That the House do pass to the next business (Mr Wharton's motion)—put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 46

Akers	Harper	Muntz
Austin	Hewitt	Powell
Bertoni	Hinze	Randell
Bird	Innes	Row
Bjelke-Petersen	Jennings	Scott-Young
Booth	Katter	Simpson
Borbidge	Kaus	Stephan
Doumany	Knox	Tenni
Edwards	Lane	Turner
Elliott	Lester	Warner
FitzGerald	Lickiss	Wharton
Frawley	Lockwood	White
Gibbs, I. J.	McKechnie	<i>Tellers:</i>
Glasson	Menzel	Neal
Goleby	Miller	Nelson
Gunn	Moore	

Noes, 22

Blake	Jones	Underwood
Casey	Kruger	Warburton
D'Arcy	Mackenroth	Wilson
Davis	McLean	Wright
Eaton	Milliner	<i>Tellers:</i>
Fouras	Prest	Gibbs, R. J.
Hansen	Scott	Vaughan
Hooper	Smith	

Resolved in the affirmative.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Appropriation Bill (No. 1)

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Treasurer), by leave, without notice: I move—

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

Motion agreed to.

SUPPLY

Vote of Credit—\$2,345,000,000

Mr SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that the following provision be made on account of the services for the year ending 30 June 1984—

From the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland, the further sum of \$920,000,000;

From the Trust and Special Funds, the further sum of \$1,300,000,000; and

From the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the further sum of \$125,000,000.

Committee

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

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

“That there be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1983-84, a further sum not exceeding \$2,345,000,000 towards defraying the expenses of the various departments and services of the State.”

Motion agreed to.

Resolution reported, received, and agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS

Committee

Vote of Credit—\$2,345,000,000

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

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

“(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1983-84, a further sum not exceeding \$920,000,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

(b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1983-84, a further sum not exceeding \$1,300,000,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

(c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1983-84, a further sum not exceeding \$125,000,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.”

Motion agreed to.

Resolutions reported, received, and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1)

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (8.31 p.m.): I move—

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

This Bill appropriates an amount of \$2,345m for expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (\$920m), the Trust and Special Funds (\$1,300m) and the Loan Fund (\$125m) for the normal services of the Government until the passage of the Budget legislation itself. This amount is in addition to an amount of \$1,560m which was appropriated by Appropriation Act (No. 2) of 1982.

In introducing the current Appropriation Bill, I believe that it is important that I take the opportunity to speak briefly about the Queensland Government's financial situation. I do this against a background of increasing concern on the part of other State Governments throughout Australia about their financial positions. For example, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia have all recently made it clear that they have failed to produce a balanced Budget for 1982-83. New South Wales and Victoria have moved to implement new taxation measures—including a financial institutions duty—in an endeavour to redeem their respective situations.

Queensland, on the other hand, has again virtually balanced its budget, with an accumulated Consolidated Revenue Fund deficit after the conclusion of the 1982-83 financial year of less than \$800,000. This is totally in line with the Government's overall objective of maintaining a balanced operating Budget, while maintaining or reducing the level of taxation and making a substantial annual contribution to capital works. Evidence of the success of this strategy was the result of the Government's recent approach to the

United States rating agencies, Moody's, and Standard and Poor's. A rating by these two agencies was an essential requirement for the State Electricity Commission to gain access to the United States commercial paper market, which is possibly the lowest-cost source of United States dollar borrowing.

These two highly respected, expert and independent agencies carefully evaluated the State's financial position and expectations. The Treasury Department, in consultation with a number of other departments and statutory bodies (particularly the State Electricity Commission), made a major submission to both agencies, setting out in great detail the State's economic position and, in particular, the position of the State Government.

This was followed by a careful independent evaluation of the submission by experienced analysts from each of the agencies. Indeed, during May, representatives from each agency visited Queensland and discussed in great detail the State's financial position with officers of the Treasury, other departments and statutory bodies, and with me. Both groups were also given an insight into the State's vast and varied resource base.

The result of these exhaustive analyses was that the State of Queensland was awarded the highest possible short-term credit rating by both rating agencies. This rating—known as A1+P1—places this State in the top rank of borrowers in world financial markets. This outcome is not accidental. It is the result of the consistent application of our financial management policy, and is based on the following ingredients—

The Queensland Government has consistently maintained tight Budget control through the preparation of a balanced State Budget and the conduct of monthly Budget reviews.

Expenditure commitment levels are adjusted as required to ensure that the Budget remains balanced at all times.

As a result of this tight control, the Government has been able to direct an aggregate amount in excess of \$500m from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to specialised capital works over the last five years. That is, while other States have found it increasingly difficult to balance their budgets, the Queensland Government has been able to shift \$500m of its recurrent revenues into employment-creating capital works.

The State Government's liquidity situation is very strong. These funds act as a buffer against economic fluctuations, and provide both a potential source of funds for important infrastructure projects and a liquidity backing that makes the State a first rank credit risk.

All of this has been achieved without resorting to new taxation measures, such as a financial institutions duty or business franchise tax, while maintaining the Queensland Government as the lowest taxing State Government in Australia. This means, in effect, that the Queensland Government's financial position is such that substantial additional revenue could be raised if necessary without increasing the level of taxes beyond that already applying in other States.

Queensland is well below them in every sphere. There is no tobacco tax or fuel tax in this State. Queensland is the only State in Australia that does not have such taxes. Indeed, if we brought our taxation base to the average level that applies in the other States, approximately \$200m could be raised in one financial year. However, the Government has no intention of doing that.

Some media comment has been made in recent months in regard to an Australian Bureau of Statistics publication which, it has been asserted by the Leader of the Opposition, shows that Queensland's budgetary situation is worse than that in other States. The Leader of the Opposition has made that assertion, although the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has said that we have excessive cash reserves. They cannot have it both ways. I know that the member for South Brisbane does not make that assertion.

Mr Fouras: You can have it both ways.

Dr EDWARDS: No, one cannot have it both ways. The Leader of the Opposition has said that Queensland has a deficit of \$1,100m. Of course, that is a fallacious statement. I know that the member for South Brisbane has more economic sense than his leader.

We should carefully analyse what the Bureau of Statistics publication actually shows. It does not purport to show the budgets of the various States, particularly the all-important operating budgets. All it purports to show is the level of funds needed to be raised by a State to fund its expenditures. No account is taken in the receipts of the loans raised or other financial arrangements entered into.

In Queensland's case, the figure is high because capital expenditure on infrastructure is high as a result of our continuing resource development throughout the State, and all reasonable people accept that it is prudent and equitable to fund capital expenditure of that nature by entering into long-term financial arrangements especially the project-oriented loans for our development programs which fund their own debt-servicing.

In addition, however, in Queensland's case a significant proportion of these long-term funds is provided by coal companies and the like by way of security deposits for railways, ports and other works which leave absolutely no obligation for servicing or repayment on the taxpayer in Queensland; and I emphasise that point.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics figures quoted are then useless as a guide to Government economic strength. In reality, as I have demonstrated, the financial situation of the Queensland Government is extremely strong. This fact has been recognised by independent international analysts, and enables this Government to look forward with confidence to the coming financial year.

In this regard, I repeat what I have said in other forums. The State's public accounts comprise three funds: the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the Loan Fund, and the Trust and Special Funds.

For the year ended 30 June last, the Consolidated Revenue Fund was virtually balanced, the Loan Fund was in balance and the Trust and Special Funds were in substantial surplus.

Finally, I point out that interest and redemption on the State's Public Debt represents only 6½ per cent of the State's Consolidated Revenue Fund—a tremendously favourable gearing ratio that is the envy of any major public company and a further indicator of the financial strength of the State Government.

As I want to keep the debate as short as possible, I will leave my remarks at that and continue my economic summary when the Budget is presented on 30 August.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr FOURAS (South Brisbane) (8.41 p.m.): A couple of weeks ago a report appeared in "The Courier-Mail" under the headline, "Joh and Llew promise top budget". The report said—

"'Next month's State Budget would be the envy of every other State,' the Premier said today. 'They will wonder how we did it and how we will continue to live and operate within our means.'"

I want to go back in history and deal with Commonwealth/State financial arrangements. I want to refer also to what happened under Fraser's regime and at the last Premiers Conference.

At the time of Federation in 1901, it was recognised that the transfer to the Commonwealth of a large part of the States' revenue-raising capacity, chiefly through customs and excise duties, would not be matched by an equivalent decline in their responsibilities. Section 87 of the Commonwealth Constitution was designed to overcome this lack of fiscal balance by providing for the States to receive 75 per cent of the revenue raised by the Commonwealth through customs and excise for a period of 10 years from Federation or thereafter until the Commonwealth Parliament otherwise provided.

At the end of the 10-year period, these payments were replaced by a combination of per capita grants to all States plus a system of special grants paid to the less populous States.

In 1923-24 the Commonwealth commenced making payments to the States for the purpose of road construction and maintenance.

Since then, particularly in the post-World War II period, there has been a general increase both in the range of purposes for which such specific payments have been made and in the complexity of the arrangements, although this trend has been reversed to a certain extent in recent years with a number of specific purpose payments being absorbed into general purpose payments.

In 1942 the assumption of sole income-taxing powers by the Commonwealth and the concurrent introduction of tax reimbursement grants to the States resulted in a further increase in the States' reliance on assistance from the Commonwealth in order to meet their financial responsibilities.

In addition, from 1927 the Commonwealth has assumed responsibility for the raising of public loans on behalf of the States under the terms of the financial agreement and through the decision of the Loan Council.

Commonwealth/State financial arrangements can therefore be seen to be an important component of the States' budgetary systems.

In Australia we have what I believe is one of the most unbalanced federal systems. Of all the federal systems existing in the world today, Australia has the most imbalanced financial arrangements of any. The Commonwealth collects more than 80 per cent of tax revenue and the State and local governments together collect less than 20 per cent, even though State and local Governments are responsible for nearly two-thirds of budgetary outlays. Queensland currently receives about 60 per cent of its revenue from the Commonwealth.

In other federal systems, for example, in Canada and the United States of America, State and local governments raise about 60 per cent of tax revenue. In the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland the corresponding percentages are 68 and 72 respectively.

This chronic imbalance in Australia has meant excessive dependence by the States on the Commonwealth, which the Commonwealth can, and does, manipulate according to its whim. The disaster of Fraser federalism showed clearly how the Commonwealth can push the States to the wall. The Fraser Government tried to off-load services provided by the Commonwealth onto the States while at the same time it reduced Commonwealth Government allocations to the States.

It is interesting to note that, since 1975-76, State Budget outlays have increased by 14.4 per cent in real terms, whereas Commonwealth Government Budget outlays, excluding payments to the States, increased by 23 per cent. In real terms the States are getting 14.4 per cent more, whereas the Commonwealth is getting 23 per cent more.

Since 1975-76, payments to the States have declined by 5.2 per cent in real terms. General purpose capital payments to the States declined by a massive 47.4 per cent. Specific purpose payments declined by 32.7 per cent. That led to the proportion of State Budgets financed by the Commonwealth declining from 72 per cent in 1975-76 to 59 per cent in 1982-83. In short, the Commonwealth was gradually and drastically squeezing the States. That was under Fraser federalism and under the Fraser-Anthony Liberal/National Party Governments. They were the Governments that the Queensland Government supported for ever and a day.

To prove my point, I draw attention to a letter from the Prime Minister to the Premiers dated 12 July 1973. The letter was sent to all Premiers. The third paragraph of that letter states—

"I must reiterate that the Commonwealth considers that the current guarantee formula is too generous, and make the obvious point that any proposal for continuation in its present form would not be acceptable. I would also wish to reiterate that an important aspect of the tax sharing arrangements is the emphasis on responsibility for the States, including responsibility for raising revenue themselves in line with their own priorities."

The States are lucky that Mr Fraser has been put into retirement. It is very fortunate that that has happened.

As a result of the review of the tax sharing arrangements, the Fraser Government dropped its commitment to allocate 39.87 per cent of personal income tax receipts to the States and instead adopted a share of total tax revenue. That commitment was taken away. If the former arrangements had been continued, Commonwealth payments to the States in 1982-83 would have totalled \$8,546m, or \$773m more than the amount actually paid. Honourable members opposite supported Mr Fraser and Mr Anthony, but they now complain about the Hawke Government ripping off the States. In 1982-83 the States were ripped off by a massive \$773m. It is irrefutable that the Commonwealth under the Fraser/Anthony Government severely reduced the payments to the States and increased its own budgeting flexibility at their expense.

It is irrefutable that the Fraser Government did more damage to Australia's Federal system than any other Government in our history. The increased centralisation of economic and financial power that occurred with the Fraser administration is evidenced by what happened at last year's Premier's conference. Here we are talking about the centralist Labor Party. We had seven years of Fraser federalism that squeezed the States—that is centralism. It was trying to make things very difficult for the States.

Let us look at what happened at last year's Premier's conference and contrast that with what happened at this year's Premier's conference. The Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, who supposedly stands up for Queensland, meekly walked away with \$127m less than the amount recommended by the Grants Commission. These are the actions of our strong leader! Joh Bjelke-Petersen went down there and walked away in a very meek and mild manner with \$127m less. To explain himself and his lack of intestinal fortitude, he meekly stated, "Queensland will help the poor cousins". I will quote what Mr Bjelke-Petersen said. He said, "We accept it. We can go along with it. We accept we are part of one nation. We failed to get what we wanted because we realise that we have to help all other States which are poorer. This proves we are carrying Australia. The other States are our poor cousins". What an amazing transition! A co-operative Joh Bjelke-Petersen attended last year's Premier's conference. He has come away from this year's Premier's conference—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! I remind the honourable member that he must refer to the Premier as the Honourable the Premier and not as Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

Mr FOURAS: I accept your ruling on that, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Premier has two different attitudes. Let us look at the statements made by the Premier that we are carrying our poor cousins. That is utter rubbish. Queensland, which has one of the lowest real incomes per head in Australia, is supposedly carrying the poor cousins. Queensland was being dictated to, and the Premier failed to stand up for the amount as recommended by the Grants Commission. The only thing that saved Queensland and the other States was the election of the Hawke Labor Government and the financial generosity of that Government at this year's Premier's Conference and Loan Council meeting. Queensland's tax sharing and special temporary revenue assistance grants increased by 13.3 per cent for 1983-84 compared with 11.5 per cent for all other States.

If the Treasurer wants to hark back to the Fraser days, I will read from what "The Age" newspaper said in an editorial on 19 March 1981 under the heading "Joh faces facts (back to front)." That is not unusual. I will refer to a few paragraphs from that editorial, which said—

"For years Queenslanders have been blissfully unaware of the fact that their Government, like those of the other smaller States, has been subsidised by the two larger States down south. Those handsome roads, that long-standing free public hospital treatment, all have been built up with tax moneys transferred by Canberra from Victoria and NSW. This year, for instance, Queensland's share of Federal tax grants is, three hundred million dollars more than it would get if it were paid at the same per capita as Victoria."

In the 1982-83 financial year, the figure would be \$431m. The editorial continued—

"Average incomes in Queensland at last count were only 6 per cent less than in Victoria. Yet last year Victoria got back only \$29 in every \$100 that its citizens paid in income tax, while Queensland got back \$48. As if this redistribution were not unfair enough, Queensland in the past five years has successfully begged on Canberra's doorstep for a further \$20 million a year, supposedly to enable it to provide services comparable to those in Victoria and NSW."

In his speech, the Treasurer made much of the fact that, although Queensland could receive a further \$200m from taxation if it were brought into line with the other States, we were not doing it. We may be a low-tax State, but we are a low-service State. The last figures available—and I take these from the report of the 1982 Commonwealth Grants Commission—show that Queensland was underspending to the extent of \$103.69 per head in areas such as primary education, secondary education, consumer protection services, lands, transport, welfare and health. In other words, for the year 1980-81, Queensland was underspending to the extent of \$247.5m.

The Treasurer skites that Queensland is a low-tax State; but people are suffering because of this State Government's policies. The Treasurer says that he is doing better than the other States, but he is servicing less than they are. It depends on where one makes one's economic judgement as to how well Queensland is doing. It is important to understand that the Commonwealth Grants Commission assessed the underspending by the Queensland Government in 1980-81—unfortunately I have to use those old figures—at \$103.69 per person. This State is spending \$247m less than other States in the provision of vital services.

I return to the difference between the Fraser Federal Government and the Hawke Federal Government. I have a document that resulted from the Premiers' Conference and the Loan Council meeting, agreed to by the State heads of Government and the Commonwealth. At the Premiers' Conference there was agreement by the State Government to a number of fundamental issues; yet, amazingly, when the Premier and the Treasurer returned to Queensland they did not, for political grand-standing purposes, agree to the communique. For example, the communique said—

“... the heads of government agreed that the Commonwealth Government has designed its macro-economic policies to promote national economic recovery. In particular, they agreed that significant fiscal stimulus to promote recovery, while avoiding excessive strain on financial markets, would be provided within a budget deficit of \$8.5 billion.”

Let us study that Budget deficit. Fraser's last Budget predicted a deficit of \$1,700m. The figure grew to \$4,600m. The Fraser Government left Hawke with a deficit that would have been \$9,500m if it had not been pruned by hard decisions that members opposite will campaign on at our next Federal election, suggesting to the people of Australia that the Labor Government has been irresponsible. Yet in this document the Queensland Government is saying that that is a responsible action.

The document continued—

“... any deficit significantly above this figure would bring into question the durability of recovery through its possible effects in raising interest rates.

The heads of government ... noted the severe budgetary environment for all governments, both Commonwealth and State. Within this environment, the substantial increase in the real value of transfers from the Commonwealth to the States would require reductions in other Commonwealth outlays or increases in Commonwealth revenues, or some combination of the two.”

That is a fact of life, but the Government is suggesting—at least the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing has suggested it—that it go to the people straight after the Federal Budget. Because the Federal Government showed some leniency to Queensland and made it easy for the State, the Queensland Government skites about its ability to manage the State's finances. However, it has received an extra \$200m from the Hawke Labor Government to achieve a balanced Budget. Now the Government will go to the people and say that the Hawke Government is irresponsible, but the Hawke Government has looked after the States.

Dr Edwards: Cut it out! That does not take into account inflation.

Mr FOURAS: Of course it does not take into account inflation.

Now I will have a look at the figures. In 1982-83, Queensland received \$1,527.4m under the tax sharing and special temporary revenue assistance grants. In 1983-84, that figure will be \$1,731m. My mathematics calculate that increase at \$203m, or a percentage increase for Queensland of 13.3, while the average increase for every other State is 11.5 per cent. So the Queensland Government is getting from the Hawke Labor Government a four to five per cent real increase that it had not previously received.

It is about time that the Government stopped its grandstanding. The special grant of \$155.5m that was shared between the States because of their budgetary difficulties is another benefit from the Hawke Labor Government.

I will further consider why the State's Budget will be balanced this year. I believe it will be balanced only because of the wages freeze. Had there been no wages freeze the Consolidated Revenue Fund would not have shown a deficit of \$800,000. The Deputy Premier should not come into this House and try to pull the wool over our eyes. I will now consider how a balanced Budget was made possible. When the State will receive \$20m

less from stamp duty revenue, \$14.4m less in pay-roll tax and, as well as that, there has been an outlay of \$10.7m for relief measures for drought and floods, which unfortunately had to be paid out at the same time, how can the Treasurer come here and say that he is a genius and has balanced the Budget? The Treasurer did so only by robbing the unemployed of the nation. He did it by moneys—\$136m—that were set aside in the Budget for wage and salary award increases.

Dr Edwards: That money was spent.

Mr FOURAS: It was not spent. I will debate that with the Deputy Premier and Treasurer in any forum of his choosing. The Government spent only \$46m of that \$136m that was set aside for salary and wage award increases. So \$53m of that money was used to subsidise the Budget shortfalls. The only reason that the Treasurer can skite about a balanced Budget this year is that he did not spend that money.

Let us consider the fundamental concept of the wages pause package. In economic terms it could only be helpful if the moneys saved in wage increases were put back into the community to increase demand in the community. But that did not happen in this State, which used that massive amount of \$53m to shore up its Budget so that the Treasurer can now tell the people of Queensland that he has balanced the Budget. He can do that only because there was a wages pause. That is despicable, to use the word that the Deputy Premier used five times today when he spoke about the Leader of the Opposition.

Dr Edwards: And you nodded your head.

Mr FOURAS: No way! The Deputy Premier and Treasurer was done like a dinner today. The Government was done like a dinner. The members of the Opposition were proud to sit behind the Leader of the Opposition, who, in our opinion, gave an excellent performance that we rated at ten out of ten. Never again will the Government be game to enter this House and carry on with such charades.

I ask the Treasurer, when he sums up, to tell us how those shortfalls in stamp duty and pay-roll tax and the extra funds spent on the police were found if they were not found from the Budget allocation for wage increases. But I will leave it at that because it may be becoming a bit tedious. I think I have made my point rather well, and I will turn to other issues.

I now want to deal with some of the things a Labor Government would do, particularly while I am talking about accountability, responsibility and efficiency in running a State. The Treasurer keeps on saying what a marvellous job the Government is doing in balancing the Budget, but there are other aspects to be considered when the spending of money is being discussed, particularly the aspect of efficiency.

I believe it is time—in fact the time is overdue—that we turned to program budgeting. I am sure that the Treasury boffins who advise the Treasurer right now would be against it because of their concern that its introduction would mean the loss of a certain amount of their power. Program budgeting is being introduced in Victoria and New South Wales, and the Queensland Government ought to do the same. Certainly the Labor Party pledges to introduce it. The Opposition will pledge as part of its election platform that it will institute program budgeting. It would be done through due processes and not introduced overnight.

The introduction of program budgeting would create a revolution as far as open government is concerned. This Government would not care for that, but that revolution would manifest itself because Government departments would have to throw open their doors to the public under the system of financial reporting called program budgeting. It has been used very successfully elsewhere, and for the Treasurer to shake his head and suggest that it is not viable is ridiculous. A statement was made in "The Australian" a couple of weeks ago to the effect that the implementation of program budgeting is tantamount to handing the people a club with which to beat their elected representatives. That is a fact, and that is why the Treasury boffins and the Premier would not want it. The bureaucracy does not want—

Dr EDWARDS: I rise to a point of order. I take exception to the honourable member calling Treasury officers "boffins". I do not believe it is becoming for a member of Parliament to refer to them in that manner.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Although I agree with the Treasurer, I point out that no member of the House has right to take a point of order on behalf of people outside this Chamber.

Mr FOURAS: I refer to Treasury officials in that manner only when I see their intransigent attitude towards program budgeting.

Dr Edwards: You are on record.

Mr FOURAS: Yes, I am on record. I am saying that Treasury officials who advise the Treasurer against program budgeting are behaving like boffins. That is the point I was trying to make, and I think that is fair enough.

