

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 1983

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. H. Warner, Toowoomba South) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

ASSENT TO BILL**Appropriation Bill (No. 2)**

Mr SPEAKER: I have to report that on 24 November 1983 I presented to His Excellency the Governor Appropriation Bill 1983-1984 (No. 2) for the Royal Assent and that His Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe his assent thereto in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

- Department of Transport for the year ended 30 June 1983
- Commissioner for Railways for the year ended 30 June 1983
- Health and Medical Services for the year ended 30 June 1983
- Queensland Radium Institute for the year ended 30 June 1983
- Operations of the Sub-Departments of the Department of Health for the year ended 30 June 1983
- Prince Charles Hospital Development Centre Trust for the year ended 30 June 1983
- Salaries and Allowances Tribunal constituted pursuant to the Judges Salaries and Pensions Act 1967-1980.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Proclamations under—

- Forestry Act 1959-1982
- Ambulance Services Act Amendment Act 1983
- Queensland Marine Act 1958-1979
- Diseases in Plants Act 1929-1972
- Fisheries Act Amendment Act 1982
- Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act 1982
- Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act Amendment Act 1983
- Queensland Grain Handling Act 1983
- Sugar Experiment Stations Act 1900-1983

Orders in Council under—

- State Transport Act 1960-1981
- City of Brisbane Act 1924-1982 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982
- City of Brisbane Town Planning Act 1964-1983
- City of Brisbane Act 1924-1982
- Racing and Betting Act 1980-1983
- Forestry Act 1959-1982
- Diseases in Timber Act 1975
- Police Act 1937-1980
- Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act 1944-1981
- Barrier Fences Act 1954-1978
- Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act 1958-1979 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982
- River Improvement Trust Act 1940-1983 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982
- Water Act 1926-1983 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982
- Water Act 1926-1983
- Irrigation Act 1922-1983 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982
- Harbours Act 1955-1982 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982
- Harbours Act 1955-1982
- Harbours Act 1955-1983
- Harbours Act 1955-1982 and the Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement Act 1968

Queensland Marine Act 1958–1979
 Health Act 1937–1982
 Ambulance Services Act 1967–1983
 Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act 1959–1981
 Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act 1959–1981 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982
 Banana Industry Protection Act 1929–1937
 City of Brisbane Market Act 1960–1982 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982
 Diseases in Plants Act 1929–1972
 Fisheries Act 1976–1982
 Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act 1982–1983
 Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act 1982–1983 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982
 Milk Supply Act 1977–1983
 Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act 1923–1981
 Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926–1983
 Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926–1983 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982
 Soil Conservation Act 1965–1980 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982
 Stock Act 1915–1981
 Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936–1973
 Wheat Pool Act 1920–1983 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982

Regulations under—

Agricultural Standards Act 1952–1981
 Fisheries Act 1976–1982
 Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act 1982–1983
 Fruit Marketing Organisation Act 1923–1980
 Meat Industry Act 1965–1983
 Poultry Industry Act 1946–1979
 Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926–1983
 Queensland Grain Handling Act 1983
 Stock Act 1915–1981
 Land Act 1962–1983
 Forestry Act 1959–1982
 Sawmills Licensing Act 1936–1979
 Sewerage and Water Supply Act 1949–1982
 Traffic Act 1949–1982
 State Transport Act 1960–1981
 Motor Vehicle Driving Instruction School Act 1969
 Motor Vehicles Control Act 1975
 Tow-truck Act 1973
 Ambulance Services Act 1967–1983
 Health Act 1937–1982
 Food Act 1981
 Hospitals Act 1936–1983
 Physiotherapists Act 1964–1981
 Queensland Marine Act 1958–1979

By-laws under—

City of Brisbane Market Act 1960–1982
 Harbours Act 1955–1982 and the Cairns Airport Act 1981
 Harbours Act 1955–1982
 Harbours Act 1955–1982 and the Port of Brisbane Authority Act 1976–1982
 Medical Act 1939–1981
 Psychologists Act 1977
 Railways Act 1914–1982
 Ordinances under the City of Brisbane Act 1924–1982
 Report and Audit Statements of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee for the year ended 30 June 1983

Report, Financial Statement and Balance Sheet of the Queensland Fish Management Authority for the period 1 December 1982 to 30 June 1983
Statement of Receipts and Payments of the Metropolitan Transit Authority for the year ended 30 June 1983

Reports—

Queensland Milk Board for the year ended 30 June 1983
Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board of Queensland for the year ended 31 December 1982
Timber Research and Development Advisory Council of North Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1983
Timber Research and Development Advisory Council of South and Central Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1983
Queensland Meat Industry Organization and Marketing Authority for the year ended 30 June 1982
Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations for the year ended 30 June 1983.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Delegation of Authority: Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.1 a.m.), by leave: 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 Local Government, Main Roads and Racing by any Act, rule, practice or ordinance on and from 25 November 1983, and until the return to Queensland of the Honourable Russell James Hinze, MLA.