We need to give the Government greater control over the State's bureaucracy. What the reforms mean in their simplest terms is that when they are implemented State Government departments and statutory authorities would begin changing their financial reporting systems to include telling the Government, and through the Government the people, not only how much they spend but where they spend it and how effectively they spend it. The obligation would be on departments and/or authorities to justify expenditures which, under the present system, are lumped together under single headings in the Budget documents. At present we have single line reporting, and that is great for the Government; but anyone who reads the Treasury papers now has no idea of how efficiently or effectively money is spent or whether tasks for which a department is responsible are carried out.

In fact, when program budgeting was introduced in the New South Wales Welfare Department as a pilot program in the last financial year, it was found that some of its statutory obligations, some of the tasks it said it was doing, were not being done at all. That proved conclusively the effectiveness of such a system. But, of course, this Government does not want to be judged on how effectively it provides human services. The last thing this Government wants is to be judged on how effectively it provides services in education, welfare or health. I believe that the line item formula that departments now use to solicit money from the Government cannot be allowed to continue.

An examination of the Budget reports for the last financial year relating to New South Wales and Victoria shows how this program budgeting system would work. It is said that the purpose of program budgeting is to facilitate analysis which will help with policy formulation and approval, program planning and direction, accountability and redirection. All of those terms are anathema to Government members. The New South Wales document points out that program budgeting encourages more efficient administration by costing the outputs of government, that is, functions, programs and activities, and not just inputs, that is, public servants, office accommodation, phones, mail and stationery. The difference is the important issue at stake. We should be looking further into this. Furthermore, the document states that program budgeting gives the Government better control over spending priorities by showing the cost of each function, program and activity instead of merely departmental running costs, that is, salaries, rents, stationery, stamps and phone calls. Program budgeting helps the Government justify expenditure by highlighting the benefits and achievements of government instead of only the costs. With program budgeting, benefits can accrue to the public, Parliament, the Cabinet and Ministers, departments and line managers.

For example, with a program budgeting system, the Premier and Cabinet Ministers would be better informed for decision-making. It would enhance their knowledge of costs and expected benefits of programs. It would improve accountability and facilitate evaluation. In addition, Parliament and the public would have the same access. They would have a better understanding and, as a result, there would be accountability. There would be a clearer anticipation of costs and expected benefits. It would ensure value for money.

The 1983 Victorian Budget Paper indicates exactly the same sort of result. The Victorian Government has made a commitment to do exactly the same thing. It is important that the same phraseology and objectives are expressed. As a result of such action departments would have to specify objectives and develop programs. The programs themselves would have to meet the departmental and Government objectives. Resources must be allocated to programs not to lines in a Budget. To make the system operational departments must have a management structure and information system capable of

managing resources and programs. That would facilitate evaluation and efficiency and let the Treasurer know where he is going. The efficiency of decision-making would be improved if such a system were implemented. I have no doubt that financial experts would suggest to the Treasurer that he should follow such procedures.

I wish to deal now with the Expo proposals that are seriously affecting my electorate. I am extremely concerned about a number of points covered by the Expo decision. I have here a letter from a person who conducts a business in South Brisbane. It is important because it typifies the extreme concern that is being felt. I will read it so that members may understand the concern and trauma confronting people. It is addressed to me and is in these terms—

“I am writing to you to put my particular case of having to give up my business in the Expo area and my hardships and inconvenience caused by this.

. . . .

I am concerned with regard to compensation benefits available to me as a small businessman leasing a workshop and employing ten (10) persons (mechanics and office staff).

It appears that current legislation is inadequate for the area affected and myself and others in the Expo site would like to be reassured that not only large businesses and property owners are fairly compensated but small business owners are also given fair consideration.

This business has been in South Brisbane servicing and repairing motor vehicles for 43 years and most of our customers are local or city people or business concerns and to have to relocate to another area would spell disaster as we could not expect our clientele to follow us to a location further afield which would make it difficult to travel to their place of employment or business.

To endeavour to obtain premises in close proximity to our existing shop, not only finding another building suitable, but in similar rent proportions is not possible as I have done this exercise and was shocked by the results. When one thinks about relocating costs it is quite frightening as things like stationery, signs, advertising, telephones, electricity etc., plus moving of hoists, machinery etc., business loss during such a move would cost quite a considerable amount of money.

Trusting that when legislation is drawn up that my concern will not be necessary and small businesses like mine and others will be adequately compensated.”

Dr Edwards interjected.

Mr FOURAS: I would hope that this is so. If those people who benefit can subsidise those who lose in an economic change or even in a social change in society, it is a positive economic or social change. That is an important principle of economic welfare. In any such economic change I have never seen those who gain compensate the losers. I am saying quite clearly in this Chamber that there are people, such as the man to whom I have just referred, who will lose because they will be most inadequately compensated. It is important that that matter be considered.

Dr Edwards interjected.

Mr FOURAS: We will see. Will those people be compensated for loss of business?

Dr Edwards interjected.

Mr FOURAS: If the Deputy Premier and Treasurer will allow me to make my speech, he can reply later to what I am saying.

The aim should be to provide equity in business opportunity, not equal compensation per square metre of land. I hope that different levels of compensation are provided. Land value should not be the only factor considered. Other factors that should be considered are relocation value, re-establishment value to council and local authority requirements, loss of livelihood of workers and owners, loss of business opportunity, destruction of business, and businesses in rented premises.

Most of the businesses in areas such as South Brisbane relate to the area. For example, the service station in Grey Street is specific to that location, its clientele, its size and its community service. Such a business simply cannot be relocated on any old corner, even one nearby. There is mute evidence to indicate that service stations just cannot be successful

anywhere in this city. It is important to bring to the notice of the Government and the public that the circumstances surrounding the resumption of a substantial area are vastly different from and more serious than those surrounding resumptions for widening roads or for freeways. I support the right of the Government to resume land for the public good, but 40 ha of prime real estate in South Brisbane is being resumed.

I think that we have to look at what the Government means when it refers to "buy back" priority at the end of Expo. Does that mean inflated rezoned values or preferential prices? Will business opportunities still be there? What allowance will be made for loss of goodwill during the interval? What choice of location will be available? Although the plan to fund Expo by the resale of the properties afterwards is publicly commendable and responsible, the compensation being requested is for existing property owners to obtain an equitable share only in that revaluation.

I now look at some of the statements that have been made by the Treasurer and the Premier about Expo. An article in "The Courier-Mail" of 16 June 1983 reads—

"The Expo will be staged on a 40 ha site on the Brisbane River southbank, and according to Government studies will be self-funding. There should be no cost to taxpayers."

I am becoming concerned that the Treasurer is acquiring some kind of cargo cult mentality. He continues to talk about self-financing railway lines and a self-financing Expo. He should be sent to the New Guinea Highlands. Maybe the people there will buy that sort of economic nonsense; I certainly won't. Let us put things in to their proper perspective. If these projects are to cost the people money, the Government should come clean about it. It should say how it will compensate those people who will lose. This Expo proposal has been shrouded in secrecy. Nobody knew that that site was being considered. The Leader of the Opposition has written to the Treasurer seeking a meeting.

Dr Edwards: I will meet with you any time, but I won't meet with the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr FOURAS: That is deplorable. I will not meet with you under those circumstances because I support the Leader of the Opposition.

Dr Edwards interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr FOURAS: That is the typical Indian-giving stance that the Treasurer adopts. He often offers to do something, but he never does it.

Dr Edwards: Because you never turn up.

Mr FOURAS: The meetings never materialise.

How will the Government resume all that land without any cost to itself? The Government has quoted a cost of \$128m. Is it going to borrow the money? Will it find the money from the Treasurer's cash balances? If it does, there will be an opportunity cost of that money. If the Government borrows \$140m for four or five years, and if it borrows that money at an interest rate of 14 or 15 per cent, it will pay back \$100m in interest. Will the Government recoup that cost by way of profits over the five-year term?

Dr Edwards: You are saying \$100m interest over five years?

Mr FOURAS: That is right. If the Government borrows \$140m over five years, that will be the amount of interest. It is very simple. Earlier today the Treasurer said that I could not add up. He certainly does not understand anything about interest rates.

On Monday, 30 May, Dr Edwards was reported as saying that State Cabinet had discussed the financial viability of the project and had given it the green light. He went on to say that the staging of the Exposition would be self-financing from admission fees, rentals and the sale of assets at an enhanced value. The Government is expecting that 6 million people will visit the Expo site.

Recently I had the privilege of being a member of a parliamentary delegation that looked at the Vancouver site. The Canadian Government is spending in excess of

\$500m for an Expo to be held at Vancouver in 1986. The Queensland Government will be staging an Expo at a projected cost of \$128m or \$148m—the figures vary. Nevertheless, whatever the figure is, it will be a poor proposition.

When I was in America, one thing that Americans said to me was that Australia is a great place but they cannot afford to travel here. That was said in both America and Canada. The Treasurer is talking about 6 million people visiting the Expo site. That is pie in the sky. I do not want to sound like a Jonah, but I do not believe—

Dr Edwards: Mr Hawke supported the project.

Mr FOURAS: Let us be realistic.

Dr Edwards: It has been indicated that our figures are correct and the Federal Government made the application on behalf of the Queensland Government.

Mr FOURAS: The Treasurer is saying that 6 million people will visit Expo and that it will be self-financing.

Dr Edwards: No. I said that 6 million people would pass through the gates over a six-month period. I did not say that 6 million people would come to Australia.

Mr FOURAS: I am saying that the Treasurer claims that 6 million people will pass through the gates. That is a gross overestimation.

Dr Edwards: Underestimation?

Mr FOURAS: Overestimation. I will be greatly surprised if Expo does not cost the people money. I should like the Treasurer to come clean and tell me how he will finance Expo.

Concern has been expressed to me about what will happen with the Expo site. It is located in my electorate and it contains prime real estate. Some cynics are claiming that Expo will allow the expansion of Brisbane across the river and that that is the Government's major criterion; it will be a real estate rake-off for the Government. If that is so and if Expo is to be financed on that basis, I will not have a bar of it.

I have stated my concern about Expo. I want compensation to be given to property holders. I hope that it is not a real estate venture by this Government, which is well known throughout Australia for doing business deals on the side. There is no doubt that the Queensland Government is the best Government that money can buy. That is irrefutable. Queensland has the best Government that money can buy.

Dr Edwards: You should withdraw that.

Mr FOURAS: I believe it; I really do.

I want to relate some of the problems that the Government encounters. One of its biggest problems is that it does not see any role for the public sector. We in the Opposition believe in a private/public sector partnership. For the Government to tackle its present problems and develop effective strategies and policies to maximise Queensland's future growth potential it must have the utmost co-operation between the public and private sectors. The Queensland public sector contributes something like 25 per cent of the gross domestic product.

The health of the public sector is vital to the survival of the private sector. Its independence is readily seen in the provision of public facilities such as roads, railways, water supply, electricity, health, education and welfare and in the provision of services such as orderly and fair business practices, development and marketing systems. The problem with the Queensland Government is that it does not see the need to play an active role in a partnership between the Government and the private sector.

I suggest that we ought to be looking at indicative economic planning, which is widely used, and not a socialist dogma. It is used in the EEC, in Japan, in Canada and in the United States of America to identify and maximise future economic growth opportunities. Such a concept is unknown in Queensland because of the ideological blinkers worn by the State Government. In modern society and in modern economies, planning is essential. We cannot adhere to a live-and-hope philosophy in which the Premier

believes in allowing no planning to take place. Efficient economic management cannot be provided by a Government which believes that it has no role to play in economic management.

Recently some interesting statistics were released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. They should be of great concern to the people in this State. I refer particularly to the statistics on fixed capital expenditure. It is stated quite clearly that next year's fixed capital expenditure in Queensland, that is, fixed assets in both the private and public sectors, is estimated to decline from \$3,415.5m to \$2,423.8m. That is of great concern to this State. The Government ought to be concerned that there will be a \$1,000m decline in private and public sector fixed capital expenditure. We ought to be thinking in terms of how to avert that drastic decline in expenditure which would wreak havoc in the building and construction industries. If the Treasurer believes those statistics, he ought to be telling this Parliament how to overcome the problem. One way in which that can be done is using some of the Treasurer's massive cash balances to bring forward capital expenditure such as building schools.

Dr Edwards: You have to pay for it.

Mr FOURAS: Of course it must be paid for. The Treasurer should let me complete my speech before he criticises it. I do not suggest that the hollow logs should be completely emptied, but I suggest that it is absolutely necessary to do something. The cost of those capital works would have to be repaid. It is not financially valid, sensible or responsible to completely empty the hollow logs. If fixed capital expenditure, both private and public, is to decline next year by \$1 billion, something ought to be done instead of investing the Treasurer's cash balances on the fixed term money market. The money could be repaid as a debt. It must be repaid. It is possible.

It is happening in Victoria. Victoria is doing very well with its program. I will be happy to debate this issue with the Treasurer in the lead-up to the next State election. This issue was debated hotly in Victoria before the last State election. The Labor Government won hands down because economists and prominent financial managers said that there was nothing dangerous in the program that the Government put forward. It does the Treasurer no credit to suggest that that sort of program of bringing forward public capital works is a shonk or that it is a deceitful program.

If the Treasurer is sincere about creating employment, he ought to be doing something about it. Serious problems exist in our economy in this State as well as in the rest of Australia. Unfortunately, the recession has not yet bottomed out. However, for political purposes, with the coming election campaign in mind, the State Government is suggesting that everything in the garden is marvellous. It is not showing any concern or doing anything about the plight of the unemployed. We have problems with technology, we have problems with an ageing population and we have problems with severe disequilibrium in several of the State's economic sectors and uncertainties in international trade. It is imperative that something be done about that.

It is imperative that we plan and that we bring forward capital works. It is imperative that we take our heads out of the sand instead of suggesting that, because we balance the books, we are great economic managers. The Government does not worry about the services that it gives to the public or about the quality of life in this State. It is the be-all and end-all of Treasury to balance the books. What absolute nonsense that is.

I will deal briefly with quangos. Over the last three years the Parliament has been involved in a very interesting debate about quangos. Unfortunately, the only Government action has been the Premier's telling someone to count the quangos. The Government thinks that, by sending people out to count them, it is acting responsibly in economic terms.

A study in Victoria showed that Victorian quangos wasted or inefficiently used \$600m worth of public funds annually. There is no reason to believe that the position is any different in Queensland. However, we are not being told that. We have had the scandal in the Peanut Marketing Board and the mismanagement in SEQEB. We have examples, but we are not told anything. The only study undertaken—and it was only a head-counting exercise—resulted in a report to which we are not privy.

People such as the Liberal member for Mt Gravatt (Mr Scassola) want a public bodies review committee such as they have in Victoria. Some members of the Liberal Party have looked at what is happening in other States and lent their support. Some

Government members may be a little more erudite than others. However, the fraud of this Government's concern about quangos has to be laid to rest. I repeat that all the Government has ever done is count them.

Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to enter today's debate about the Stanwell Power Station. On the one hand, we have been told that it is totally irrelevant for an Italian company to suggest that, as part of the desirability of its being awarded the contract, it would buy some 10 million tonnes of coal over a period of years. It is interesting that the Cabinet did not think that that was important enough to influence its decision on the successful tenderer. On the other hand, what happened with the Jackson oil pipeline? On his own initiative, the Premier went along as a lobbyist. He does not believe in lobbyists, but he will lobby for some people when the time is right. He will lobby for Dr Oskar; he will lobby for Milan Brych; he will lobby for the Koreans or for the Japanese. He does it with monotonous regularity. In the instance of the Stanwell Power Station, honourable members have seen the most amazing lobbying that one could find.

At the insistence of the Premier, a Korean construction company was given a 25 per cent equity in the Jackson oil pipeline construction. That company had nothing to do with the oil. There was no shortage of capital or technical know-how. However, the Premier insisted on its being given that equity. Then, when the Foreign Investment Review Board concluded that it was of no net economic benefit to the nation, the Premier said, "Horror! Horror! How ridiculous! We have other things. We will trade with them. They will stop buying our primary produce. They will stop buying our coal. They will stop buying our meat." Basically, he was telling that country that it should blackmail this State. He was acting as an agent provocateur in making such statements. What a carpet-bagger the Premier turns out to be from time to time when he goes to South East Asia. They must rub their hands with glee when they have a man such as the Premier to whom they can sell such propositions.

It was claimed that there was no economic benefit to the ICC Korean construction company to have a 25 per cent equity in the Jackson oil pipeline. The problem is that the Government has double standards. On the one hand, it did not worry about losing \$259m when it made its Tarong decision; on the other hand, it made shocking decisions such as the decision on the Winchester coal lease. By adopting a sanctimonious attitude, the Treasurer has been a party to this hoax and has claimed to be horrified that a member of the Opposition has questioned the Government's integrity. If I may say it again: it is the best Government that money can buy.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! I remind the honourable member for South Brisbane that it is unparliamentary to make personal reflections on any member of this Chamber. Twice tonight I have heard the honourable member say that this Government is the best that money can buy. I ask the honourable member to enlighten me as to what he means by that statement.

Mr FOURAS: I think it is self-evident.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I want to know to what you are referring. I am asking the member for South Brisbane to explain to the Chair what he means by that statement.

Mr FOURAS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will not take a point of order. I am asking him to explain to me what he means by that statement.

Mr FOURAS: I think it is self-evident, and that is all I am willing to say on that. What I have just said is self-evident.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw that statement.

Mr FOURAS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I withdraw that statement, if that pleases you.

Mr Wharton: He has lost his place.

Mr FOURAS: There is no need to worry about that.

Mr Gunn: You are trying to tell us how to run the State.

Mr FOURAS: I suggest that I could do that very well.

When it comes to losing my place, I remember well an occasion on which, during the Matters of Public Interest Debate, a member who is now a Minister was to make a 10-minute speech. After he had read for two minutes it was drawn to his attention that he could not read speeches in this place, so he sat down. I will not be rude enough to name the Minister, but he did not have the brains or the ability to cope with being told that he could not read his speech. Now the Minister for Commerce and Industry (Mr Gunn) has suggested to me that I have lost my place.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Once again the honourable member is making personal reflections.

Mr FOURAS: I return to discuss issues pertinent to the debate, and I now turn to superannuation. To follow the course of what has happened to superannuation is very important. In 1972 the State Service Superannuation Scheme was changed from one in which public servants bought units depending on their age and salary. The fund was actuarially sound because when a public servant bought a unit with, say, five years to go, he knew exactly how much it would cost. In 1972 that was changed to a percentage scheme, and I supported that change. However, the actuarial assessment of the new scheme was based on a $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent inflation rate and a $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent increase in salary. At that time, the earning rate of the fund was given as 5 per cent. So at that time the State Service Superannuation Fund had an earning rate above the inflation rate and the average increase in salaries. That was a viable and actuarially sound proposition.

In the 11 years since then the State Government has short-changed the State Service Superannuation Fund of tens and tens of millions of dollars. While inflation and the average increase of salaries has run at $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, the Government has paid interest to the fund at 7 per cent. Any actuary who agreed with that proposition should be certified. I am sure no actuary would suggest that an earning rate so far below the cost to the fund would not put the fund into a very difficult position, which is exactly what has happened.

The actuarial report into the fund that should have been tabled ages ago has not been tabled. The report was asked for in 1980 and since then the Government has made no attempt to remedy the serious shortfall. I have no doubt — the Treasurer can disagree with my assertion — that actuarially the fund has a \$200m deficit. A massive increase in earnings is needed to overcome it.

It is time that the State stopped robbing Peter to pay Paul, stopped paying these appallingly low interest rates to the superannuation fund. It is interesting to note that although the fund at present is worth some \$400m, the Government is borrowing money from it on which it is paying 7 per cent interest. It then invests that money at many different interest rates. No wonder the Government can come up with \$191m in interest as an input item of the State Budget. Of course it helps the Treasury; but is it fair to the scheme? Is it fair to threaten the viability of a fund by adopting such penny-pinching tactics for the past 11 years? Is it fair to the members of the fund? The position will be made clear when the actuarial report is released.

I would like to sum up by suggesting that the myth that this State Government is a great manager of funds should be put to rest. As I said earlier, it has been able to make that claim by, on the 1980-81 figures, underspending \$247.5m in vital areas such as health, welfare and education. It is doing the same thing this year by pilfering \$53m from moneys allocated for wage and salary increases. That will be revealed when we see the Budget papers. It will be there for all to see. I suggest that it is about time that we looked at the introduction of program budgeting, used indicative planning and brought the financial management of this State into the 1980s.

Mr LESTER (Peak Downs) (9.37 p.m.): I take this opportunity to offer my congratulations to the Treasurer, who works so hard to keep the finances of our State in a sound and equitable position.

Tonight honourable members heard the honourable member for South Brisbane carry on at length; but Opposition members do not realise that people in New South Wales pay 50 per cent more in State taxation than do Queenslanders. Victorians pay 70 per cent more in State taxation than do Queenslanders. It is money in people's pockets that is important, and our Treasurer tries to keep as much money in people's pockets as

possible. All the Labor Party wants to do is condemn, condemn, condemn. Opposition members do not know the answers; they do not know how to be positive. In every State that the Labor Party has tried to run the finances have gone downhill and made life much more difficult for its people.

All Australians have seen the financial atrocities committed by the Labor Governments of New South Wales and Victoria. The South Australian Labor Government seems to be moving quickly in the same direction, as is the Government of Western Australia. As for the Federal Government, we do not know from one minute to the next what is going to happen. One minutes death duties are to be introduced; another Minister says that they are not. Then a Minister refers to the introduction of a capital gains tax, and somebody else denies that. The people of Australia, in particular the rural people, have been slugged in many ways since that grotesque Government gained office in Canberra.

If the Labor Party pursues its socialist policies, Australia will end up like so many other socialist countries with virtually nothing left from taxation revenues in the bin in Canberra and many more people wanting to dip into it. That is what socialism is all about. The Labor Party does not seem to understand that free enterprise is about being positive and providing people with an incentive to work. The Labor Party tries to cut people down until they cannot get up again, and that is how Communism begins to breed.

Members of the Federal Government have been mixing with Communists. What about David Combe? It is all there in the newspapers for everybody to read. Nobody ever thought that Mr Young, Mr Hawke and many other people would be involved and have to clear themselves politically by court action. That has occurred because of their alliance with the Communist movement. That is the sort of thing we are dealing with in Australia today—a Government that is totally corrupt and does not seem to have the welfare of the hard-working people at heart. The knocking we just heard from the member for South Brisbane is enough to make one's blood curdle, and I hope and trust that the people of Queensland will never ever give members of the Labor Party any form of command in this State.

Mr Menzel: Who do you think wrote his speech?

Mr LESTER: He could not read a lot of it; he had great difficulty. He lost his place and then tried to draw comparisons with what other people do.

Mr Scott: What are you reading?

Mr LESTER: I have not read a word. To prove how much I know about this matter, I can look you in the eye and carry on with my speech as I always do. You know that for a fact.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! The honourable member will address the Chair and not the honourable member for Cook.

Mr LESTER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I take note of your guidance because you always control Parliament in a very fair and prestigious way.

Members of the Labor Party are tending to knock Expo. They are going sideways, forwards and backwards on the Expo proposal. They do not know whether they want it or not. They adopted the same attitude to the Commonwealth Games. They condemned the concept of the Games until they started. Opposition members hoped that the Games would not be successful so that they could blame us during the coming election campaign, but they were a real success.

Expo will be a great success. People from all over the world will come here. Some of them will settle here. Many of them will invest money here which, in turn, will mean more jobs for Queenslanders. We will then tackle the Olympic Games and make them a great success. Surely the Labor Party will not knock that idea. The successful Commonwealth Games, which were run in excellent facilities by great administrators with financial benefit flowing to the whole of Australia, followed by a successful Expo and successful Olympic Games—all within a decade—will surely turn the State of Queensland into the State of the world. It should be our aim to foster such ideas and make them work. Unfortunately, members of the Labor Party always try to win a few votes by knocking things. They might gain a few votes by doing so but, quite obviously, their economics are in their boots, not in their heads.

Mr Prest: The old baker—13 to a dozen.

Mr LESTER: That is about as far as you can count, Mr Prest—13 to a dozen. How many are there in a dozen, Dr Edwards?

Dr Edwards: Twelve.

Mr LESTER: That's right. That means you are a far better Treasurer—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will refer to honourable members by their correct title. If he is referring to the Treasurer he will refer to the Honourable the Treasurer. If he is referring to the member for Port Curtis he will refer to the member for Port Curtis.

Mr LESTER: I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

It is quite obvious that the honourable member for Port Curtis cannot count because he said that there were 13 in a dozen. It is quite clear that the Honourable the Treasurer can count because he said that there are 12 in a dozen. That clearly settles the economic battle on the floor of Parliament tonight. Opposition members have done that for us. We do not need to talk too much about economics. We have beaten them with a small sum. That is typical of the mentality of members of the Opposition. They do not know their sums; they cannot do their work and they do not know too much about opposition.

Let us remember that Opposition members are condemning the Government's visionary project to electrify the coal lines in Queensland. Some ALP members say that that will not happen. They do not seem to realise that the design work is completed and that the documentation is under way. Without doubt tenders will be called in the next month or so. They are ready to go, and why shouldn't they be because the profits on the railway lines are made in Central Queensland? At least half of the traffic movements take place on the coal lines. The coal miners, business people and all others in Central Queensland have been saying that this is what should be done. However, since the Government moved to get the scheme under way the Labor Party has tried to knock it. Members of the Opposition have said that it will not come to fruition. They have said that, if it is implemented, it will not work. Opposition members seem to forget that it will provide hundreds of jobs over the next decade and that it will save \$250m in the next decade in maintenance and fuel costs. It will mean that coal transport will be far more reliable. In the next decade, who will be able to depend on imported oil? There will probably be a war overseas and we will not be able to import oil. If that happens, we will not be able to shift our coal.

This deal will modernise the transport system in our State. If we depend on the diesel trains, we will be out of business in 10 years because other countries will be more competitive in the supply of coal. Being competitive means providing companies with the opportunity to offer coal at the best price.

I condemn the members of the Opposition for the way in which they have carried on about the electrification of the coal lines. I know the number of telephone calls that I have received from miners today. Opposition members have condemned their own people in the Central Highlands. I made it very clear what I think of the members of the Opposition, and the miners have made it clear to me what they think of them, too. I am astounded that the members of the Opposition should carry on in that way.

It must also be remembered that locally produced coal will be used in the power-stations that will provide the power. Of course, we have caught the members of the Labor Party unprepared. They were prepared to fight the forthcoming election on the basis that these lines would not be electrified. Now they find that this project will be well under way by the time the election is held. It is a great pity that some people think that details of projects such as this one are announced only just before elections.

The mines at Blair Athol, Riverside and Curragh are beginning to wind down, and the construction work-force at those mines will be looking for other work. These railway line construction projects will provide that work. Surely that is good, sound and sensible government.

Opposition members, in common with Mr Hawke and his predecessor, Mr Whitlam, have no idea of economics. They make all sorts of promises that they cannot keep. Indeed, if all their promises were implemented, this State would be well in the red.

Tonight we heard the Opposition spokesman on Treasury matters talk about debit balances and so on. He said, "Give the people this and that. Get into debt as much as you like." Opposition members forget that it all has to be paid for.

The system operated by the Deputy Premier and Treasurer is the correct one. I know that at times we all want more things for our State and we cannot always get them. At least this Government produces a balanced Budget at the end of the year. Queensland is going ahead at a faster rate than any other State. If Opposition members do not believe me, they should have a look at the development in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. No other State in Australia is going ahead at the same rate as Queensland. Indeed, those other States have not got the Commonwealth Games behind them and Expo and the Olympic Games in front of them. Do Opposition members believe that those things have happened through good luck? Of course not. They have happened as a result of sound planning. I think that I have proved conclusively tonight that the planning in this State has been sound. The State is going ahead in leaps and bounds but in an economically responsible way.

The Labor Party in Canberra and in the other States is raping the taxpayers, and it would do the same in Queensland if it had the chance. It is raping the primary producers, the business people and the doers in our great land. Can we put up with a Deputy Prime Minister who says that we do not need a wheat industry or a sugar industry? I could not believe it when I heard Mr Bowen say that. I know that the member for Mulgrave was very upset when Mr Bowen said that we did not need a sugar industry. He also said that we do not need a wheat industry. How would the people in the Central Highlands get on if there was no wheat industry? By the turn of the century that industry will expand fourfold.

Mr Menzel: Wouldn't it be better if we gave the Labor Government in Canberra away?

Mr LESTER: Obviously the people are going to give it away. Its term will be very short.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr LESTER: The honourable member for Port Curtis cannot deny that Mr Bowen said that.

Furthermore, the Federal Minister for Energy, Senator Walsh, said that all of the cockies and farmers were millionaires. I would like him to visit the Central Highlands, where people are trying to pay off big loans but are unable to do so. Last year the average income of those people was only \$2,000. \$2,000! And Senator Walsh said that they are millionaires! Couple that comment with Mr Bowen's remarks that the nation does not need a wheat industry or a sugar industry. What a Government the nation has in Canberra! It is an unacceptable Government. It is making things more difficult for each and every State.

In spite of that, Queensland is going ahead with its progressive policies. It conducted the Commonwealth Games, it will be holding Expo 88 and it hopes to be host for the Olympic Games. It is embarking upon railway electrification projects and many other new projects all over the State. Every part of this State is developing in some form or another.

I challenge members of the Labor Party to visit New South Wales and to tell me that the same development is occurring in that State, a State in which people are paying 50 per cent more than Queenslanders in State taxation. I challenge Labor members to go to Victoria and to tell me the same development is occurring in that State, in which people are paying 70 per cent more in State taxation.

The arguments put forward by Labor members cannot be counted, and Opposition members are well aware of that. Tonight they have been unable to answer me. The honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) tried to open his mouth on the odd occasion, but he had to shut it again when he realised what the facts are. I challenged the member for Port Curtis (Mr Prest) to deny what I said. He was unable to do so. He said that he could not hear me. I think that most people in the Chamber can hear me.

Labor members are trying to take development from the Peak Downs electorate. They are knocking the rail electrification, and they want to take away the wheat industry. They want to take the sugar industry from our coastal areas. It is very clear that Labor members have no idea of what economics are all about; neither will they have any idea while they

have this socialist ideology of milking the bank in Canberra and having more people trying to draw money out of the bank as well as having more people dependent on the Government for hand-outs. That is the breeding of a Communist system; there is no doubt about that.

Mr Scott: Read some more.

Mr LESTER: How much have I read tonight? I have hardly looked at my notes. There is far more in them than I will need to say. The record of the Labor Party is so bad that I do not need to quote all the information that I have in my notes.

There is no doubt that, although the Labor Government in Canberra talks about creating jobs, its every move takes away jobs. In addition to wanting to destroy the wheat and sugar industries, the Federal Labor Government intends imposing a fixed price on coal. That will terminate many contracts at the cost of a huge number of jobs.

Furthermore, the Federal Government is mucking about with Medicare. It wants to take away private services, which have been provided most effectively, and to put the whole of our health service into one big system that will go broke. Such systems have gone broke in other parts of the world. Mr Hayden messed around with Medibank, with the result that it did not work either. In this instance, 2 000 to 3 000 jobs in the health insurance industry will be lost. Nobody can deny that.

The Federal Labor Government proposes that builders will collect taxes from sub-contractors. Ironically, at a time when Governments are talking about building more houses, the Federal Government in Canberra suggests that a tax of 10 per cent, rising in some cases to 25 per cent, be imposed. Such a tax will wipe out many jobs in the building industry because many builders will not take on the job.

Last Saturday night the Premier himself was in Rockhampton and he heard the story told by all the concerned builders in that city. Is that right, Mr Premier?

Mr Bjelke-Petersen: That is dead right.

Mr LESTER: By gee, they were upset! Last Wednesday I attended a public meeting in Emerald at which officers from the Taxation Department could not answer a number of the questions that I asked on behalf of builders. Those officers simply could not answer them. It was not that they were not intelligent. They said to me privately, "We cannot implement these new rules by 1 September."

Is it possible to get Mr Hawke to agree to defer the introduction of that tax till it can be worked out properly? There is no way in the world that that will be done. The Federal Government wants to go on and be stupid. It will then go to the Press and state what it is trying to do to create employment. That is the type of Government that we have in Canberra. They do not know where they are going. New ideas are worked out by people in Canberra, but they do not work out how they are going to fit in with local authorities or anyone else. The irony of the whole situation is that the offenders will not be caught. More bookwork is being placed on people who are already paying their taxes. Is that what they told you, Mr Premier?

Mr Bjelke-Petersen: That is correct.

Mr LESTER: That is the sort of thing that they are doing. One could go on and on about the financial atrocities of the Federal Government in Canberra. The Queensland Government is doing very well. There is no doubt that the Labor Party is very worried about the coming State election. Its policies are not standing up under pressure.

Queenslanders have many other concerns about the Federal Government. It is trying to impose a tax on ordinary business people. If a businessman employs a person and wishes to dismiss him because he can no longer be gainfully employed, the businessman must pay that employee three months' wages if he wants to put him off straight away. The businessman must also establish and pay for a retraining program for that employee.

It goes further. If that person is put off, he must be given four weeks' pay in lieu of three months' notice, four weeks' pay for each year of service, plus one week's pay for each completed year of service when the employee is aged 35 or over, and an additional two weeks' pay for each completed year of service in excess of ten years' service if the employee is aged 45 years, plus maintenance of income payments for a period of 12 months after termination. This is the sort of thing that the Federal Government in Canberra, supported by the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia

and Western Australia, is backing at the Arbitration Commission hearing in Melbourne at the moment. Of course, the Opposition in Queensland is also backing that. They are the big doers, so they say, of small business.

Through my committee of employment and industrial relations I have had meetings with concerned people. Many people will not now employ additional staff. If that program is implemented in Queensland, some businesses will close. A business cannot operate any longer under such a system. The Labor Party in Queensland must be shuddering in its boots. There is no way that it will be able to convince business people that it will ever be able to show its face to them again. Businessmen cannot afford to pay for such schemes in difficult times, and this seems to be only the beginning. The Federal Labor Government will do many other things to screw down the business person. I find it hard to believe, but it is true. It goes much further. By its backing of that document, the Labor Party's business credibility is destroyed totally. The fact that Opposition members have not interjected tonight is very clear evidence that it is the Labor Party's policy to screw down the business person, never to let him get up again, and to bring in socialist ideology that will cost many more jobs in this great State of ours.

Mr Scott: You prefer that they should not pay tax?

Mr LESTER: The honourable member cannot deny it. He is trying to change the subject. He is referring to taxation. I did not mention taxation. I mentioned the cost of implementation of the scheme on the poor old person who is trying to employ somebody.

Mr Scott: What is the resource that you were talking about?

Mr LESTER: The honourable member is trying to change the subject. That is the strength of the Labor Party. When it cannot win an argument, it brings in another subject. In public speaking, the first thing one does if an opponent is getting the better of an argument is change the subject, bring in a red herring and try to rattle the speaker. Might I say that the member for Cook has picked the wrong person to try to rattle tonight. I am used to such fellows. He will never rattle me. I will never stop fighting to destroy the ALP. Quite honestly, it has produced a destructive socialist Government that will bring down everybody who has anything to do with it or who goes near it.

The taxpayers of Queensland are astounded that the Federal Labor Government has purchased two Boeing jets. It did so under the guise of using them for mid-air refuelling of F18 aircraft. However, as those fighters will not be delivered for another four years, the aircraft bought for refuelling are being transferred to the VIP flight. As a result, there will now be four VIP Boeing jet aircraft to transport Federal Ministers all over Australia. That is just part of the hypocrisy of the Labor Party. Before the last Federal election, it promised that there would be no more VIP jet aircraft; that the two Boeing 707's would be sold and that the money would be given back to the taxpayers to help with housing and employment. But what has been done? Two more Boeings have been bought, this time from Canada. That is the style of the Labor Government we have in Canberra. Labor members have not been able to interject on one of my statements tonight.

I could go on and on with many of the things that the Labor Party has done. It is trying to destroy the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. Tourism is one of the greatest generators of employment in this country. In the last 12 months the corporation has increased domestic tourism by some 20 per cent and increased international tourism by some 40 per cent. The gross net revenue from those increases has been \$380m. The Labor Party wants to destroy that by bringing it within some socialist ideology that will not work.

The Leader of the Opposition entered the Chamber thinking that he might be able to interject and put me down, but the pace has been too hot for him and he has had to leave. He gives me a bow as he does so. I will give him some credit, though. He publicly wished me a happy birthday the other day on radio station 4HI. However, I feel he has been sick ever since, which is probably why he was not performing well today.

Let me point to some of the innovations of this State Government. The abolition of death duties has resulted in a great deal of business for Queensland. People have come here from all parts of Australia. The result has been a boost to the building industry. Pay-roll tax has gradually been lessened, thanks to the efforts of the Treasurer

and of the Premier. Of course, the Government is moving also in the field of stamp duties. Why shouldn't it? In the last 10 years or so the number of administrative personnel has risen by about 30 per cent, although employment in manufacturing industry has declined by about 20 per cent.

Obviously, the financial field must be considered for employment opportunities. Queensland will be working very hard to make itself the financial capital of Australia. If taxes such as stamp duty can be reduced, without a shadow of a doubt some head offices will be attracted to Queensland. The Treasurer has been working very hard in this field. He has made overtures to many companies, including American Express. There is no doubt that he will continue to be successful. That will mean much to our State. Many more people will be attracted here and there will be a repetition of what happened following the abolition of death duty.

In the last year Queensland increased its population by 3.1 per cent. Australia as a whole increased its employment by 1.1 per cent. In spite of the fact that additional people have migrated to Queensland, unemployment in this State is still under the national average. Youth unemployment is 7 per cent below the national average. Surely that is a good record.

However, the Queensland Government does not simply beat its chest and say how good it is. The Government believes that that is still not good enough and it will work harder until the unemployment level is zero. Just for the record, this year the Government has created some 27 000 jobs. In the last three years, 58 000 jobs have been lost in the States of Victoria and New South Wales.

To cap my speech I remind honourable members that some States demand between 50 to 70 per cent higher taxation yet have an employment record far worse than that in Queensland, so it is quite obvious that Queensland is the place to live. I congratulate the Treasurer for trying to do so much to make our lives better.

Hon. J. W. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove) (10.6 p.m.): A few minutes ago the House heard an interjection from the honourable member for Cook, who was prepared to talk about taxation. It is always refreshing to hear a member of the ALP being prepared to debate taxation. Often it is more interesting to listen to what ALP spokesmen do not say on economic matters than what they do say. One of the things that they habitually and carefully avoid is the ALP policy on taxation.

In the last few days Senator Button has rather let the cat out of the bag. Once again he has mentioned that tax favourite of the ALP, the capital gains or wealth tax. We heard about it on one occasion back in 1977, just before a Federal election. Then the cat was let out of the bag, too, of course. However, it gave the people of Australia time to look at ALP taxing policies as they really are and to reject them.

Until the ALP Federal conference in July last year, the subject of a wealth tax or a capital gains tax was carefully kept well under wraps. I will come back to that July conference of the ALP in 1982 and examine a little more closely what it said and what it did.

Before I do, I would like to refer to one of the Labor Party's basic documents, one which sets out some of its philosophy and some of its basic aims and one which gives a clue as to the direction in which the Labor Party will head when it is in Government. It was issued by the National Secretariat of the Australian Labor Party on 9 June last year. I will quote briefly from a few sections. At page 2 the following appears as an aim—

"The redistribution of income, wealth and economic power. Such measures are necessary to ensure both a greater degree of social and economic equality and that important economic decisions are made through democratic processes rather than remaining the prerogative of private economic interest."

So that one of the Labor Party's basic aims is the redistribution of income, wealth and economic power.

A couple of pages later the methods to be used are mentioned, and they are not conventional methods—

"Our philosophy and the experience of recent years in this and many other Western economies shows any suggestion that reliance on conventional monetary and fiscal policies alone cannot achieve our objectives."

So in its secret documents the Labor Party turns its back on conventional monetary and fiscal policies. That is no surprise.

Mr Scott: What Government does not try to redistribute income? The Liberals certainly do.

Mr GREENWOOD: Does the honourable member deny the existence of this document? Does he repudiate it? Of course he does not. He is bound to the socialist objectives of his party. Members of the ALP sign the pledge and if ever they get into Government in this State they will be bound to implement it. So I ask the honourable member to listen whilst I expose him and his colleagues to the people of this State.

Page five of the document goes on to state, "On attaining Government Labor will immediately begin"—and then are listed a few innocuous proposals—but the sting is in the tail, "and to redistribute income and wealth." So once again, this is one of their long-term objectives, and it is an objective that they are—

Mr Scott: That is not the Liberal philosophy?

Mr GREENWOOD: No. We believe in letting people keep the results of their labour; we believe in letting people keep the gains they make through their hard work. But the Labor Party, in the same document, is determined to take it off them and to take it off them in large lumps.

Let us see what happened at the ALP conference in July 1982. One can see the thread coming through: recommendations for wealth taxes, capital gains taxes, death duties on widows and gift duties. Let us not forget the taxing of superannuation payments, because any sum of money that looks to be a big sum, whether it has been earned or not, whether it has been budgeted for over many years of hard work or not, attracts the Labor Party's axe. At that conference another proposal surfaced once again. The powerful ALP Economic Committee put the proposal to the conference for the application "of an effective tax on realised capital gains." It was opposed. It was opposed by Mr Hayden.

Mr Blake: And it was not passed.

Mr GREENWOOD: We will come to that. On what grounds was it opposed? Not because it was wrong to take the savings of people away from them, not because it was unjust to take away from them their capital gains, but because it might be unpopular. He said—

"In some quarters there has been a surprising display of passion which has disguised the fact that this issue is one of political presentation."

He said that the proposal would—

"... create enormous opportunities for our opponents to attack us. The proposal is impossible to sell to the electorate."

That is all in "The Courier-Mail" of 7 July last year. That was the thrust of his speech; not that a capital gains tax was wrong, not that he disagreed with it, but that it would be unpopular if he brought it out into the open and subjected it to the vote of the Australian people. So that is democracy according to the ALP: keep it away from the Australian people; hide the unpopular policies so that the party can get elected.

The other man who opposed it was Mr Keating, and he is reported in "The Australian" on the same day. His first point was the same, that the Liberal Party would go on the attack because, as he pointed out, this ALP policy would be charging capital gains tax on caravans, on holiday homes, on stamp collections and on everything else. He made the same point as Hayden did, that it would be politically unpopular. He said, "We would be out there committing political hara-kiri." But he went on to say that the other great fallacy of the argument was that a new capital gains tax would be an effective redistributor of wealth. The estimates of the Federal parliamentary Labor Party for this tax were for only \$60m in its first year of operation. So once again he was not opposing it because he thought it was a bad thing and he was not opposing it because he thought it was contrary to Labor policy. Oh, no, it was in accordance with Labor policy but he thought it was not going to be an effective redistributor of wealth.

Mr Scott: You favour unlimited, untrammelled capital gains?

Mr GREENWOOD: Of course I do. I favour people being able to make investments and being able to make wise investments, because a man who invests risks his money, too. He can risk losing it all, so he should be entitled to keep the benefits.

Hayden's arguments were the arguments that persuaded the ALP conference to narrowly reject the proposal by 54 votes to 43, not on the basis that it was a bad thing but on the basis it might prove politically unpopular or politically disastrous as it did in 1977.

It is interesting to look at the people who were in favour of it, those who strongly supported it before that ALP conference, and to look at the names on the roll of honour of those who voted for the capital gains tax to see where they stand in the Labor hierarchy at present when the Federal Budget is about to be formulated.

We know where Senator Button stands. He is one of the four most powerful Labor parliamentarians in Australia. Who were the others who advocated the capital gains tax? The chairman and convenor of the economic committee that put this proposal forward was one, Mr Bob Hawke. Another member was Mr Ralph Willis. Another member who supported it was Chris Hurford. That is a roll call of some of the most important members of the ALP in politics at present. It should not be a surprise to any of us if the policies and philosophies of this ALP document of June 1982 are now to be implemented in this country. If we see capital gains taxes, wealth taxes, gift duties, taxes on superannuation and death duties on widows—

Mr Blake: How would you pin back the \$9.6 billion deficit they inherited from the Liberals, or would you let it go from bad to worse?

Mr GREENWOOD: How would I pin it back? There is no sufficient evidence that it needs to be pinned back by an extraordinarily large amount. If the honourable member were prepared to accept Keynesian economics—and I presume that, as an enlightened thinker, he would be—there is nothing wrong with running a deficit at a time when the economy is underemployed. The trick is to know how big a deficit can be run. To use that figure as if the whole of it had to be blotted out overnight would be economic nonsense. To blot it out overnight would put a stranglehold on the nation's economy from which it would never recover.

Mr Scott: How did it get there?

Mr GREENWOOD: It got there as a result of an expansionary policy in the last Federal Budget—an expansionary policy which, I venture to suggest, would have had a very good chance of working at this point in time if we had not had an unfortunate change in Government that saw, within a few days, one of the most disastrous turn-arounds in the Australian economy that we have ever experienced, together with an enormous outflow of capital and the necessity for a tremendous devaluation of our dollar. The honourable member should not talk to me about the effects of the Labor Government coming into office on 5 March.

I would like the honourable member to direct his attention from the failure of the taxation policy that his Federal colleagues are implementing to the taxation policy that some of his State colleagues in other Labor States are implementing, because I would be pleased to talk about that, too. The honourable member for Peak Downs said a few things about New South Wales, but he had only started to tell the story. The real point is that welfare services, social services and health services can only be found on sound financial and economic management. This State has enjoyed that for many years, in direct contrast with New South Wales.

We heard from the member for Peak Downs about the enormous tax slugs that the people of New South Wales suffer. I will say a little more about that in a moment. We should remember that not only are they paying more, but also they are getting profoundly less in the Labor mismanaged State of New South Wales than we are getting up here.

Let us have a look at the budgetary problems in New South Wales less than 12 months ago. The Labor Government in that State brought down a deficit of \$69m—I repeat, a deficit in New South Wales of \$69m—which was the highest since the Lang Labor Government of the Depression years. What is more, it would have been even worse had its accounting been valid, accurate and responsible. Its real deficit of about \$290m was concealed by a transfer of funds of some \$221m from the State Rail Authority. I ask honourable members to remember that when they start thinking about the record deficit in New South Wales last year.

It would have been much, much worse had it not been for some very fancy accounting. Indeed, it would have been much, much worse if the Government had not introduced a mini-Budget in June, as a result of which there were enormous increases in the charges that were imposed upon the ordinary people of New South Wales. For instance, fares for people who used public transport were increased by about 20 per cent. For people who drove their own cars, a new State petrol tax of 3c a litre was imposed. A tax of 5c a litre was imposed on diesel fuel. Electricity charges were increased by 17 per cent, and by an additional 12½ per cent at peak hours. So it goes on.

Did the people of New South Wales get additional facilities for those enormous increases in taxation? I will not bore honourable members by giving a detailed recital of the mismanagement in that State, but I shall just take one area in which the ALP tries to pretend to the people of Australia that it has a good record—the area of health and welfare. Let us have a look and see what Laurie Brereton, the New South Wales Minister for Health, has done to health services in that State.

I will begin with the beds for hospitals in the city. At Sydney Hospital, which had 326 beds, he closed down 226 beds. The Mater Misericordiae Hospital, which had 210 beds, was closed completely. The Women's Hospital at Crown Street with 192 beds was closed completely. The War Memorial Hospital at Waverley had 120 beds. It was losing 50 beds and was being changed into a geriatric centre. So, in Sydney alone, he was closing 678 beds in the most important hospitals, including teaching hospitals, in that State.

What did Mr Brereton offer in return? He offered in return some additional beds in the western suburbs on the never-never plan. He promised that in the future he would create 670 beds in the western suburbs. But when that comes about, of course, is a matter for conjecture, although he did say that in the next financial year a 200-bed hospital would open at Mount Druitt. So he had a timetable in that respect, and a timetable, which might or might not be implemented, in respect of some others.

What did Mr Brereton do in the country? Of course, what he did there was even worse. In New England, he closed 202 out of 1 287 beds. In the Far West, he closed 224 beds. In the Central West, he closed 256 beds. So it goes on. What it amounts to is that in rural New South Wales he eliminated more than 1 000 hospital beds.

I ask honourable members to compare that sorry record of Labor in office in New South Wales with the record of this Government, because although the Laborites in New South Wales, with their high taxes, are closing hospital beds, this Government, with its low taxes, is opening hospital beds. I am glad to say that one of them is the Keperra Hospital, in my electorate, which in the future will serve the people of Mitchelton, Fenny Grove, Grovely, Enoggera and other suburbs.

Let me deal with this Government's record. I could repeat this story year by year, as I have here the Treasurer's Financial Statements for the past six or seven years. However, as I have contrasted Queensland's record with the 1982-83 story for New South Wales, I shall limit myself to the 1982-83 story for Queensland.

This is the story hospital by hospital:—

Brisbane—

Mater—new adult hospital of 275 beds, six operating theatres and out-patients;
Royal Brisbane—new kitchen facilities and staff amenities;
Queensland Radium Institute—new radiotherapy building.

Country—

Bundaberg—redevelopment Stages 1, 2 and 3; new 48-bed maternity hospital with operating theatre and delivery rooms, and so on;

Cairns—redevelopment Stage 2; 267 beds.

Mr Blake: A lot of the money was raised locally in the community.

Mr GREENWOOD: The honourable member does not like this, does he?

Mr Blake: A lot of the money was raised locally in the community. You don't like that, do you?

Mr GREENWOOD: All I am saying is that if the Queensland Government can do it, why cannot the Labor Government in New South Wales do it? If the honourable member has the answers, why does not the Labor Party in New South Wales have them? Why is the Labor Government in New South Wales such a failure?

A Government Member: Because it is broke.

Mr GREENWOOD: That is it. To continue—

Caloundra—extensions; 17 extra beds;

Gladstone—redevelopment; 120 beds with all necessary ancillaries;

Goondiwindi—new hospital; 60 beds;

Gympie—new nursing home; 40 beds;

Innisfail—redevelopment Stages 1 and 2; new building with 16 maternity beds plus 40 nursing home beds;

Ipswich—new services building; OPD, casualty, etc.;

Maryborough—new 40-bed nursing home;

Mt Isa—redevelopment Stage 2; new construction of 20 beds;

Rockhampton—new ward block; 317 beds;

Toowoomba—new nursing home, Oakey; 2 x 40 bed nursing home units, and so on.

That list does not include other health projects such as the redevelopment in Stage 2 at "Eventide", Sandgate, and the new community health centre at Gladstone.

All over the State the picture is plain: better facilities, more beds and improved services for the community. This is from a Government that is reducing taxes Budget by Budget.

Compare that with Labor's performance. I venture to suggest that when the people of Queensland do compare Labor's promises with its performance they will realise that its promises are frauds and delusions.

Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (10.28 p.m.): The member for Ashgrove referred to health services. All honourable members would know the problems that confront the people of Queensland when they are sick and try to gain admission to a hospital. All members are aware of the waiting lists at out-patient departments. All members would have on their files complaints from their constituents concerning the State's hospital system. They would also have on record the difficulties that aged persons experience in obtaining admission to geriatric homes in Queensland.

Dr Edwards: Because your Federal Government won't approve any new building.

Mr VAUGHAN: The fact is that Queensland's hospital system is not all that it could be. The previous speaker, Mr Greenwood, referred to the Hawke Labor Government. Any Government that inherited a \$9.6 billion deficit, as the Hawke Government did from the Fraser-Howard Government, would certainly have to take some steps to try to correct the situation. The deficit was supposed to be a little over \$1 billion. Who was it that in 1975, after he stole government from the Whitlam Government, said, "Give me three years and I will turn on the lights"? Three years from 1975! In 1983, the people of Australia saw the light.

I want to make some comments concerning the Auditor-General's report on the awarding of contracts for the Stanwell Power Station, on which the debate was gagged earlier today by the Government. I was rather surprised when the Premier had the audacity to refer to loyal and impartial officers of the electricity industry. Not very long ago the Premier of this State virtually accused the officers of the State Electricity Commission of being dishonest. In fact, in this Chamber on 18 April 1978, the Premier, in trying to justify the decision that his Government made to construct the new powerhouse in this State at Tarong rather than at Millmerran, said—

"I take the S.E.C. to task for not being accurate or honest in its report to Cabinet."

Today the very same Premier tried to convince us that, as far as he was concerned, the State Electricity Commission was loyal. I do not doubt that the State Electricity Commission in this State is loyal; but that is not what the Premier said in this Chamber in 1978. It is significant that, in the whole episode of the Stanwell Power Station contracts, the Auditor-General went to great lengths to refer to the extent to which tenders were considered; but in the case of the decision on the Tarong Power Station, the Premier asked the Co-ordinator-General and some other persons to consider the report from the State Electricity Commission over a week-end. In the speech that the Premier made in this Chamber on 18 April 1978, he said—

"I had the Co-ordinator-General review the S.E.C. report and recommendations."

If one looks at the lengths to which the Auditor-General went to impress upon honourable members the in-depth analysis that had to be conducted in relation to the Stanwell Power Station contracts, it makes one wonder how the Premier has the audacity to say the things that he says. He said that Cabinet postponed its decision for a fortnight so that all the Ministers would have time to study the report. After all the Ministers studied that report, both the recommendation of the State Electricity Commission and the recommendation of the Minister for Mines and Energy were changed.

The Premier also said—

“From discussions with the Co-ordinator-General and senior Government officials, including the State Electricity Commissioner, I have confirmed a figure as high as—listen to this—\$200m in favour of Tarong, even if Millmerran is prepared to drop its price after 20 years.”

As has been stated in this Chamber today, the decision to go to Tarong in preference to Millmerran cost this State \$250m. Today I heard a number of interjections from Government members. I heard one interjection from the member for Pine Rivers. It is significant that in August 1980, during the debate on matters of public interest, the member for Pine Rivers said that graft or bias on the part of the QEGB officers could be responsible for the awarding of contracts for Tarong. It is significant that, although the Government is trying to castigate the Opposition in relation to the Auditor-General's report that was tabled today, from time to time Government members have made complaints about the manner in which tenders have been awarded for power-station contracts. The member for Pine Rivers stated that the Government should launch a judicial investigation. The amount involved on that occasion was \$4m. Because the Leader of the Opposition took the only step that he could take in relation to complaints that had been made to him, Government members said that that was not the correct thing to do.

Dr Edwards: They did not say that. They said that his allegations were unfounded.

Mr VAUGHAN: The only way in which the Opposition could clarify the position was to do what the Leader of the Opposition did.

In February 1980, a complaint was made by Mr Tony Taylor, chairman of Babcock Australia Limited, a Queensland company, about contracts for the Tarong Power Station. On Friday, 29 February 1980, a report appeared in the “Telegraph” that one of the tenders for the Tarong Power Station boilers was from a company that had unproven technology. Mr Taylor said that Hitachi had no major experience in coal-fired boiler technology. Something that was not brought out in the debate earlier today is that C. Itoh not only has been awarded contracts for the Stanwell Power Station but also has been awarded contracts for the boilers and turbo-generators at the Tarong Power Station and the Callide “B” Power Station. Therefore, it is not \$331m that we are talking about. All up, the contracts that have been awarded to C. Itoh could be as much as a billion dollars.

The Premier was reported in the Press on 18 April 1978 as hitting at the SEC report. What a joke that is when one compares it with the attitude adopted by the Premier in today's debate on the Auditor-General's report. The attitude taken by the Premier on the matter of Stanwell has been vastly different from his attitude about Tarong.

In any consideration of contracts awarded by Cabinet, we must take into account the Winchester South decision. That contract involved some \$15,000m. The 32 tenders went before Cabinet. When there was a disagreement, the matter was considered after lunch by the Treasurer and the Minister for Mines and Energy. The decision taken was that the BP consortium should be awarded the tender in preference to the other 31 tenderers. The decision taken by Cabinet was that the BP tender was a very good deal. The Minister said so in this House. He said that it set a new standard for mineral development in Queensland, that there were greater royalties in the tender and that the company had proposed an accelerated exploration program over 15 months with a view to commencing export production by mid-1984. The company agreed to certain other conditions over and above its original tender. However, the other 31 tenderers were not given the same opportunity to alter their tenders. The same may be said about the successful tenderer for the Stanwell contracts.

The awarding of contracts for the boilers and turbo-generators is not the only problem with the Stanwell Power Station. There is also the matter of coal supplies. Mention was made this afternoon by the Minister for Mines and Energy of our relations with the

Japanese in the matter of coal supply. In March, during the previous session, I directed a question to the Minister for Mines and Energy about coal supplies for Stanwell and coal that was to be supplied by the Curragh mine. I expressed my concern about the difficult position in which the Government was placing the Curragh coal-mining company because the decision on building the Stanwell Power Station was continually being deferred. The reply given to me by the Minister was that coal was to be supplied to the Gladstone Power Station from the Curragh mine—I think the figure was about 1.1 million tonnes—which was part of a 2 million tonne contract to commence in October this year.

The Government has committed itself to a 2 million tonne contract over the period until the first unit of the Stanwell Power Station comes on line, which was supposed to be 1987. With only 1.1 million tonnes able to be taken by the Gladstone Power Station, what will happen with the other 1 million tonnes of the 2 million tonne contract from the Curragh mine which, as I said, is due to come into operation in October this year? A big question mark hangs over the other one million tonnes. There has been some suggestion that it is to be stockpiled, but, quite frankly, I cannot see how the Government can stockpile 1 million tonnes of coal each year until 1987. The Government has decided to defer the commencement of the Stanwell Power Station until some date to be announced, even though on a number of occasions the Minister has given varying commencement dates. Initially it was to be 1987, then 1988 and, in answer to a question earlier this year, the Minister said that the Stanwell Power Station was to be in operation by 1992. However, I am not too sure whether the Minister meant the operation of the first unit or the operation of the complete power-station.

This whole issue arose over the letting of contracts for the boilers and the turbo-generators for the Stanwell Power Station, but I think it is very important that the Government gives the people of the State and the representatives of the coal-mining company that is to supply coal to the Stanwell Power Station a definite date for the commissioning of the first unit.

I was interested to note that on page five of the Auditor-General's report presented to the House today comment is made about the boiler sizes. The Auditor-General went into a great deal of detail about coal characteristics and outlined how it was very important to the Queensland Electricity Generating Board that the boilers be of a particular design because of the high slagging properties of the coal. I am concerned that the Government states that the C. Itoh tender was quite satisfactory by comparison with other tenders but that, because of this reference to the high slagging properties of the coal, C. Itoh had to change the size of its furnace depth.

I have already stated that C. Itoh was the successful tenderer for the boiler at the Tarong Power Station and the Callide "B" Power Station. Having regard to the slagging and boiler problems that the Government and the QEGB experienced with the Gladstone Power Station, one would imagine that C. Itoh would have been in a position to know, when preparing its tender, the exact boiler construction requirements. I find it very strange that C. Itoh had to be convinced by the QEGB engineers on the design of its boilers.

I have also referred to the manner in which the Auditor-General outlined the extent to which the Queensland Electricity Generating Board went to analyse all of the tenders. On page four he refers to the fact that five full-time qualified engineers evaluated the tenders for the turbo-generators and four evaluated the tenders for the boilers. Those engineers conducted a systematic, in-depth examination of tenders and the results of each tender analysis were fully documented in separate reports dated 15 April 1983, each comprising about 150 pages of data. As I have said, the Co-ordinator-General made no in-depth study of the Tarong and Millmerran Power Stations.

In his speech this afternoon the Minister for Mines and Energy referred to our coal contracts with the Japanese. I take this opportunity to express my concern about those contracts with the Japanese because on Friday, 29 July 1983, I read an article in "The Courier-Mail" which stated that Nippon Steel Corporation officials said that Queensland coal-mines would have to follow world coal-producing nations and voluntarily reduce output. The article stated—

"... there were no signs of optimism in the steel manufacturing industry, which directly affected coal use."

But the significant part of that article about which I was concerned was this statement—

“‘We are also involved with 10 new coal mines coming into production by April next year and this commitment to take delivery from those mines means current suppliers must reduce.’”

The statement went on to say that there were five mines in Queensland which would be affected. The new Queensland mines are German Creek, Oaky Creek, Riverside, Curragh and Collinsville. I am concerned because I have been advocating for quite some time that we should develop our coal-mining industry in a planned and rational manner. I expressed concern about approval being given for the development of new mines when we have existing mines which are producing below capacity. We have a surplus of coal in this State with the Utah mine at Peak Downs producing at little more than half its capacity and other Utah mines and the Thiess Dampier Mitsui mines producing below capacity, yet the Japanese are saying that, even though we already have a cut-back in our coal production and export contracts, if they are to take up the contracts from the new mines which are coming on line there has to be yet a further cut-back from existing mines.

Dr Edwards interjected.

Mr VAUGHAN: This is what they were reported as saying—

“‘We are also involved with 10 new coal mines coming into production by April next year and this commitment to take delivery from those mines means current suppliers must reduce.’”

Dr Edwards: You obviously haven't read the Coal Board report.

Mr VAUGHAN: Which report, 1981-82 or 1982-83?

Dr Edwards: The one just released referred to an increase from 21 million tonnes to 23 million tonnes.

Mr VAUGHAN: The Coal Board report does not become available to me until February next year.

Dr Edwards: The Coal Board annual report on production in this financial year indicated that the output to coal exported overseas from this State was 23 million tonnes compared with 21 million tonnes the previous year.

Mr VAUGHAN: That is not what the board said for 1982.

Dr Edwards: This is for 1982-83.

Mr VAUGHAN: Things must have picked up.

Dr Edwards: You should use more reliable figures.

Mr VAUGHAN: I will wait until I see the Coal Board report.

Mr I. J. GIBBS: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Nudgee is making some quite inaccurate statements about coal. This year has been a record export year and a record year for mining, and we will see a similar pattern of growth next year.

Mr VAUGHAN: As I was saying, Nippon Steel Corporation officials have been quoted as saying that there has to be a reduction from the current suppliers so that they can take up the contracts from the new coal-mines.

Mr I. J. GIBBS: I rise to a point of order. That information is incorrect. In the main, the expansion in the new mines relates to steaming coal and that is where major expansion will take place.

Mr VAUGHAN: The Minister for Mines and Energy stated in the House, in reply to a question asked by the member for Peak Downs on 22 March 1983 about what action was being taken to assist problems relating to the coal-mining industry, that any new mine under development in Queensland is protected by export or domestic contracts. The Minister was trying to say that contracts for any new steaming coal mines were protected by export or domestic contracts. I am informed that the Japanese have suggested that the 5 million tonne contracts of the Blair Athol mine may have to be reduced. If the Minister

can guarantee that there will be no reduction in export contracts for existing coal-mines and, in particular, for those mines coming on line, such as Blair Athol, Newlands, Curragh and Riverside, I will be very pleased, but that is not how I understand the position.

The Minister said that the report in "The Courier-Mail" last Friday that the Japanese will not ask producing coal-mines to further reduce contract commitments so that they can take up their contract commitments from the mines coming on line in the near future is not true. I will be very pleased to hear that that is so, but that is not my understanding of it.

The member for Peak Downs referred to the electrification scheme for the coal lines. It was announced yesterday by the Minister for Transport and was dealt with again today by the Treasurer in reply to a question asked by the member for Peak Downs. This morning, I read a headline that appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 12 December 1979, which proves that this is a hardy annual. The article referred to a \$274m rail scheme and claimed that Cabinet was looking at electric trains for the coalfields.

When I entered this House in 1977 a liquid fuel supply problem was confronting this State and nation because of falling world supplies. Since then I have been advocating that we should be electrifying the coal lines.

Dr Edwards: Why are you knocking it?

Mr VAUGHAN: I am not knocking it. I will believe it when I see it. That is a cold, hard fact of life. This scheme was trotted out in November 1979.

Dr Edwards: That is not so.

Mr VAUGHAN: The Treasurer trotted it out in 1979.

Dr Edwards: That was a guesstimate in 1979 of what it would cost. The study has been completed.

Mr VAUGHAN: I will quote from a Press statement, reference 151/79, dated 12 November 1979, which was released by the Minister for Transport. It is in these terms—

"Cabinet has approved a recommendation by the Hon. the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Dr Edwards and the Hon. Minister for Transport Mr Tomkins, based on the findings of the team of Consultants headed by P. G. Pak Poy and Associates Pty Ltd and the recommendation of the Commissioner for Railways for an early start on electrification of the Brisbane to Blackwater railway line."

Reference was also made to the Brisbane—Rockhampton, Blackwater—Gladstone and Brisbane—Toowoomba lines. It referred to the preliminary scheme costing \$274.11m. The article continued—

"The timing of the scheme is for preliminary design to start next year, 1980—"

Dr Edwards: And it did.

Mr VAUGHAN: ". . . and construction by 1982—" and it didn't. The article continued—

". . . with electrically hauled trains commencing operation between Blackwater and Gladstone by 1985."

Dr Edwards: Exactly. The 1985-86 date will be met. You might be invited.

Mr VAUGHAN: It all depends. I will wait and see.

On 17 May 1981, another story was floated in "The Sunday Mail" under the heading "Rail electrification to get boost". It again referred to the detailed design of the Blackwater to Gladstone section of the line. The Minister for Transport said that the 10-year program provided for a start of construction early in 1982 and the beginning of operations in 1984.

Since becoming a member of this Assembly, I have been advocating that, to conserve our liquid fuel supplies, the Government should be electrifying the lines that carry the huge tonnages. I believe that the logical line to begin with would be the Goonyella to Hay Point line, because it carries the largest tonnages. As a matter of fact, in November 1981, I directed a question to the Minister for Transport to ascertain the extent of the consumption of diesel fuel on the coal lines. I hoped to be able to convince the Government that it should proceed with, in particular, the electrification of the Goonyella to Hay Point line. When honourable members debated the Newlands mine proposal—I think that was early this

year or in the latter part of last year—I suggested that, as that would be a new line and the Government would have to purchase new locomotives, instead of going ahead and purchasing diesel-electric locomotives for that line, the line should be electrified.

Dr Edwards: It would not pay.

Mr VAUGHAN: Why wouldn't it pay? There is talk about other coal-mines up there. Authorities to prospect and mining leases have been granted—

Dr Edwards interjected.

Mr VAUGHAN: The Treasurer is always talking about when the industry is going to show an improvement. We all expect that it might show an improvement in the latter part of 1984 or the early part of 1985.

There are other coal-mines in that area. I venture to suggest that in two years' time, or a little while after the Newlands mine comes on stream, that line will be used more fully. Instead of purchasing diesel-electric locomotives for the Newlands line, the line should be electrified. I believe that the Goonyella to Hay Point line would be the most logical line to electrify first.

Mr BORBRIDGE (Surfers Paradise) (10.58 p.m.): In supporting the Appropriation Bill, I first congratulate the Government and the Treasurer for the way in which Queensland has been able to secure the major international credit rating that it has. I refer to the A1 + P1 rating that it has recently secured. That is something that has not been achieved by any other State. It emphasises the fact that Queensland is continuing to outperform the rest of Australia in every major area of government endeavour. Despite the economic problems that beset us, Queensland continues to set the pace and standard for the rest of the country.

It is interesting to note that for the year ended December 1982, Queensland experienced a net estimated migration gain of 52 274 people, representing 40.5 per cent of Australia's total population increase of 129 071 people. Last year, 1 005 people moved to Queensland each week. This State is continuing to experience the most substantial and sizeable internal migration in the history of Australia.

If we look at the figures for the other States we note that, by contrast, 17 626 people left New South Wales, 14 515 people left Victoria, and 7 811 people left South Australia. That is a total of 34 607 people, which is almost equal to Queensland's population increase in real terms. The State's population growth for the year was 3.17 per cent, compared with the national average of 1.71 per cent.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr BORBRIDGE: I can understand the sensitivity of honourable members opposite, because the fact is that Queensland is experiencing an influx of political refugees from the socialist Governments throughout the rest of Australia. It is interesting to note that Queensland's population increase is 3.17 per cent, compared with the national average of 1.71 per cent, the New South Wales increase of 1.4 per cent and the Victorian increase of 1.2 per cent.

People are voting with their feet. They know that Queensland has strong leadership and a low-tax, private-enterprise Government that has points on the score-board and is continuing to take the initiative in State taxation reforms.

The Premier and the Treasurer made comments relating to the reform of land tax, stamp duty and pay-roll tax that will be made in the coming Budget. That reform, too, will be a very firm indication that this Government is an innovative one and a reformist one, particularly in giving incentive to business and reducing State taxation to the lowest possible level. The Government's achievements in regard to development, tax reform and job creation are, quite simply, unparalleled. Queensland is providing the investment climate that allows business to plan ahead with confidence. This trend will consolidate after the State election later this year.

It is interesting to note that, despite the large number of people who are coming here and the fact that an estimated 18 to 20 per cent of them are unemployed, Queensland is continuing to create more new jobs than every other State in Australia combined. In the past three years, a total of 58 400 new jobs were created in Queensland. In contrast, New South Wales lost 33 900 jobs, Victoria lost 25 300 jobs and South Australia lost 5 400 jobs. That is stunning testimony to the failure of Mr Wran, Mr Cain, Mr Bannon and those who preceded them.

Queensland's unemployment rate, although unacceptably high, has dropped over each of the past four months. In the first six months of 1983, capital works projects totalling more than \$600m have been approved, to create 394 000 man-weeks of employment. That is in addition to the \$168m committed under the wages pause, which has provided employment for 5 000 people.

Queensland continues to be the State in which the majority of the nation's major development projects are taking place and in which most of Australia's future prosperity will be generated. I refer to the Gold Coast casino, which is in my electorate and is the largest privately financed construction project in Australia. I refer also to the stabilisation of the Southport Bar, for which tenders will close in the near future, the Stanwell Power Station, new port facilities at Brisbane, Abbot Point and Hay Point, the Wivenhoe Dam, the Cultural Centre, the Gateway Bridge, the Brisbane Airport and, in 1988, Expo. They are all major development projects that are taking place in this State as a direct result of the actions of this Government. In contrast, the Governments of Mr Hawke, Mr Wran, Mr Cain, Mr Bannon and Mr Burke are Governments of promises, not performance. What have they done for job creation, tourism and small business?

I am sure that many honourable members would be pleased to examine the great legislative achievements of the New South Wales Government of Mr Wran. What has it done?

Mr Lester interjected.

Mr BORBRIDGE: I know that the honourable member for Peak Downs is interested, so for his benefit and also for the benefit of other members I shall go through some of Mr Wran's great record in New South Wales.

He has repealed the Summary Offences Act and he has been responsible for the alienation of coal rights without compensation, the politicisation of the Public Service by the appointment of political advisers or commissars, the dismantling of the Rural Bank, and for the introduction of a pay-roll tax levy that makes New South Wales pay-roll tax the highest in Australia.

A tax of 8.4 per cent on the wholesale price of petrol and a tax of 14 per cent on the wholesale price of diesel have been introduced. The financial institutions duty, which is expected to raise \$130m from the pockets of New South Wales taxpayers, has been introduced. The Local Government Assistance Fund has been abolished. The Government subsidy to pensioners for council and water rates has been halved. The Employment Protection Act has been introduced. It forces employers to give notice to the Government if they wish to retrench employees and empowers the Government to interfere in the right of management to make its own decisions. Socialism by stealth, by the back door! Land rights legislation has been introduced. As the honourable member for Ashgrove stated earlier, hospitals have been closed. Drought aid has been severely limited and the bulk of State Government funded development projects restricted to a 200-mile radius of the city of Sydney.

Mr Wran's Government has forced the amalgamation of local councils. There are now 41 fewer local authorities in existence in New South Wales than in 1976. In the 6-year period from 1976 to 1982 New South Wales public housing activity declined by 66 per cent. Electricity charges in certain areas have been increased by over 100 per cent in the past 12 months. Since Mr Wran came to power in 1976, freight rates have increased by 300 per cent. Workers' compensation premiums have increased by over 100 per cent. In the past 12 months alone, in some industries we have reached the stage in this State at which our workers' compensation premiums are up to several hundred per cent lower than those in any other State in the Commonwealth. There has been an 88.79 per cent increase in the cost of registering a family car in New South Wales since Mr Wran came to power. Land Tax exemptions are now so low that the average person is having to find the money to pay massive bills.

I express the strongest possible concern at ALP moves to introduce a national financial institutions tax which could have quite serious ramifications for Queensland. The financial institutions duty introduced in both Victoria and New South Wales has wreaked havoc on the business community in those two States and amounts to nothing more than a blatant socialist grab for money by pick-pocket Governments. If one needs proof, one need look only at the "Gold Coast Bulletin" on Wednesday, 2 March. Under the headline "The great tax escape" it states, "Tweed jobs fear as \$10m is sent across the border in a bid to avoid New South Wales finance tax." As the Treasurer says, it is still going on.

The Victorian Premier, Mr Cain, has made a submission to the Federal Government to have this tax introduced across the nation. The implementation of the financial institutions duty came about following an attempt by Mr Wran and Mr Cain to contain their massive Budget deficits. The taxes hurt most those people best able to lead Australia out of our present economic difficulties.

Mr Cain, Mr Wran and the Premiers of the other Labor States know very well that the Queensland Government is on record as opposing a financial institutions duty, but the Labor Governments of South Australia and Western Australia are almost certain to introduce it. The lack of such a tax in this State has consolidated Queensland's reputation as the emerging business capital of Australia, as companies based in the southern States come to realise the benefits of shifting their operations to Queensland.

For the benefit of honourable members, I point out that the FID operates in the South at the rate of 0.03 per cent duty on the receipts of all financial transactions—3c for every \$100 transacted—and, in certain circumstances, applicable more than once. The New South Wales Government is expected to collect \$130m this year, and the Victorian Treasury estimates that \$33m has been collected since the tax was introduced last December.

Coupled with major State taxation reform to be announced in the Queensland Budget, the absence of a financial institutions tax in this State means that we are extremely well poised to benefit from the socialist excesses of Labor Governments interstate. It could very well result in sizeable investment and business opportunities throughout Queensland, particularly on the Gold Coast. Mr Cain's move to have the tax introduced on a national scale is a warning to Queensland and an indication of the commitment to high taxation by Labor Governments at both the Federal and State levels.

The administration of the financial institutions duty has been such a shambles that earlier this year a seminar was conducted in Sydney in an endeavour to work out how it was to apply. The headlines in "The Australian" of 17 March 1983 tell the story—

"NSW to move to stamp out avoidance of new tax";

"Attacks could ruin financial chances";

"NSW Government begins urgent review of Act provisions"; and

"Tax Specialist claims legislation 'nonsense'".

A public seminar had to be held to try to sort out the absolute shambles in the administration of the financial institutions duty in New South Wales.

Dr Edwards: It still has not been sorted out.

Mr BORBRIDGE: As the Treasurer says, it still has not been sorted out. The problems continue. The uncertainty is still there. The people who are being hurt most are those in the business community who are best able to lead this country out of the economic problems that confront us.

I express the strongest possible concern that American Express is seeking to impose Mr Wran's financial institutions duty on its Queensland card holders simply because it has its head office and its banking arrangements concentrated in Sydney. American Express is acting as Mr Wran's Queensland tax agent. Queenslanders are now expected to pay tax to Mr Wran on goods and services purchased in the State of Queensland. That is unacceptable. The matter is receiving close attention by the State Government. I am one card holder—and I know of many others—to deduct Mr Wran's tax from the American Express statement. It is quite immoral, it is quite unjust and it is totally wrong that Queenslanders who spend money in this State should be expected by any company to meet the taxation requirements of another State Government.

Dr Edwards: It is probably illegal, too.

Mr BORBRIDGE: Yes, it is probably illegal. I know that the Treasurer is closely examining the matter. I express the hope that he will take action to protect Queenslanders from this most unfair and unjust action by that company.

I touch briefly on the recent High Court decision relating to the Gordon below Franklin Dam. It should be of the utmost concern to members on both sides that four men not answerable to the nation now have the power, in effect, to change the Constitution. That is a power that does not exist in other western democracies such as the United States

of America. It is equally disturbing that executive government in Australia can enter into agreements or treaties legally binding without reference to Federal or State Parliaments. Obviously, that is a concern that is not shared by honourable members of the Opposition.

To emphasise the severe threat of the extended use of the Commonwealth's foreign affairs power and the effect of denying the States the full and proper use of their constitutional rights and responsibilities, I quote the Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, Sir Harry Gibbs, in his judgment in *Koowarta v. Bjelke-Petersen*, which is reported in 56 ALJR at page 637—

"If the view of Evatt and McTiernan J.J. is correct, the executive could by making an agreement, formal or informal, with another country, arrogate to the Parliament power to make laws on any subject whatsoever. It could, for example, by making an appropriate treaty, obtain for the Parliament powers to control education, to regulate the use of land, to fix the conditions of trading and employment, to censor the Press or to determine the basis of criminal responsibility—it is impossible to envisage any area of power which could not become the subject of Commonwealth legislation if the Commonwealth became a party to an appropriate international agreement . . ."

The Chief Justice went on to say—

"The distribution of powers made by the Constitution could in time be completely obliterated: there would be no field of power which the Commonwealth could not invade, and the Federal balance achieved by the Constitution could be entirely destroyed."

It therefore follows that our entire Federal system of Government is at risk.

The other matter to which I wish to refer briefly tonight is the submission of the ACTU to the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission on job protection and severance pay claims. That submission, supported by all Labor Governments, could well sound the death-knell for thousands of businesses, both large and small, throughout Australia. The ACTU proposals amount to a vicious attack on private enterprise and should be condemned by all thinking Australians.

Besides existing award and statutory entitlements, the ACTU is claiming substantial payments to be made to employees whose employment is terminated for reasons "of an economic, technological, structural or similar nature". In summary, the ACTU is seeking three months' notice of termination or payment in lieu thereof, four weeks' pay plus four weeks' pay for each year of service, plus one week's pay for each completed year of service when the employee is aged 35 years or over, plus an additional two weeks' pay for each completed year of service in excess of 10 years' service if the employee is aged 45 years or over, plus the full value of accrued sick leave, long service leave and annual leave with loading, plus maintenance of income payments for a period of 12 months after termination, plus any relocation expenses and the cost of retraining or training.

In line with the New South Wales Government's employment protection legislation, the ACTU submission seeks to subvert and destroy the right of business to make its own decisions. If this claim is successful, and it is supported by the Federal Government and all the State Labor Governments, then national economic recovery could well be devastated. I express the strongest possible concern about that submission, which is before the commission in Melbourne at the present time.

I am sure that the Queensland Government will join with the Tasmanian Government in the employers' total opposition to a proposal that will send many businesses bankrupt and cause a great deal of personal and economic hardship and unemployment throughout the country.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (11.18 p.m.): I rise to speak in an attenuated form to the Appropriation Bill tonight. Without canvassing too much of what has been said before, I would like to elaborate on something that was raised, namely, the Commonwealth Government's proposals to impose a withholding tax.

The honourable member for Surfers Paradise has referred to the importance of business making its own decisions. It is not because of any inherent quality about making its own decisions; it is because that happens to be the most efficient way in which the economy can operate; and, in the end result, it is the most efficient and likely way in which people's employment will be secured. Only out of a productive Australia will wealth develop, and one must remember that production depends on efficiency. So it is not an exercise motivated

by heartlessness that makes people put off men. It is usually an act of great regret and great heart-rending to put men off. However, the simple reality is that for anybody in a productive, private business to go on retaining people when the production of profit no longer economically justifies their employment—

Mr Wilson: What you are saying is that they have not kept up with the times.

Mr INNES: I do not quite know what the statement "keeping up with the times" means. It means remaining competitive, and perhaps the honourable member can speak from the full knowledge of having been in a protected industry where profit-making was not necessary. But people in private enterprise, people who produce the predominant wealth of this country, have to stay competitive. If a person does not stay competitive he loses his profitability, and if he loses profitability he cannot pay his suppliers. If his suppliers cannot be paid, that means that they go broke and their wage earners cannot be paid.

Mr Fouras: Are you supporting tax evasion?

Mr INNES: Not at all. Mr Beattie, the honourable member for South Brisbane—I am sorry, Mr Fouras, one gets confused with the modern Labor Party—talks about—

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr INNES: Now we have the Opposition spokesman for Mines and Energy, Mr Beattie—I am sorry, Mr Vaughan. It is just that one hears the other name so often. It is interesting to contemplate that every time one hears Mr Beattie speak, as one frequently does about State matters, he is really trying to hide somebody in this House from the television lights, somebody who is perhaps not performing quite as well as he should be.

The reality is that business has to stay profitable and efficient. The withholding tax, which has been mentioned already tonight, was recently reported as being devastating. That was not a single opinion. It happened to be the opinion of a leader in the building trade, the executive director of the Queensland Master Builders Association. But it was not merely his opinion; it was first brought to my attention by the senior partner of a very old accounting firm in this town. It was later reinforced by papers produced and circulated by firms such as Hungerfords, Hancock & Offner, and Coopers & Lybrand. Several of the leading accounting firms in this city and this nation have circulated advice and issued warnings that coincide directly with the fears and concern expressed by leaders in the building industry, and nobody on the other side can say that the building industry is not an extraordinarily important part of the economy of this State and nation.

At its simplest, the reality is that what is being proposed and the way it is being proposed will mean that people are being taxed after they have already paid tax. Many of the companies and firms that will be liable for this 10 per cent deduction, if they are lucky, will already have paid provisional tax for the following year.

The reality is that people believe, or are coming to the conclusion, that this is not an attempt to close the black money economy; this is not an attempt to get rid of the cash economy. One of the most important areas of the cash economy is specifically excluded. That is a turnover tax on business to provide cash flow to the Commonwealth to finance all its other schemes. How can it justify taking tax from companies that have already paid tax, particularly in areas where it can be demonstrated clearly that there is likely to be a fall in profitability and, therefore, the tax paid is likely to have been overpaid or the provisional tax set aside is likely to have been too much and likely to result in a rebate to the companies concerned?

Under the guise of eliminating the cash economy we have the imposition of what is, in effect, and what appears to be increasingly clearly intended to be, a turnover tax on a very important part—indeed, a vital part—of industry and of the economy. I heard a few jibes from the other side suggesting that I am against the cash economy. If I am, it appears that I have been very lately joined by the Labor Government of Western Australia. It has opposed the introduction of such a tax at present.

Members of this Parliament have to understand how the tax will operate. A very important area of the cash economy in the building industry is exempted. Below the figure of \$10,000 for house building there is not even an obligation to inform the Taxation

Commissioner. Above the figure of \$10,000, a householder has merely to notify the Taxation Department of the contract and the amount being paid. Everyone in this Chamber knows that a very significant area of the cash economy—and no doubt one that is facilitated by tens of thousands of people in the State—is domestic transactions ranging between several hundred dollars and several thousand dollars. A price is nominated clearly on the understanding that it is on the basis of a cash cheque or money. Everyone knows why that is so. It is an enormous part of the cash economy in the building industry.

In many instances the companies that will be caught by this are substantial, long-term businesses. They are reputable businesses and public companies that have to maintain open audit situations in which, in many instances, there is no suggestion that they have ever been engaged in tax evasion or are likely to become involved in tax evasion.

The statements and illustrations that have been presented are as follows: Any person hiring a builder and any building company hiring a subcontractor, an engineer or a consultant, or engaging transport or cleaning services, will have to remit, each month, to the Taxation Department 10 per cent of the amount that is paid. As everybody knows, in the pure building situation there is likely to be a retention of 5 or 10 per cent. Out of the cash flow of the person in the first place who is legally liable to make payments to subcontractors or suppliers, a significant part of it is taken aside. A further 10 per cent has to be added to that or, if an exemption cannot be gained, 20 or 25 per cent has to be added.

Mr Scott: What is the retention for?

Mr INNES: The retention is for performance.

Mr Scott: That is for people who will not pay their bills.

Mr INNES: That is not so. Retention is a normal practice in the building industry when a person withholds money to ensure performance by another.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr INNES: I am suggesting that the building industry has had to incorporate a system whereby an amount of money, either 5 per cent or 10 per cent, is kept aside to ensure faithful performance of the contract.

Mr Scott: It is like a tax.

Mr INNES: No, it is not.

The 5 or 10 per cent is set aside for a period during which defects may become manifest or other problems have to be fixed up, after which the balance is paid. The period of retention is usually only for two or three months, but this is remission on the basis of month by month over 12 months.

Mr Hewitt interjected.

Mr INNES: I do not think anything is capable of helping the understanding of the member for Cook. He does not wish to understand and he is not capable of understanding.

People are winning contracts on margins of far less than 10 per cent. People are competing for contracts on the basis of keeping the work-force together, hoping that recovery—

Mr Scott: What about exemptions?

Mr INNES: If the honourable member had read anything about this matter at all, he would have realised that the form of exemption is so restrictive as to be impractical. I understand from private and public conversation that the members of the Australian Taxation Office who are going round attempting to explain the implementation of this scheme are making no secret of the fact that exemptions will be extremely difficult to obtain and that there will be only a handful of them in this State.

Anybody who has had an argument with the Taxation Commissioner will not be able to get an exemption. Many bona fide people who, for legitimate and strongly held reasons, have had some differences with the Taxation Office will not get an exemption. There are members in this Chamber who would fall into that category, and I do not mean to suggest in the slightest any lack of propriety on their part. Anybody who has had a difference with the Taxation Office over what is and what is not a permissible deduction will not get an exemption.

If a person cannot get his tax agent to certify that he has audited the books of the firm and is satisfied that the statements as to money are accurate and completely

supported by the books—a form of certification that is far greater than any that tax agents currently have to provide—he will not be in a position to claim an exemption. In other words, an accountant will virtually have to declare total and full knowledge of all documentation from which the ultimate figures are derived. From talking to accountants generally and reading what others say about this matter, I believe that no accountant could in all honesty or faith, unless he was involved in the domestic facts of a business, give such a certification.

We have heard about unemployment schemes. This is an absolute humdinger. This is one scheme created by the Federal Government that deserves the title “unemployment scheme”. It is a scheme that will inevitably have the effect of causing unemployment. It is the sort of scheme that is devised by people who have never been in business or had to make a profit or who know nothing about the market-place or the realities. It is what I would call lowest common denominator legislation; and how much of it we see in modern Parliaments!

Because somebody does something wrong somewhere, a scheme is devised which catches everybody and imposes intolerable, unrealistic and even horrendous limitations on business, freedom of action and capacity to make a profit or to employ others. Why cannot we settle for schemes that attack the core of the problem and make massive impositions on the people who offend, not on the 90 per cent who do not offend? That is the gist of this legislation. The Taxation Office will take on an extra 1 000 people to police this scheme. How much do 1 000 people cost? How many millions of dollars do 1 000 people cost? It must be remembered that 1 000 people mean 1 000 eyes, 1 000 checks, and 1 000 additional problems for people who are struggling to employ—

Mr Scott: Who suggested 1 000 people? You, the newspapers or Dr Edwards?

Mr INNES: I do not know how far north the honourable member has been in the last week, or in what remote area of his electorate he has been—I have some sympathy for him because of some of the places that he has to service—but I am quoting the statements of the Taxation Commissioner, who, with some pride, has said, “I can get this scheme off the ground on 1 October because we are taking on 1 000 people to assist with this scheme.” I see that the member for Bundaberg has heard the same announcement.

Mr Blake: Yes, but that would be 2 000 eyes, not 1 000 eyes as you said—unless they were cock-eyed or one-eyed.

Mr INNES: The honourable member took the words out of my mouth. The people who will be involved in this will be one-eyed. It is exactly their lack of two eyes that has been the theme of my comments so far. They will be unable to see the two sides of the coin.

I suggest that this scheme is created or presided over by people who are in the predicament in which members of the Opposition in this House find themselves. Very few of them have ever been in the business of employing others, of winning a contract, of making a profit and of struggling with the realities.

Mr Scott: You hardly come from a profession where a great deal of competition exists.

Mr INNES: I have a pretty chequered background.

This scheme is indicative of the oversight of a Government that has not been faced with the real problems that confront Australia and relate to that vital area of Australia that produces the riches and creates the jobs. This is an indication of what has been said earlier about the unrealities of legislation in other States. The Federal Government presents the scheme in an acute form, but honourable members can rest assured that there is more of this to come as long as a Labor Government presides in Canberra or anywhere else in Australia.

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (11.37 p.m.): I have great pleasure in being afforded an opportunity to speak to the Appropriation Bill, because I want to raise the important issue of our Standing Orders. Today the report of the Standing Orders Committee was tabled. I was amazed when I read that the Committee resolved—

“That, in view of the imbalance of its membership and its wish for further information on public accounts Committees and other Committees, a decision be postponed until the new year.”

In the first place, I do not believe that the imbalance in the membership of the committee had anything to do with that resolution. I suggest that what really happened was that the Government ran away from its responsibilities. In Saturday's "Daily Sun" I read a statement attributed to Mr Speaker to the effect that, because Mr Casey and Mr D'Arcy had resigned from the Standing Orders Committee and because the Labor Party had not been able to appoint anyone in their place, the committee decided not to carry on with the matter of the establishment of a public accounts committee. I am telling this House and the people of Queensland that at that meeting the Government had the numbers if it wished to shoulder its responsibility of carrying out the wishes of this Parliament by bringing down a report on the establishment of a public accounts committee.

I know why the Government does not want a public accounts committee; because it does not want Big Brother looking over its shoulder telling it how, why, when or where it will spend money.

I suggest that one of the reasons why the Government does not want such a committee arises out of the payment of ministerial legal expenses. I have with me a copy of a cheque in relation to a writ that I served on the Minister for Local Government in 1979. In 1982 I was told that the Minister knew he was in trouble, had been to Cabinet and was going to get Cabinet to pay damages if they were awarded plus all legal costs.

I did not want the public of Queensland to make any contribution to me for being defamed by a Minister who is a loudmouth and who has a very loose tongue. Therefore, I said that I would withdraw the writ provided he paid all the legal costs—his and mine. He agreed to that, and his wife, Mrs Fay Hinze, assured me that the Government would not be paying the legal costs of my solicitor and his solicitor. I was told that I should get Patrick J. Mullins & Mullins to send the account to her and that she would see it was paid personally by Russ Hinze.

On 6 July 1983 a cheque was drawn by the Department of Justice Cash Credit Expenditure Account on the Reserve Bank of Australia for the Queensland Government. That is cheque No. 046815 and is for the amount of \$1,208.60, payable to Patrick J. Mullins & Mullins re the Hinze v. Prest writ. I am quite willing to table it. All the Ministers know about it.

I am concerned about the extent to which legal expenses and other expenses are coming out of the public purse to pay for ministerial misdemeanours. I am surprised that Ministers of the Crown should be allowed to get away with that sort of thing. If a person makes defamatory statements, he should be big enough to shoulder his responsibilities. I have referred to the speech made by the member for Sherwood in which he said that Ministers are big boys, that they know their responsibilities, that they have enough staff to advise them in their capacity as Ministers, and that they should not make such mistakes.

In addition to the amount of \$1,208.60 paid to Patrick Mullins & Mullins, I am quite certain that Mr Hinze's solicitors' and barrister's fees would have been paid from the public purse. Yesterday, when "The Gladstone Observer" contacted the Premier's Department, a spokesman for the Premier said that there is a principle that members of Parliament are covered by the Government when legal action is taken against them. That indicates that all members of Parliament are covered when legal action is taken against them. I am quite certain that that is not the case. I know a member of the Opposition who had a writ taken out against him by Mr Hinze at the same time. When Mr Hinze withdrew that writ—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): I ask the honourable member to refer to the Minister for Local Government as the Minister for Local Government.

Mr PREST: I will do so.

When the Minister for Local Government withdrew the writ against the member of the Opposition, it cost the member \$1,500 for his own legal expenses. This is one of the main reasons why the Government does not want a public accounts committee. I would like to know how much money has been paid out during the past three to five years on expenses incurred by Ministers. I suggest that if there was a public accounts committee we would know where that money is going. I would like to know how many legal actions are involved. I am disgusted that this practice is allowed to take place. This is not the first time that it has happened. I remember that an award was made against the Premier in the litigation concerning Mr Sinclair of Fraser Island. The decision was reversed and eventually Mr Sinclair had to pay.

I turn now to the transport industry and, in particular, to the railways as they are today. A serious situation is developing in the railways throughout Queensland and the rest of Australia. Being a representative of Queensland, I am concerned about the action taken by the Minister for Transport concerning railway workers in this State. In the very near future there could be a stoppage of railway workers in Queensland if the Minister does not stop his action of provoking railway workers to strike during the lead-up to the election. When the Federal election was approaching, the Minister for Transport hurried through this Parliament the report of PA Australia. Of course, the railwaymen were wise. They acted very responsibly and took that report in their stride.

Just prior to a State election, the Minister is again attempting to provoke the railway workers of this State by threatening to replace some three-man crews with two-man crews. However, I refer to a question about train-crew staffing put to the Minister for Transport on 16 March 1983 by the member for Balonne—

“Mr NEAL: I ask the Minister for Transport: In view of reports in the Press, is it proposed to reduce train crews to two men?”

Mr LANE: There is no proposal in the P A Australia report to reduce the number in a train crew from the present three, consisting of driver, fireman and guard, to two. However, at a recent meeting of the commissioners in charge of the various railway systems in Australia, the matter appeared on the agenda . . .”

Mr Yewdale: That was a Dorothy Dixier.

Mr PREST: It could have been a Dorothy Dixier, yes. The Minister continued—

“The Government has quite a firm package of proposals to reduce costs in the railway system. The Government is working on the proposals, through its departmental officers. The reduction of crews to two men is an extraneous matter emanating from the action taken by the Wran Government in New South Wales. Such a step is not proposed at this time in Queensland.”

However, the Minister for Transport is now attempting to provoke railwaymen into taking industrial action. If he continues on his present course, he will succeed in his attempt. For some time the Minister for Transport has been attempting to provoke them. Never in the history of the railways has there been a Minister so offside with railway workers.

I refer now to “The Railway Advocate” of July 1983, in which Mr Dunne said that the Commissioner for Railways had provided the relevant unions with a set of proposals for the introduction of two-man crews working on specified lines in Queensland. He names the lines on which two-man crews will be introduced in four stages. They are—

“1. Goonyella Railway, incorporating existing depots at Coppabella and Jilalan and new depots at Moranbah and Dysart.

2. Collinsville-Newlands, incorporating Collinsville and Bowen depots and also Greenvale operation incorporating Greenvale and Townsville depots.

3. Blackwater, Moura and Callide coal traffic, incorporating depots of Rockhampton, Gladstone, Bluff, Moura Mine and Earlsfield.

4. Progressive extension to other non-shunt non-roadside carrying freight services in selected areas affecting various depots.”

If the Australian Railways Union was not blessed with such a responsible group of workers and union officials, safety would be thrown out the door and the Minister for Transport would succeed in substituting three-man crews with two-man crews. The July “Advocate” carried this article—

“When Transport Minister Lane announced last year the Cabinet decision to employ private consultants to carry out investigations into the railways, the ARU called instead, for a public inquiry. We said then, and now repeat, that only a public inquiry would provide an opportunity for all aspects of rail operations and policies to be examined fully.

Such an inquiry is still possible and rail workers and Queensland people should raise this demand with members of Parliament and in community organisations. There are many matters relating to the ‘economic difficulties’ of the railways which the Consultants ignored and which government does not wish aired publicly. Many of such matters are central to rail economy and they should be examined publicly.”

There would be no person in the Railways in Queensland more responsible than Pat Dunne.

Now the Minister for Transport is embarking on a spending spree in the railway system. The Government has stated that there will be no reduction in staff, yet in certain goods sheds the number of staff has been reduced by approximately 30 per cent. As this is an election year, the Government has announced a big spending spree, but the people of Queensland must doubt whether it will ever take place.

When one considers the Government's attitude to improvements in the rail system, one must think back to the blunder that cost the State of Queensland some \$255m. In 1947 a report recommended the electrification of the Brisbane rail system at a cost of \$5m. Now the total cost of the project, which is expected to be completed in 1984, is estimated at \$260m. However, now the Government has announced its intention to electrify practically the whole rail system from Brisbane to Townsville. I now quote from today's "Daily Sun"—

"A \$584 million project to electrify 1 500 km of central Queensland's coal mine railways has been hailed by State Government leaders as the largest rail development undertaken anywhere in the world.

The project will make Queensland coal more competitive on overseas markets and lead to electrification of the State's 1 340 km main trunk passenger line from Brisbane to Townsville.

The eight year electrification project, employing 1 000 and serving 18 Bowen Basin coal mines, will begin later this year following State Cabinet approval yesterday.

Tenders will soon be called for the first stage Blackwater-to-Gladstone line estimated to cost \$269m, on which construction will begin this financial year."

Over the years the people of Queensland have heard so much propaganda on what the Government intends to do with the railways, they must be very wary of this promise. However, the railway system is still losing some \$157m per year.

When the Government was installing CTC between Gladstone and Blackwater or thereabouts, it had to run overseas to borrow approximately \$8m to fund that job. Now the Government is considering a cost of \$584m to electrify the complete coal rail system.

Although the Government is willing to undertake that expenditure in an effort to supply cheap coal to overseas markets, those who travel on Queensland trains are having sleepless nights. On this matter, I will read from a Press report of 17 July 1983—

"Scores of Queenslanders have had to abandon Christmas family reunions with northern relatives because of a shortage of sleeping berths on the Sunlander train.

A Railway Department official said berths on the train, which runs between Cairns and Brisbane, were already booked out until past Christmas.

'It would have to be a real emergency case to get a sleeping berth at this stage. Families have to go on to a waiting list now,' he said.

The department takes bookings for The Sunlander six months ahead but sleeping berths are snapped up as fast as they come on the market."

That reveals that the Government cannot provide a service for passengers but it is prepared to spend \$584m on electrification of the State's coal lines. A railway spokesman agreed that more sleeping accommodation is needed but lack of finance is preventing any additions to rolling-stock. I realise that there is a limit to the number of wagons that can be attached to a passenger train but at the present time each passenger train contains three or four empty QLXT wagons. If they were removed and put onto the fast goods trains and if the State had the finance to buy another couple of sleeping cars it would be better able to provide sleeping berths for the travelling public. Transport in Queensland, particularly the rail system, has been sadly neglected.

Something should be done to improve the service on our passenger trains and also to provide comfort for those people who travel by rail. Something must be done so that people do not have to book a sleeper six months in advance. I am certain that if something was done to improve facilities on our rail services the deficit would not be as large as it is.

While on the subject of railways, we should not forget the promises that have been made in relation to the Redcliffe rail link, particularly in the 1979 by-election and 1980 election campaigns. The people of Redcliffe are still waiting for it, yet the Government intends to rebuild the Gold Coast rail line, which was pulled up by this Government in the early 1960s. As I said earlier, the Opposition agrees that this line should be built because it would provide an alternative form of transport to the Gold Coast, reduce some of the traffic on the highway and perhaps eliminate some of the road fatalities. But

I have discovered that on 10 December 1973 Mr Charles Holm—we all know that he is a bigwig in the National Party—bought a portion of land which was part of the old rail line for \$2,600. Naturally, the new line will pass through his property, and I am certain that Charlie will not be as generous on this occasion as the Railway Department was in allowing him to acquire the land for \$2,600. I am certain that the compensation he will be offered will be far in excess of that amount. In addition, the rail line will provide a great service to the nearby subdivision that he owns.

I must mention a couple of other people who stand to make some money when land is being resumed for this proposed rail line. Two companies—Stereotype Pty Ltd and Barker & Gibbs Investments—own land which will have to be resumed. The directors of Stereotype Pty Ltd are Paul Michael Flann and Marion Glenice Flann. Mr Flann just happens to be the campaign director of Mr Ivan Gibbs. Barker & Gibbs Investments is owned by Mr Ivan James Gibbs, Doris Ethel Rosemary Gibbs, Stephen Samuel Barker and Moira Aileen Barker. That company owns land in George Street, Beenleigh. Nevertheless, I say good luck to those people who will be able to make some money out of the Government's mistake in pulling up the Gold Coast rail line back in the 1960s, just when the Gold Coast was really taking off.

I am sorry that I have taken so long, Mr Speaker, but I wanted to draw your attention to the fact that I am concerned about the need for a public accounts committee. I believe that this Parliament should pressure the Government into setting up such a committee immediately. I am also concerned about the promises being made about the electrification of the coal lines in Central Queensland. The Opposition would like to see development of that type, but something should be done first about improving passenger accommodation on our railways. Some attempt should be made to limit the amount of money paid when land is resumed for the Gold Coast rail line, that is, if the line is ever built.

Mr MUNTZ (Whitsunday) (11.59 p.m.): I enter this debate on the Appropriation Bill to commend the Treasurer and the State Government for what I believe is an unparalleled credible management record compared with that of other States. I believe I have a responsibility to inform and warn the people of Queensland of the clear difference between the successful private enterprise policies of this coalition Government and the failed policies of the Labor Party in Queensland. I do not believe that there could ever be a clearer distinction between the economic policies and performance of two political parties than is evidenced by the difference between the Labor Party and the Queensland National-Liberal Government. It is not just the basic philosophic difference of socialism versus private enterprise. If we examine the practical application of those competing philosophies in the Queensland and the Australian context, we see a marked contrast in performance.

[Wednesday, 3 August 1983]

Under the leadership of the coalition Government, Queensland has been transformed in the past two decades from the so-called Cinderella State to the most vibrant, prosperous member of the Federation. That transformation did not happen simply by chance. It was the result of sound policies implemented with flare and imagination and, I might add, a great deal of business sense that is totally lacking on the Opposition benches in this Chamber.

I will look first at the issue of taxation by a Labor administration. For a Government that allegedly places so much importance on competent, economic management, the Hawke Labor administration is making an incredible mess of its decisions in the taxation field. Its record after 100 days in office was very shabby, and it only gets worse. There would be no difference in Queensland under a Labor administration.

Mr Borbidge: The Opposition is scared stiff of the Federal Budget.

Mr MUNTZ: That is true.

In the Federal sphere, Labor bribed its way into power by offering substantial cuts in income tax. What happened to those? They simply disappeared, and but for the string of outrageous scandals that has embroiled the Labor Party in recent months, we might at least have witnessed a caretaker Government in limbo. In his earnest desire to provide a contrast to Malcolm Fraser's policies, Hawke seems to have been able to come up with only one thing, that is, putting politics back on the front page.

Labor also caused a furore with its plans to impose a harsh and discriminatory tax on lump sum superannuation benefits. It did not breathe a word about that before the Federal election. We have witnessed an incredible amount of back-tracking on that superannuation tax, but the situation remains as muddy and confused as ever.

In speaking of confusion, I ask: What is to happen about a capital gains tax? We have heard a string of Labor Ministers expressing support for that iniquitous tax, and almost as many denials. However, it will be noticed that the denials are always couched in very fuzzy terms. The Prime Minister is fond of saying that there will be no new capital gains tax, and I emphasise the word "new"; but can we believe that he will not amend existing section 26A of the Taxation Act to provide such an impost?

Labor is now talking about a wealth tax. Why cannot Labor be honest and straightforward, and why cannot members on our Opposition benches act in the same way in this matter and say quite simply that they want to get their grubby little hands onto money that has been accumulated by those who have worked hard in order to hand it over to those who are too lazy to make the effort.

Mr Borbidge: They are talking about death duties, too.

Mr MUNTZ: That is so.

Surely by this time Labor realises that it cannot act like a fairy godmother with the hard-earned savings of thrifty Australians.

I turn now to some of Labor's other broken promises in the economic area. The cancellation of the National Water Resources Program was a stupid decision. What has been overlooked is that Australia is the driest continent on earth and particularly prone to droughts. The folly of scrapping the water resources program will be felt severely in the years to come—years when the Hawke Government will be just another embarrassing memory and the Queensland Labor Party will still be chasing the Treasury benches in complete disarray. If nothing else, Labor should at least have learnt that the recent drought slashed Australia's export income and that that has been a major factor in the current recession.

Labor has always scoffed at the rural community. A fine example of that cynicism is the decision by Hawke to slash projected expenditure on the proposed Alice Springs-Darwin railway line. The funding has deliberately been cut back so far that it is now beyond the capacity of the Northern Territory Government to make a go of it. However, once again, we have witnessed the enterprise and initiative of the Queensland Government in rising to the occasion. The feasibility study that Queensland has undertaken with the Northern Territory on a Mt Isa-Darwin rail link will be of vital importance to the future of Northern Australia and of North Queensland. It will bring greatly enhanced prosperity to those regions. Such instances make a mockery of Labor's pretentious claim of bringing all Australians together. The fact is that Labor could not care less about anyone outside the Canberra-Sydney-Melbourne triangle.

Another nasty surprise for taxpayers was the disastrous withholding tax for the building industry. That stupid, ill-conceived legislation will do little more than create a mountain of paper work. In many instances, builders do not make 10 per cent profit on a job, yet they will be forced to deduct this amount for the Taxation Department regardless of their profit situation.

As I said before, Labor simply lacks any business sense. What it regards as stimulus almost invariably acts as a disincentive. As it is only a few days before the Federal Budget is brought down, we should examine the efforts of the Federal Labor Treasurer (Mr Keating) in the recent mini-Budget. What a horror that was. Some newspapers described it as brutal, and some tipped that it was just a warm-up for this month's Budget onslaught.

There was, of course, the lump-sum superannuation tax, an issue that is still unresolved. Means tests were reintroduced for some pensioners. The Fraser Government's housing interest tax rebate scheme was scrapped. Country people were forced to pay more for petrol freight costs. Income averaging by primary producers was harshly tightened. An excise of 2 cents a litre was imposed on Avgas. The special depreciation allowance for petrol storage was scrapped. The depreciation allowance for plant and equipment was slashed from 33½ per cent to 20 per cent per year.

It is abundantly clear from that horrific list of disincentives that the rural community of Australia, and particularly of Queensland, has been forced to meet a disproportionate share of the Hawke Labor Government's economic savagery.

It is just as well that the former Special Minister of State has become another ministerial casualty of the Hawke administration's bungling incompetence. When he was still a Minister, he advocated the scrapping of the secrecy provisions of taxation returns. I ask: Is nothing sacred from Labor's Big Brother attitude? It was the same Mick Young who publicly advocated the reintroduction of death duties on a national level. We all remember that it was this coalition Government in Queensland that made the breakthrough in getting rid of that particularly iniquitous tax. With such a daunting record of broken promises behind it after just a few months, can we have any faith at all that death duties will not be brought in as part of the coming Federal Budget?

But Labor's frightening record in the area of taxation does not end there. New South Wales and Victoria now want the Hawke administration to introduce a national financial institutions duty. That move is specifically aimed at Queensland, because many business houses are sensibly moving their transactions through this State to avoid those penalties. In fact, the Government's performance in Queensland is extraordinarily good, and not just in the field of taxation.

Let us examine the number of bankruptcies in this State. The number of companies registered in Queensland has nearly doubled in five years; but, despite that, the number going into liquidation or receivership has remained constant. In 1978, there were about 43 800 registered companies in Queensland, including interstate and overseas companies with offices in the State. During that year, a total of 182 companies were wound up. Five years later, with a staggering 84 800 companies on the Queensland register, only 154 companies were dissolved. That is 28 fewer than the number five years earlier. The record is certainly impressive.

There is no doubt that the fact that Queensland is the lowest-taxed State has a major bearing on the profitability, and therefore on the survivability, of companies in this State. The Queensland coalition Government, unlike Labor, realises that employment will not grow while companies are forced to the wall by over-zealous taxation policies. Until Labor realises that profit is not a dirty word, it will continue its appalling record of economic performance. Government members are very proud to contrast this Government's record with Labor's record.

The Queensland Government scrapped death duties, gift duties and road permit fees. Then it set about making important reductions in pay-roll tax, with the eventual aim of abolishing it altogether. The Queensland Government is now examining land tax, and its reduction or abolition is a strong possibility in the future. It is worth noting that Queensland's land tax income is only one-fifth that of New South Wales. Some \$31m is collected in Queensland, but New South Wales land-owners have to find an estimated \$145m to give to their Labor Government. In Queensland, reductions in stamp duty are the Government's next prime objective, and, given its record, one can be sure that they will be brought down.

The record of State Labor Governments is a very sorry one. They have subjected the residents of their States to staggering increases in taxation, and there is one very simple reason for that—financial mismanagement. Neville Wran, before he was forced to stand aside under the shadow of impropriety, was the foremost practitioner of exploiting public cash reserves—known by the more common term, the practice of raiding hollow logs—the reserves maintained by statutory authorities within a State. Wran and Labor have made such a thorough stripping of these assets that they qualify for a "wet slutzkin" award. It is uncertain, though, whether this hilarity is shared by the people of New South Wales who have watched their State brought perilously close to financial insolvency.

Sound business practice dictates that a firm or enterprise should not be stripped of virtually all of its cash reserves. To do so is to invite the collapse of the enterprise with the attendant harsh economic ramifications.

Can there be a greater illustration, then, of the gross financial mismanagement that is synonymous with Labor?

The warning bells have been sounded many times over, but the situation is always played down. Rather than heed the advice of financial experts, John Cain has chosen to take Victoria down the same economic path. I believe that Mr Bannon and Mr Burke will not be far behind. The message is very clear.

Queensland and this coalition Government will be waiting with open arms for those enterprises that decide this is the State of opportunity. That is happening already.

Already Mr Wright and the Queensland branch of the Australian Labor Party have seized on the idea of there being millions of unused dollars lying around the State Treasury. He is promising the world to anyone who will listen, saying he will pay for it out of these "unused" State funds. Queenslanders will not be conned by Mr Wright.

Does it not occur to him that, if there were untold millions lying idle, the present or any Government would have used them to satisfy the demands of the vast number of pressure groups throughout the State?

It would be simple enough to label the Labor strategy as naive, but that ignores the disastrous effects such financial irresponsibility will generate.

The Labor Party's policies and philosophy are a disaster and will not be accepted by Queenslanders.

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (12.12 a.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the Appropriation Bill. In the interests of saving time I do not intend to reply in detail. However, one or two comments need to be made in answer to remarks made by Opposition members.

In particular, I want to address my remarks to the comments made by the Opposition spokesman on Treasury matters, the honourable member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras). I must say that he did summarise the federal system and its history in a very accurate and correct manner. The imbalance in the federal system is something that this Government has made very clear to both the Whitlam and Fraser Governments and again to the Hawke Government. I must say, however, that the honourable member's information concerning the Grants Commission is totally inaccurate, as are his statements.

It must be said that last year the Fraser Government deprived this Government of \$100m when it allowed the phasing in of the Grants Commission relativities over a three-year period instead of giving Queensland the funds to which it was entitled under the Grants Commission relativities review. I make no apology for my criticism of the Fraser Government in that regard. It did that to give support to the Liberal Governments in Western Australia and South Australia, obviously for political purposes. I do not support such action on that basis.

Mr Kruger interjected.

Dr EDWARDS: Would the honourable member mind keeping quiet so that I can answer what was a very reasonable speech by his colleague? When the honourable member for Murrumbidgee makes a reasonable speech, I will listen to him.

The honourable member for South Brisbane did not understand that the Fraser Government took that action for political purposes, to support the Liberal Governments in Western Australia and South Australia. I make no apology for criticising the Fraser Government on that basis. I hope that a similar attitude is not displayed by the Hawke Government towards the Queensland Government because we do not have the same political philosophy as the Hawke Government.

The Grants Commission imbalance under which this Government was deprived of certain funds was carried on by the Hawke Government this year when it gave Queensland only a part flow-on of the entitlement that was due to us. Mr Hawke himself admitted that last year the Queensland Government was deprived. It was deprived, and that is the reason why, whereas the other States got 9 per cent, Queensland got 13 per cent. That was done in an attempt to right the wrong that had been committed last year with the phasing-in over a three-year period. Next year, if the system is continued, the relativities will correct that anomaly over a three-year period. Mr Hawke is on record as saying that he would like a review of the grants system. At this stage the Queensland Government would not welcome such a review.

We have just been through the exercise for a three-year period and now they are thinking about doing it again. Although we receive a 13.2 per cent increase compared with an average of 9 per cent in other States, it rectified a disability that was suffered by this State last year.

Mr Fouras: Part of that has been phased in.

Dr EDWARDS: Yes. The final phasing in will be in 1984-5.

In the meantime the Government has lost \$150m that should have come to this State. That is a point that the honourable member for South Brisbane has recognised. On the facts presented by the honourable member, I would have thought that the Federal Government may well see fit to correct that anomaly.

I now turn to the communique, and point out that it will be the last communique to which the Queensland Government will be a party. We were told that it would not be used against us and that it was a consensus view. Mr Hawke has continually used that communique. Tonight the member for South Brisbane has used it again. That is not the purpose of a communique. It is used to express an opinion from the meeting. I am very disappointed that it is being used against the Government because it was part of what was a general statement.

Dr Lockwood interjected.

Dr EDWARDS: I think that that is a fair comment.

The honourable member for South Brisbane referred to program budgeting. The Government has been examining program budgeting on and off since 1972. In 1972 the present Auditor-General, Mr Craven, was sent overseas to report to us on program budgeting. He came back and the then Under Treasurer, Sir Allan Sewell, examined his report and furnished a very comprehensive report to the Government. He pointed out that there were some advantages in program budgeting but that there were many disadvantages. To suggest, as the honourable member has, that we do not intend to ever implement program budgeting in any form is a misstatement. If it is proven to be a benefit to accountability and beneficial to the State's funding arrangements, we would certainly consider it or part of it as an option. We are not prepared to allow it into the system when it has been proved to have so many deficiencies in the American system at this stage. A recent report in the "Economic Review" indicated that the American people were swinging away from program budgeting. There is a wide spread of opinion on this matter.

I state very clearly that no person will be disadvantaged in the land compensation arrangements for Expo. If the honourable member would like to name the particular gentleman to whom he referred, I would be happy to make certain that he is cared for in that regard. Provision has been made to deal immediately with urgent cases.

Mr Fouras: I wasn't talking about people who own land; I was referring to people who are leasing buildings.

Dr EDWARDS: A reasonable settlement will be made. Nobody will be disadvantaged in that regard.

The Expo will be one of the greatest things that has ever happened in Queensland. Our figures have been checked by the exposition department of the Federal Government. It supports the figures that have been presented to the Paris exposition committee. There is no doubt that it will be a great success.

I cannot understand why the Opposition Treasury spokesman would criticise a Government about the interest rate paid on a superannuation fund. He is judging two incomparable matters. He said that, because the bond rate is 14 per cent, we should be paying 14 per cent interest.

Mr Fouras: Did I say that?

Dr EDWARDS: That is what the honourable member implied.

Some of the loans that were given out by the superannuation fund are 30 years old. To this day, many of them are paying 3 per cent interest. Therefore, an average is paid. The recommendation of the State Service Superannuation Board in its annual review of interest rates is to increase them. That is one of the conditions that will be laid down in the amendments to the superannuation scheme that, I hope, will come before this Parliament in the next few weeks.

I thank the other members for their contributions. There was some very good debate on taxation matters. The members for Sherwood, Peak Downs, Surfers Paradise and Whitsunday made some very clear statements on tax matters. Those matters will be a major issue in the next State election. The Labor Party cannot run away from its policy of high taxation.

I refer to one final matter. I was particularly disappointed at the continued knocking by the Labor Opposition following the announcement of the coal line electrification program. It is a reality. The funding arrangements are in place in general principle. Tenders will be called as quickly as possible. I hope that they can be called within a month. The design and documentation for the Blackwater to Gladstone line are completed. The design is well advanced—

Mr Underwood: You said that about Redcliffe.

Dr EDWARDS: The member for Ipswich West babbles on all the time. Nobody believes what he says.

Mr Underwood interjected.

Dr EDWARDS: For goodness sake!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! The honourable member for Ipswich West has had his opportunity.

Dr EDWARDS: He will not be the member for Ipswich West after the next election, but that is another matter.

As to the Redcliffe line—the member for Port Curtis mentioned that and the line to Southport—this year the Government has made a commitment of \$2m for the acquisition of land for the Redcliffe line. We will be continuing to allocate funds this year for that project.

On the day tenders are invited for electrification of the Central Queensland lines there will be some red faces on the other side of the House. I am extremely disappointed that members of the Opposition are critical of a program that will provide employment opportunities to thousands of Queenslanders. They will have to answer for their criticism. The work will be done in Queensland. The locomotives will be built in this State. The work will be allocated to Australian firms.

The Government's policy is to continue the electrification program. We have honoured our commitments. We are disappointed that the program is a year behind schedule—and I admit that publicly—but it is about time the Opposition recognised that a line cannot be built without a great deal of planning and numerous feasibility studies.

My position is very clear. I have been critical of Government statements about railway lines that should never have been considered. The Government and the Opposition, too, ought to have fewer promising politicians and more responsible people. Governments can spend as much money as they like, but the people have to pay for it. The sooner that is realised, the better. The nation is in a mess federally because the Fraser Government and, prior to that, the Whitlam Government went on spending sprees that no-one could afford. I am sick and tired of people making such commitments. If the Opposition makes commitments around this State, as its Leader has done for some time, somebody will have to pay. We cannot allow such commitments to continue. While I am Treasurer of this State, I will not commit the Government or any future group of people—

Mr WRIGHT: I rise to a point of order. The Treasurer has made an accusation about promises made by me and other members on this side. It ought to be noted on the record that to date our total election promises amount to \$50m, whereas the Government promises so far amount to \$3,200m.

Dr EDWARDS: I am amazed that the Leader of the Opposition would admit to promises of \$50m. He has only considered part of the promises. He has not considered the cost of taxation by way of rates paid to local authorities. That is not included in the \$50m. The estimate of that alone for Government properties throughout the State is in the vicinity of \$160m a year. The Leader of the Opposition is prepared to promise that, although he says we have a debt of \$1,100m. I cannot see the correlation between those two statements. We are committed to anything promised by the Government.

Mr Wright: What about the Bradfield scheme alone?

Dr EDWARDS: There is another of the Opposition Leader's inaccuracies. The Government has never committed itself to the Bradfield scheme. We committed ourselves to a feasibility study, which the Federal Labor Government has reneged on.

Mr Wright: What about the Darwin scheme? \$700m.

Dr EDWARDS: He is now talking about the Mt Isa to Darwin scheme. We have committed ourselves to a feasibility study on it. It is about time he understood the difference between a feasibility study and the construction of a project. The quicker the Leader of the Opposition becomes honest with his statements, the quicker he will be able to live with his conscience.

Mr Wright interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! The Leader of the Opposition had the opportunity, if he wished to avail himself of it, to address the Chair. I now call the Deputy Premier and Treasurer.

Dr EDWARDS: The Leader of the Opposition had the opportunity to speak to the Bill but he did not even bother to do so.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion (Dr Edwards) agreed to.

Committee

Mr Kaus (Mansfield) in the chair

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Dr Edwards, read a third time.

PATRIOTIC FUNDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

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

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Patriotic Funds Act of 1942, as subsequently amended, in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House) (12.28 a.m.): I move—

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

The object of this Bill is to assist trustees of patriotic funds to wind up their funds. There are at present a number of patriotic funds in Queensland which are inactive.

Although under the existing legislation there is a provision that allows a fund to transfer its assets to some other patriotic fund, it has been found that trustees are reluctant in most cases to do so. Trustees have adopted the attitude that moneys have been raised locally and they are not prepared to hand their assets over to a patriotic fund which is located in another area. A further problem is that, as more patriotic funds cease operating, there are fewer funds available that can receive moneys from those funds being wound up.

Most of the funds seeking to wind up their affairs have requested that the balance held by them be donated to other local bodies or organisations so that the residents of the area in which the funds have been raised could benefit. It is considered that this proposal has much to commend it and it is therefore intended that the Patriotic Funds Act be amended to allow trustees to pay the balance of their assets to other associations which have as one of their objects the benefit of the public. This would enable funds which have been collected in a particular area to be used by some association, other than a patriotic fund, in the same area.

The opportunity is also being taken to amend section 3 of the Act to redefine the term “Under Secretary”.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Wright, adjourned.

BUILDERS' REGISTRATION AND HOME-OWNERS' PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Builders' Registration and Home-owners' Protection Act 1979-1982 in certain particulars and for related purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing) (12.31 a.m.): I move—

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

It is the policy of this Government that legislation should be introduced to require the Governor in Council to approve new superannuation schemes or amendments to existing schemes of statutory authorities, which will ensure that a uniform approach is adopted for all employees in the public sector and that superannuation schemes operated by statutory authorities do not conflict with schemes operated by the Government for its employees.

As the Builders Registration Board, which is constituted under the Act, operates a superannuation scheme for its employees, provisions have been included in this amending Bill that will give effect to this Government's policy decision.

The amending Bill also includes provisions making minor alterations to the instrument of guarantee and indemnity lodged with the Builders Registration Board by directors of bodies corporate having paid up capital of less than \$100,000.

The instruments were introduced to maintain the viability of the insurance fund established under the Act. However, it has become apparent that the instrument in its present form attracts ad valorem stamp duty of a quarter of a per cent. It was not intended that this stamp duty would be payable and thereby impose an extra burden on a body corporate that is just starting out, as its finances would obviously be limited. I therefore discussed the matter with the Honourable the Treasurer, and it is evident that the most appropriate course of action that will remove this obligation is to amend the present form of the instrument so that it may be assessed at nominal rates only. To achieve this, the instrument will be limited to \$100,000 by way of an amendment to the Act, with no reference being made to this limit on the instrument itself.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, adjourned.

PRIVACY COMMITTEE BILL

Hon. S. S. DOUMANY (Kurilpa—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to provide for the constitution of a Privacy Committee, to define its powers and functions and for purposes connected therewith.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. S. S. DOUMANY (Kurilpa—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.34 a.m.): I move—

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

Privacy is one of the most basic rights of people in our society. The object of this Bill is, therefore, to establish a Privacy Committee to protect people from unreasonable intrusions into their homes and private lives.

The proposed committee will consist of seven members. A person shall not be appointed as a member of the committee unless he has a special knowledge of, or interest in, matters affecting the privacy of persons.

The committee will have the power to conduct research and collect and collate information in respect of any matter relating to the privacy of persons referred to it by the Minister.

The committee will also be required to make reports and recommendations to the Minister in relation to any matter that concerns the need for or the desirability of legislative or administrative action in the interests of the privacy of persons.

Once the committee is established, I propose to refer the Invasion of Privacy Act to it with a view to reporting on and recommending any amendments to that Act that it considers desirable in the interests of the privacy of persons.

The committee will have the power in relation to any matter relating to the privacy of persons generally to disseminate information and undertake educational work. It will also receive and investigate complaints about alleged violations of the privacy of persons. Where the committee conducts such an investigation, it will be required to report thereon only to the Minister.

Upon the conclusion of an investigation, if the committee is satisfied that no further action is warranted in respect of the matter to which the complaint relates, it will advise the complainant accordingly. In any other case, the committee will be required to advise the complainant that a report has been or will be forwarded to the Minister but will not advise the complainant of the contents of that report. Such a report will not be published without the prior approval of the Minister.

The committee will make annual reports on its work and activities, and these reports will be laid before the Legislative Assembly.

Provision is also made in the Bill for the committee to make a special report for laying before the Legislative Assembly on any matter arising in connection with the exercise or performance of its powers and functions.

The Bill is expressed to bind the Crown so the Privacy Committee will have authority to investigate matters coming within its jurisdiction in the public sector as well as in the private sector.

Provision is made in the Bill for the appointment of subcommittees and the delegation of certain powers and functions of the committee to individual members, members of a subcommittee or officers of the committee.

The Bill will be operative for only five years. The effectiveness of the committee will be closely monitored in that time and if, at the conclusion of the five years, the committee has proved to be an outstanding success in protecting the privacy of persons, no doubt its activities can be extended at that time.

Other provisions in the Bill deal with matters of procedure and offences.

No attempt has been made to provide in the Bill any restrictive definition of privacy of persons as it is considered it would be more appropriate to leave the limits of privacy to be worked out as circumstances unfold.

Privacy is the right of every person in a democracy. This Bill will allow the privacy of individuals to be protected whilst at the same time allowing normal functions to operate in the community.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr R. J. Gibbs, adjourned.

BAIL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. S. S. DOUMANY (Kurilpa—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Bail Act 1980–1982 in a certain particular.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. S. S. DOUMANY (Kurilpa—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.38 a.m.): I move—

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

The question of bail in criminal proceedings was referred to the Law Reform Commission by this Government in the late 1970s. As a result of that examination, the law relating to bail was consolidated in the one statute whereas previously the law had been contained in the Criminal Code, the Justices Act and in other statutes.

Assent was given to the Bail Act in May of 1980 and the changes brought about by that legislation have been in effect for a little over two years. Although some of the principles relating to bail were altered by this legislation after considerable scrutiny by the Law Reform Commission and the profession, the vast majority of principles were not altered.

One principle that has governed criminal law for many centuries is that no court fees should be taken in relation to criminal cases. This principle was included in the Criminal Code by Sir Samuel Griffith some 90 years ago. It is provided by section 704 of the Criminal Code that “no fees can be taken in any court of criminal jurisdiction or before any justice from any person who is charged with an indictable offence for any proceeding had or taken in the Court or before the justice with respect to the charge”.

As a result of the enactment of the Bail Act, the protection of section 704 has now been removed with respect to applications for bail brought pursuant to section 13 of the Bail Act. These applications are heard before judges of the Supreme Court sitting in chambers. As a result of the interpretation of the Rules of the Supreme Court, it would appear that fees are now chargeable on this type of application.

The purpose of this amending legislation is to firmly ensconce into the Bail Act the principle which has governed the criminal law for many years. As a matter of principle no matter of procedure or lack of finance should prevent an accused person from applying for bail in Queensland courts. This Bill will ensure that no fees shall be taken as a result of applications for bail to the Supreme Court.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr R. J. Gibbs, adjourned.

MINING TITLES FREEHOLDING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Mining Titles Freeholding Act 1980-1982 in certain particulars and for other purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr I. J. Gibbs, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy) (12.42 a.m.): I move—

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

The proposed Bill is a short one, but, nevertheless, an important one as far as the many lessees of miners' homestead perpetual leases and the holders of business areas and residence areas are concerned.

When the Mining Titles Freeholding Act was introduced in July 1980, its main objective was to provide for the freeholding of miners' homestead leases, miners' homestead perpetual leases, residence areas and business areas if an application for such freeholding was approved by the Minister.

In the case of a miner's homestead lease, the Act provides that the lessee can obtain a deed of grant in fee simple without any further payment towards the present unimproved value of the land. This is because, under the conditions attaching to this particular title, the land has already been paid for during the first period of 30 years of the lease.

However, the lessee of a miner's homestead perpetual lease or the holder of a business area or residence area is required to pay the unimproved value of the land, as at the date of the application for freeholding. This is determined by the warden's court, taking into consideration a valuation supplied by the Minister and any valuation or evidence submitted by the applicant. There is, of course, provision for an applicant dissatisfied with the determination of the warden's court to appeal to the Land Court.

The valuations supplied to the warden's court by the Minister have been unimproved values determined by approved valuers from the Lands Department under an administrative arrangement with that department. These valuations have in many cases been considerably higher than that expected by landholders. As a result, very few applicants for freeholding, other than lessees of miners' homestead leases, have followed through with their applications. Additionally, it is known that others have not even bothered to do so because of the cost factor.

Honourable members would be aware that with the introduction of the Land Act and Another Act Amendment Act 1981, the capital values of certain perpetual leases under the Land Act were determined for all time on the values which existed as at 31 December 1980. Thus, an anomalous situation has developed. On the one hand, we have the value used for the purposes of freeholding tenures under the Land Act frozen as at 31 December 1980, whilst, on the other hand, the value for the purposes of freeholding under the Mining Titles Freeholding Act is determined as at the date of application for such freeholding. The Government now seeks to remove this anomaly.

This Bill amends the definition of "unimproved value" to enable the use of the valuation made by the Valuer-General under the Valuation of Land Act existing as at 31 December 1980 rather than the valuation determined by the Warden's Court as at the date of application. Of course, in those cases where there is no valuation for a particular block at that date, the valuation to be used is the one which first takes or took effect after 31 December 1980.

It is proposed that this valuation should be used rather than the capital value as determined by the warden for the rental period current as at 31 December 1980 because the capital values determined by mining wardens are assessed at 10-year intervals and hence vary greatly throughout the State. Honourable members should agree that use of the valuation made under the Valuation of Land Act is an acceptable alternative.

However, the Valuation of Land Act provides for concessional valuations in those cases where the land is used exclusively for the purposes of the business of primary production. The Bill provides that these valuations not be accepted for the purposes of freeholding under the Mining Titles Freeholding Act, as they are not comparable with those for miners' homesteads in general.

Instead, the Bill provides that the "non-concessional" valuation that would have been applicable had such a valuation been undertaken by the Valuer-General at the date of the last concessional valuation, which took effect prior to 31 December 1980, be obtained and used.

Again, in those cases where there was no concessional valuation before 31 December 1980, a non-concessional valuation will be obtained as at the date of the first concessional valuation which took or takes effect after 31 December 1980.

The Minister will obtain a certificate of valuation of the unimproved value from the Valuer-General and submit it to the warden. The warden will also be informed of the amount, if any, the Valuer-General has charged for supplying this valuation.

I would point out to honourable members that in those cases where the land has been valued at its highest and best use, that is a non-concessional valuation, it is not proposed to charge for the supply of the valuation. This will be the majority of cases.

In cases where the Valuer-General's value shown on the valuation roll is a concessional valuation, such as where the land is used for the purposes of the business of primary

production, and a special valuation is required to be made for the purposes of freeholding, it is proposed that either the fee prescribed by the valuation of Land Act or the cost incurred in making the valuation be charged, whichever is the lesser.

Finally, as I mentioned earlier, under the existing legislation there is provision for an applicant who is dissatisfied with the unimproved value as determined by the Warden's Court to appeal to the Land Court.

Now that it is proposed to use, in the majority of cases, an existing valuation under the Valuation of Land Act, in respect of which the applicant had the right of appeal to the Land Court at the time of the valuation, there is no reason why this provision, which, in effect, would give the applicant a "second" right of appeal in respect of the same valuation, should be retained. The Bill removes this "second" right of appeal.

This is not the case where the land has a concessional valuation and it will be necessary to obtain a valuation on a non-concessional basis. Therefore, in such cases, the Bill provides that, if the applicant is dissatisfied with the non-concessional valuation, he will have the right of appeal to the Land Court.

As I indicated at the beginning of my speech, I consider the Bill is most important as it allows the lessees of miners' homestead perpetual leases and the holders of business areas and residence areas to freehold their land at a fair and reasonable cost.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Vaughan, adjourned.

MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Mines Regulation Act 1964-1983 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr I. J. Gibbs, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy) (12.51 a.m.): I move—

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

The proposed Bill has a twofold purpose. Firstly, it amends the provisions of the Act relating to the collection of statistical information.

The need for the submission of production and statistical returns has been long established. However, this information has traditionally been collected on a calendar year basis, and, whereas calendar year reporting was appropriate at the time of its inception, it is now inconsistent with the practices generally in operation in the mining industry and used by other data collection agencies. Consequently, difficulties have been experienced with miners maintaining reporting schedules owing to the necessity for them to prepare completely separate sets of figures for the calendar year when their returns to other agencies, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Taxation Department, are for the financial year.

The proposed amendments simply provide for the submission of this information on a financial rather than a calendar year basis. I might mention that this change-over to financial year reporting will also allow validation of data within the Mines Department, particularly in respect of royalty, as well as with other agencies such as the Queensland Coal Board and the Queensland Treasury.

Additionally, the requirements relating to the submission of returns for monthly, quarterly or other periods have been broadened and clarified, as have the requirements for returns where operations have not been continuous throughout the year.

The Bill proposes that the existing provisions relating to penalties specifically for breaches of the requirement to lodge returns be removed in order that the general penalty

provisions presently contained in section 65 of the Act might be applicable. It is considered appropriate that this two-tier scale of penalties apply, thus allowing the imposition of a lower penalty on a person who is not the owner, agent or manager of a mine.

As well, owing to the lack of evidentiary aids, proceedings against offenders have been seriously hampered. The Bill includes provisions designed to overcome this problem.

Secondly, the Bill also provides for certain penalties to be increased. Honourable members will be aware that a number of the penalties under this Act were increased earlier this year, and the proposed amendments merely seek to bring a measure of uniformity to the overall penalty provisions.

I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Debate, on motion of Mr Vaughan, adjourned.

EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Minister for Education), by leave, without notice: I move—
“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Education Act 1964-1974 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Minister for Education) (12.55 a.m.): I move—
“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The Education Act that is currently under review was passed by this House in 1964 following its introduction by the late Honourable Jack Pizzey. It represented a consolidation and modernisation of provisions that had been on the Queensland statute-book for a long time—some of them since 1875.

The 1964 Act was amended in 1970 mainly to provide for advanced education and again in 1973 to effect amendments seen as necessary as a result of three years' practical administration of the advanced education provisions. The Education Act 1964-1973 was further amended in one particular in 1974 as a consequence of the passing of the Age of Majority Act.

On 26 November 1981, my predecessor as Minister for Education, the Honourable Bill Gunn, introduced into this Chamber a Bill to amend the Education Act 1964-1974 and the University of Queensland Act 1965-1981. Honourable members will recall that, to allow public scrutiny of its provisions, the Bill was not proceeded with in that sitting of Parliament. Such scrutiny led to some debate about such principles as the registration of non-State schools, maltreatment of children and even registration of teachers, although that provision essentially was being rearranged, with little change.

During that debate, particularly in relation to the registration of non-State schools, my predecessor worked extremely hard in explaining the provision and securing the understanding of church leaders in particular. As a member of the Minister's education committee, I was aware of his unceasing efforts to have the Bill accepted and I pay tribute to his hard work.

One of my first tasks as Minister for Education was to re-examine the Bill (although I knew it quite well) to try to solve the particular problems facing the Government, because disagreement on some provisions was holding up the passage of essential machinery provisions which had been drafted to repair defects and omissions in the Education Act that had emerged over the years. My review of the Bill resulted in the removal of any provision that I considered even remotely controversial, with one exception with which I will deal later.

The Bill now before the House represents a greatly reduced version of the original Bill, containing matters which should not be delayed any longer if the Government is to be able to perform its role efficiently and in the best interests of education in this State.

As before, there are provisions that could be described as updating measures. These include recognition of State pre-school centres and special education units; official introduction of the term "Technical and Further Education"; omission of a transitional provision covering the establishment of parents and citizens associations and reference to agricultural education; increase in the money values of penalties; and head teachers redesignated as principals.

The main provisions of the Bill are as follows—

Use of schools

As explained previously, we have been advised that, because schools are built on land reserved for educational purposes and the Act, as it at present stands, is an Education Act, the use of school facilities for anything other than educational purposes is, strictly speaking, not lawful. The Government is anxious to encourage community groups to use the extensive facilities available in State schools. The Government has chosen not to restrict use of schools by the community as a result of this legal advice, but to adopt a commonsense approach to the question pending amendment of the Act. The use of the term "and for other purposes" in the amendment of the long title (Clause 3) is intended to cover the use of schools for other than educational purposes.

Funds of a parents and citizens association

Although this provision raised some questions when it appeared in the previous Bill, we are persisting with it because, despite assertions to the contrary, it is a machinery provision clarifying what has always been the case: funds of a parents and citizens association are legally owned by the Corporation of the Minister for Education. The Act already states that property acquired by an association is legally owned by the corporation and this has always been taken to include funds. The Act has been administered on that basis. It has never been clearly stated, however, and that is all that is intended. An association is an unincorporated body and cannot legally own the funds. Somebody has to, and logically it should be the Minister. No change in policy is envisaged; neither, as one ludicrous suggestion was made, is it a sinister plot to solve the Government's financial problems by taking over all parents and citizens association funds in Queensland.

The Government recognises that a parents and citizens association works hard for its money and that it does not want a Minister constantly telling it how to spend that money. This has never been the case and it will not occur in future. The Act states that parents and citizens association funds must be used for the benefit of the children attending the particular school. On rare occasions there is a difference of opinion within a parents and citizens association about the use of funds and the Minister has had to execute his ownership powers to settle the matter. This has sometimes been questioned, but the explanation has been readily accepted. I hope I have reassured those honourable members who have reflected the doubts of some associations, and may I mention here that I have had discussions with the Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Associations about this provision. I emphasise that the funds cannot be in legal limbo. They must be legally owned by somebody, and that person has to be the Minister.

Joint development schemes

As with use of schools, we have been told that joint development of school/community facilities by the Government, parents and citizens associations and local authorities should be legally covered. This is one of the essential provisions of the Bill and is one of the main reasons for reintroduction of the legislation in its reduced form. Joint building schemes are a sensible means of providing costly community facilities using all available financial resources. Local authorities, in particular, have adopted them enthusiastically, and I would hate to see them founder because of legalities. The provision affects every member of this House—indeed every measure in the Bill does—and I believe it demands unanimous support.

Parents and citizens associations

The Bill also legally authorises parents and citizens associations to borrow money and to employ people. They are doing both at the moment and, as with other provisions, the Government used a realistic approach and allowed the practices to continue pending amendment of the Act.

State pre-school centres

State pre-school centres are to be covered by the Act in a formal sense and are to be covered by certain particular provisions as set out in clause 16. The following sections that applied to State schools will also apply to State pre-schools; discontinuance of State schools; use of schools; inspection of schools; instruction to be free; exclusion of pupils; wilful disturbance of school; trespass and transport of pupils.

Compulsory attendance

There is a defect in this provision in that a prosecution for truancy would have to prove in a court that a child had not attended any school on the day of alleged absence instead of just the school he or she normally attends. It is being repaired by requiring a child of the age of compulsory attendance to be enrolled at a school and attend that school. Opportunity is being taken to include mention of exemption from attendance in this section as a clarifying measure.

Traffic by-laws

Clause 28 of the Bill is a repetition of the clause from the previous Bill enabling colleges of advanced education to make by-laws governing traffic on their campuses. This House recently enacted similar legislation in relation to universities. Penalties are increased, as are other penalties in the Act, to relate to changed values. It is appropriate to emphasise here that the Education Act does not confer any powers to the Government relating to traffic outside of school and college grounds. This clause relates only to traffic movements within the colleges of advanced education.

Perceptive members might also notice that clauses 26 and 29 amend certain sections relating to by-laws. These relate to clause 8, which applies the Acts Interpretation Act to by-laws in so far as the tabling and disallowance provisions are concerned. The same applies to regulations in clause 7. It is now drafting practice not to repeat these machinery provisions where they are covered by the Acts Interpretation Act.

Special education

The provisions of the previous Bill relating to special education were among those which caused considerable debate. This debate was more domestic than public, but it has, nevertheless, caused some dissension about the measures. I believe that it is appropriate that I should spend a few minutes outlining the kinds of provisions that are presently made by my department in special education and the very significant changes that have occurred in these provisions in recent years. It is unfortunately true that much of what appears in the media concerning education is about the so-called faults and shortcomings of the system. The good things, in general, are not sufficiently controversial to be newsworthy.

Special education facilities provide for a very wide range of handicapping conditions—the visually handicapped, the hearing handicapped, the physically handicapped such as the cerebral palsied, the spina bifida sufferers and those with muscular atrophy conditions, the mentally handicapped, the speech handicapped, the emotionally disturbed, the learning disabled and the disadvantaged. Some of these handicaps require separate educational provision in free-standing special schools, others can be provided for in the normal school, provided specialist support is available for the general class-room teacher.

Fortunately for the community, the incidence of severe handicapping conditions is not high. This, however, does pose special problems in a State as large and with such population spread as Queensland. Provision for varying degrees of handicap requiring the attention of highly trained specialist teachers in less-populated areas has been made by the use of itinerant visiting teachers and by a unique special education correspondence unit.

In this State there are now 60 State special schools, 62 special education units attached to primary or secondary schools, six special classes for learning disabled pupils, seven special early intervention pre-schools, a migrant education centre and guidance centres in 36 locations throughout the State. This does not include the 321 remedial centres attached to primary schools. All told almost 1 600 teachers and professional officers provide special education services to some 31 000 children with some type of handicapping condition.

In addition, further provision for certain types of handicap such as autism and moderate mental handicap is provided by voluntary agencies such as the Autistic Association and the Endeavour Foundation. The full educational costs met by these agencies are paid by this Government with assistance from the Commonwealth Schools Commission.

A significant and necessary but very expensive service offered to handicapped children is in their transport to special education centres, whether conducted by State or voluntary agencies. In 1982-83 some \$2,476,000 was expended under this heading.

Queensland is generally regarded as leading the way in Australia in its provision for the handicapped. We have pioneered many initiatives that are now adopted in other States. In recent years we have led the way in a balanced program of integration of handicapped children in primary and secondary schools. Our early intervention programs for the visually and hearing handicapped have done much to ease the concerns of parents and to assist children to benefit from the educational programs offered in the schools and classes.

During redrafting of the Bill we had some discussion with concerned persons and we have slightly amended the special education provision to provide for an expression of accountability where State funds are provided to a non-State special education facility. I respect the views of those who do not totally agree with this provision and I can assure them that my officers and I have gone to great lengths to try to meet their requirements and suggestions. We do, however, have to face the realities of availability of resources. All the measures relating to special education are therefore set out in terms which I believe are as far as the Government can go at this stage.

I might add that the definition of handicapped child is based upon a suggestion from my Special Education Advisory Council. Handicapped children's education sometimes begins at a very early age—before the age of compulsory attendance—and continues beyond the age of 15, the official school-leaving age. If parents do not wish their child to receive special education outside the age of compulsory attendance they will not be forced to send their child to school. The definition does, however, permit the education of children outside the years of compulsory attendance.

I would suggest to honourable members that the Bill now before the House could in no way be described as controversial. I am sure honourable members will agree that it comprises measures which are essential to the efficient and even legal functioning of the Government and which affect every member in his or her role as representative of a constituency which would expect that such things as community use of schools, joint development of school/community facilities, compulsory attendance and borrowings by parents and citizens associations should not be hampered by legalities which this House now has the opportunity to correct.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Smith, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—
“That the House do now adjourn.”

Laundering of Hospital Linen

Mr UNDERWOOD (Ipswich West) (1.10 a.m.): On Thursday, 21 July 1983, the Minister for Health made a statement on the Haydn Sargent show that likened the risk of cross infection from infected hospital linen to stories about the risks of catching venereal disease from toilet seats. Judging by this irresponsible statement by the Minister it is obvious that he is ill informed about the serious health risks that are emerging and are being caused by the State Government's headlong rush into ideological madness.

I intend to refer to some of the expert opinion that is available in Australia. In doing so I will quote the Director of Microbiology at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, Dr Robin Pavillard, who said—

“Laundries processing hospital linen must prevent microorganisms spreading from heavily soiled or infectious linen, in the sorting and washing machine loading

areas to other sections of the production line, where they may recontaminate newly washed or finished items. In other words, dirty areas of the laundry must be isolated from clean areas.

Because it is difficult to establish wash conditions capable of inactivating hepatitis B virus reliably in blood stained linen from unidentified virus carriers, it is probably unwise to process hotel, kitchen, restaurant and food industry linen in close proximity to, or in the same machines as, hospital linen."

Obviously the Minister for Health is not concerned about cross-infection risks involving typhoid, herpes and other diseases that could adversely affect the prestigious tourist resorts round Cairns and Nambour when the hospital laundries are closed later this year and infected hospital linen is washed with linen from local hotels, motels and restaurants in Cairns and on the Sunshine Coast.

Recent newspaper reports from the USA stated that four health care workers had contracted the dreaded Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome from indirect contact with AIDS sufferers. The centre for disease control in Atlanta, Georgia, has indicated that these health workers—a nurse, a nurse's aide, an ambulance attendant and a hospital laundry worker—were not in the high-risk categories in that they were not homosexuals, drug addicts, frequent receivers of blood transfusions or Haitians.

In tonight's news, a report on Government hearings in the United States was presented which predicted that there will be some 3 million AIDS sufferers by the year 1988. In the light of this evidence I call on the Minister for Health to inform Parliament how many suspected AIDS cases at the moment are in Queensland public hospitals, which hospitals are involved, and where is the soiled linen from the infectious disease wards of those hospitals currently laundered.

If the Minister for Health persists with his current plans to close up to 25 public hospital laundries, as stated on "Nationwide", he must be prepared to publish regularly a list of private laundries handling infected hospital linen so that the proprietors of kindergartens, children's day care centres, private boarding schools, cafes, restaurants, hotels and motels can be made aware of any potential cross-infection risks. Reports within public hospital laundries indicate that linen returned from some private contractors has contained faeces, blood and vomit and has been returned mixed with linen from hotels and motels and Army linen from defence bases.

I intend to cite some examples to show the lack of sanitary standards in private laundries. They indicate lack of maintenance of public health protection in private laundries because of the failure and inability of the private laundries to do the work properly.

Last year, when the State Government caused an industrial dispute, linen returned from a private laundry operator to the Princess Alexandra Hospital contained blood, faeces and vomit. At the QEII Hospital an internal health department inquiry was carried out into the poor standard of laundry work being returned by Sutnick, the private contractor at that stage. Workers were literally sorting out the reusable wound pads, or the dirty "blacks" from the clean "whites". The current rejection rate for theatre laundry was 30 per cent. Even last week, supposedly clean linen was returned from the private contractor, Sutnick. On it were bloodstains and footprints. A torn Army garment was mixed in with the hospital linen. That indicated that the laundry is mixed.

The Redcliffe Hospital received its hospital linen from the Deluxe drycleaners of Caloundra, and in amongst it was hotel and motel laundry.

The staff at the "Eventide" home at Sandgate have had to sort out sanitary pads returned from the Lowes laundry. They have had to sort out the dirty "blacks" from the clean "whites". It is revolting even to think about it.

The Textile Care and Rental Association—the same organisation that has accused the union movement and the Opposition of scare tactics over the cross-infection issue—has published a pamphlet for distribution in Queensland hotels and motels. It alleges—

"Recent opinions have indicated the strain of incurable venereal disease, Herpes II, may be transmitted by contact on items such as clothing, sheeting and towelling.

Clearly, it isn't worth the risk."

(Time expired.)

"Enterprise Queensland" Campaign

Mr BORBRIDGE (Surfers Paradise) (1.15 a.m.): I bring to the attention of honourable members a copy of a letter that has been given to me by a Gold Coast businessman. It emphasises the importance of the "Enterprise Queensland" campaign, particularly as it affects South East Asia. I am very much aware that the Premier, the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, the Minister for Works and Housing, the Minister for Mines and Energy and other Ministers have been devoting a great deal of time and effort to trying to attract investment from South East Asia and other parts of the world.

Mr Lester: It is the sign of an aggressive and go-ahead Government.

Mr BORBRIDGE: That is right. I am sure that honourable members on both sides of the Chamber are aware that at present there are particular problems in Hong Kong. The lease agreement between the British Government and the People's Republic of China expires in 1997, and it will be subject to renegotiation. The Foreign Investment Review Board, under instructions from the Federal Government, has so far blocked at least one major project in my area on the Gold Coast. Capital, which could be used to create a lot of work throughout Queensland and indeed throughout Australia, is being blocked.

I shall quote directly from a letter from a company that I will not name, but it is a major company in Hong Kong. One of its principals was recently in Australia. The letter states—

"A puzzling pattern emerged from my Australian discussions, where one after another of the agents and developers I talked to mentioned that while Singapore, Malaysian, Indonesian, and even New Guinea Chinese are active to some extent in the Australian property market, Hong Kong Chinese are noticeable in their absence. Moreover several developers and agents had made concerted efforts to market in Hong Kong, and these had been consistently unsuccessful.

Upon my return to Hong Kong, I immediately undertook a series of intensive interviews with a small but carefully selected group of Chinese businessmen. There was nothing random in my sample. I went directly to some of the most influential Chinese in Hong Kong, all of them men known to me personally. They were mainly big property men, but also included an hotelier and a big banker. I asked these men to speak for themselves, and also to speak for Hong Kong Chinese in general, and to answer whether they thought it true that Hong Kong Chinese were not interested in buying Australian property; and if so, why? There was an extraordinary consistency in their answers."

This is the most important part of the letter, and it should be closely examined. It is certainly a signal to this country that it will miss out on many of the incredible investment opportunities that are presently available in countries in South East Asia, and particularly in Hong Kong. The letter continues—

"In summary, given Australia's foreign investment policy and the anticipated Labour tightening of that policy; Australia's current immigration policy; the current state of the Australian economy; and Australia's isolation and often parochial outlook; Hong Kong Chinese investment attention remains strongly focused on North America. Hong Kong Chinese businessmen tend to see Australia as a place where investment is difficult, interest rates are excessively high and likely to rise again, and economic recovery is uncertain for the near future. The position was generally summed up in one or another form of the following question.

"When you can put your money in to the biggest and strongest economy of the world, without any barriers, and when you can remove it overnight if you like, without applying to the government for permission, why would one struggle to make an investment in a stagnant economy, whose government does everything possible to prevent the investment?" "

Those were the words of a rather prominent Hong Kong company when it went back to try to find out why there was not the interest in getting money into Australia that it thought there should be.

That letter indicates the importance of consolidating and building the "Enterprise Queensland" campaign, which is a great initiative of this Government. As well, it indicates that Australia needs to be going further than that at the national level with the Federal

Government, because there are many areas in which this country is going wrong and in which it needs to take positive action to secure the investment that can be so crucial to the future development of this State and country.

Roles of a Member of Parliament

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (1.22 a.m.): As this Parliament goes into the thirteenth day of sitting this year, and for the benefit of the many persons in my electorate of all political persuasions and many members of my party who believe that it is wrong for this Parliament to have sat for only 12 days this year, I wish to place on record what I have said to them and what I have said in the party room: a dozen days in Parliament is not enough; the first sitting day for five months is not enough.

Mr Scott: Then why do you stay on that side?

Mr INNES: The alternative, that of sitting with the honourable member, is even more appalling.

Contrary to public rumour and to the deceptive, rubbishing articles that from time to time calculate our worth in terms of total income over hours spent in Parliament, I and many other members work for 80 or 90 hours a week on parliamentary business, whether the House sits or not.

The role of the general electorate fix-it is part of the role of a member. His primary roles are those of legislator and scrutineer of the Executive and the administration. That is certainly the belief of the majority of electors in my electorate.

Sadly, it is symptomatic of modern, Cabinet-dominated Government that sitting days become fewer. More than a decade ago, a distinguished member of the House of Commons, Quentin Hogg, wrote in his thesis "The Elected Dictatorship" about this trend under the Westminster system. His comments remain true of other Parliaments in Australia today.

To Cabinet Ministers, their functions are important; but they cannot be more important than the institution to which they owe their position. Despite the hushed reverence of their public servants and the extraordinary metamorphosis that takes place when angry constituents who are taken into their presence become deferential and flattering ingrates, they are not the repositories of all wisdom. They need the assistance of the elected members of Parliament to arrive at wisdom.

Today the Premier was reported as expressing grave reservations about the emergence and prevalence of lobbyists. He said that they demean the position of elected members of Parliament. I suggest that the lack of sitting days in a year also demeans the functions of the elected representatives and, indeed, the institution of Parliament.

Small Business

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (1.24 a.m.): I express my concern for small business, which is not getting a go from the Government and Government departments.

Small businesses play a leading part in the community. They provide local employment and they subscribe to the local council by paying rates and charges. As well, the small businessman is called upon to subscribe to many organisations by way of donations and assistance. Small businesses rely for their livelihood entirely on business within their small towns, areas or cities.

Recently a contract was let by the QEGB in Brisbane for the carpeting of approximately 20 houses. The difference between the lowest out-of-town tender and the local tender was \$5.29 per house.

Local small businesses should be allowed a margin to allow them to exist. When the QEGB is questioned in relation to these contracts, particularly who obtained them and how they obtained them, it seems to duck and dive. When I spoke to a member of QEGB I was told that the successful tenderer was a firm by the name of Cut Price Carpets from Currumbin. On making inquiries, I was told that there is no such business at Currumbin.

I was also told that there is no registered company of that name. On speaking again to a member of the QEGB, the name of the successful tenderer was changed from Cut Price Carpets to Carpet Markets of Currumbin. Upon making inquiries I again found that there was no such business. I was also informed by a person in the carpet trade at Tugun that there was no firm on the Gold Coast by the name of Cut Price Carpets or Carpet Markets. I am quite certain that on this occasion the business concerned operates from the back of a truck and that it has no overheads. It would have no overheads because apprentices would not be employed. The businessman would be working long hours. He would not abide by the rules with which other employers must comply. Therefore, he is able to undercut the legitimate business person within the local area.

As QEGB ducked and dived and gave me different names of successful tenderers, I suggested that maybe it could have been QEGB Carpet Layers that won the contract. The businessman said that that may have been correct. I believe that when contracts are being let the small business person should be given a margin over outside contractors. These people are employers within the town. They contribute to the rates and charges imposed by the local authority. They also subscribe to other organisations within the town.

During an election year a Minister may go into a particular electorate and state that job prospects are good in a particular city. The Minister for Employment and Labour Relations visited Gladstone on 28 July. On 29 July it was reported in the Press that he said that there was no recession in Gladstone. Of course, when such statements are made, people from interstate and intrastate flock to that area looking for the job prospects to which the Minister has referred. Unfortunately, they arrive only to find that the pot of gold is not at the end of the rainbow. They must then live in unacceptable conditions. They are forced to live on the banks of creeks or on the beach, and they are forced to sleep in motor cars. When persons arrive in a city without a job and without money or the prospects of a job, a tremendous strain is placed on the resources of charities such as St Vincent de Paul and the Salvation Army.

(Time expired.)

Australian Bicentennial Road Development Program

Mr LESTER (Peak Downs) (1.29 a.m.): Some ALP candidates stand under a sign that says "A Bicentennial Road Project", have their photograph taken, have it published by the Press and say that Mr Hawke gave them the money for the particular project. They then make statements congratulating Mr Hawke and all the other people in Canberra. They are saying that the Federal Government is actually building bridges and roads. I believe that that ideology should be corrected because apparently some people do not realise how the bicentennial road development project operates or how it started.

It is fair to say that the proposition was first floated by the Queensland Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze). In fact, on one of his trips to Emerald he put it to various groups, including the shire council. All thought that it would be a good idea. At the next roads conference in Canberra he put the idea forward to Mr Fraser and his Cabinet, who agreed that there should be a bicentennial roads program. It was further agreed that the program be funded through a petrol levy of 1c a litre for the first year, increasing to 2c a litre from the second year through to 1988.

The projects funded have been on the drawing board for some considerable time. Money from the bicentennial fund is distributed to various districts throughout Australia and added to State money and Commonwealth tax reimbursement funds. The result is that several projects can proceed at once. Each project, however, is approved by the Federal Minister. That is done merely to ensure that he knows what is happening. The Federal Government actually is the administrator of the money contributed by each and every motorist through the fuel levy.

The Labor Party should not play politics with such a scheme and mislead the public by claiming that Mr Hawke is responsible. Of course, I quickly corrected any misrepresentation in my area of Central Queensland. People there understand the truth of the matter. However, it is very sad that members of the ALP should try to deceive the public. I cannot understand the way they are acting, misrepresenting the truth.

A few moments ago the member for Port Curtis referred to small business. He spoke about what this Government and everybody else had to do to help small business.

Mr Borbidge: In New South Wales now some small businesses have to apply to the Government if they wish to readjust their staffing levels.

Mr LESTER: That is so. The ACTU has applications for variations to various awards in Melbourne at the moment. Those variations will have the effect that if a businessman, through no fault of his own, has to put someone off, he will have to give three months' notice. If he cannot do so, he must pay the money in lieu. Then he must give him another four weeks' pay and comply with all sorts of other conditions that will result in several hundreds of dollars more being paid to the person being retrenched. As well, the former employer has to pay for a retraining program and also for removal expenses. The Labor Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia are backing such provisions, as is the Labor Opposition in Queensland.

Townsville, "Sin City" of the North

Dr SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (1.34 a.m.): In 30 years I have seen many changes take place in Townsville. I witnessed great progress in the city while the Townsville Citizens Association and the Association for Civil Development controlled the council. However, since the ALP has taken control, the city has changed from the sun city of the North to the sin city of the North. It has become a crime centre. I often wonder how it has happened, but then I consider the process that has occurred. First, there is a sex shop, where books on sex are sold to children, even though their sale is supposedly confined to anyone over the age of 18. Those books were deliberately sold to the children and, as a result, their minds are polluted.

Then an escort agency, which is prostitution by another name, was established. Last Friday's "Townsville Bulletin" contained 31 advertisements for escort agencies, each of which had its own phone number. I have found it difficult to obtain a telephone connection for a pensioner and to have public telephones put in streets, so I wonder just how those people have telephones connected so quickly.

The next thing is that an abortion clinic was set up without any constraints of town planning or restrictions placed on it by the city's health authorities. It operates completely openly and free of the constraints of the law. When one considers such clinics, one wonders why the council did not stop it. However, the answer to that is that Townsville has an ALP council and part of the Labor Party's platform is abortion on demand. If the Labor Party ever assumes control of this State, sections 224, 225 and 226 of the Criminal Code will be repealed, which will allow for abortion on demand in this State.

The most recent social blot on Townsville is the establishment of a licensed restaurant called Sigi's. Blatantly crude sexual exhibitions are given at that restaurant. Ian Miller recently reported in "The Courier-Mail" that he went to that restaurant at lunch-time to have a cold beer. By the time he left that establishment, he had had more than a lunch. In that article he said that the performers squirted plastic containers of baby oil over each other and then performed what can only be described as an explicit routine. They used bananas for stimulation, and the audience helped rub them down and wash them in a bathtub. All that occurred on licensed premises, condoned by the health department of the city council, the city council and the Licensing Commission. What is more, it is obviously condoned by the police.

I suggest that the Government exert pressure on the police, the Licensing Commission and the health department of the Townsville City Council do their job and clean up the filth that is destroying the community and the children of Townsville. The city elders are setting a bad example by their inactivity.

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 1.37 a.m. (Wednesday).