I lay upon the table of the House a copy of the Queensland Government Gazette of 24 November 1983 notifying this arrangement.

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

Aboriginal Land Rights

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police) (11.13 a.m.), by leave: The demand for freehold land rights for Aboriginal people is set to divide this nation. All we hear today is this same message from the Aboriginal stirrers, who wish to use the Aboriginal cause for their own selfish purposes, and a few other people who, I believe, could be honestly misguided.

My experience as Minister for Lands is that the simple fact of life is that that catchcry is being blatantly used to establish a core of extremely powerful land-owners in Canberra—absentee land-owners and an aboriginal elite. This group, headed by Aboriginal Development Commission chairman, Charles Perkins, talks of the rights of the Aboriginal people to hold title to their own land while setting up, at their expense, the biggest single landholding in Australia's history. Do the Aboriginal people realise that, under the Charles Perkins scheme, they individually are no closer to owning freehold title to lands being bought by his ADC than they have ever been?

Tens of millions of dollars of tax-payers' money is being used to support this elite organisation, which history will show will hold onto the land titles and virtually subscript Aboriginal people as workers. The Aboriginal Development Commission, in its published policy, states—

“Owning land, caring for it, managing it and having the resources to develop it, is crucial to the development of aboriginal communities.”

Despite those published policy idealisms, it is interesting to note how the land is dealt with once it is acquired by the ADC. Title, in fact, remains with the commission and it is not transferred to any other Aboriginal individual or group.

Occupational rights only are given. Because of this, the whole cosmetic overlay dissolves. Land is not, in fact, given to the Aboriginal people, but is vested in a

Commonwealth statutory authority—one of our dreaded quangos, according to State Labor politicians, which is socialism at its worst. Yet federally Labor is promoting—and pouring tens of millions of dollars of taxpayers money into—just such a body.

A recent ADC document “The Land—The People”, came closest to revealing the true picture. It attempts to justify the retention of land titles, but talks of “dilemmas” which it faced—the lack of suitable statutory or corporate bodies to which land may be transferred, and the lack of safeguards through security of tenure which will protect these organisations from a recurrence of dispossession. The Aboriginal Development Commission can transfer title to land which it has acquired only to legally recognised entities.

Here in Queensland the Government is giving Aboriginal people a deed of grant in trust—virtually freeholding, but ensuring that no one, at any time, can sell it from under the feet of communities. We are now considering a proposal to allow individual Aborigines to own “rights” to their own household allotments within the communities, so they can be legally handed down from generation to generation and be a place for families to take root, with the provision that it cannot be sold.

There is nothing to stop individual Aborigines from buying land under the same conditions as white Queenslanders, even here in Brisbane. Yet here now we have the typical stirrer-orchestrated cry for Aboriginal land rights over Musgrave Park in the centre of Brisbane, supposedly, I take it, so that the succession of unfortunate derelicts can lie down in the sun, rain, heat and cold and continue to “enjoy” the distinction of dying from alcohol poisoning, disease, drugs or just plain exposure to the weather.

According to a report yesterday (24 November 1983) a Mr Pat Murdock, a field officer with the Aboriginal Medical Service, is quoted as saying that “thousands of our people have died on that grass (Musgrave Park)—32 in the last year” Land rights will not solve that.

Surely in the name of humanity, people swelling the ranks of those picking up the land rights catch-cry should turn their attention, as this Government is doing, to the real problem—that of providing suitable housing and medical attention, as available in a hostel-type environment.

Dying is the only real certainty in this life. By their own actions and irrational behaviour these people, supported by a misunderstanding, misguided, but sympathetic, section of the community, are speeding up the dying process in large cities.

Aborigines and Islanders' Rights

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders—Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (11.20 a.m.), by leave: Aborigines and Islanders in Queensland have all of the rights of each and every Queenslanders in this State. I refer specifically to a statement by Mr Peter Bailey of the Australian Human Rights Commission, which appeared in yesterday morning's press and stated that discrimination against Aborigines “in all the ordinary areas of life” should be outlawed. How can something that does not exist be outlawed?

Aborigines in this State are entitled to go into any shop, hotel or other public place and make whatever purchases they wish, provided they have the money. That is contrary to the statements made by Mr Bailey. They have full capacity to make land transactions of any sort. A large percentage of them already own leasehold and freehold land in Queensland. No Aborigine or Islander is disadvantaged in buying or selling land because of his race.

The Federal Government's land rights debate is another question altogether. The Federal Government is pursuing inalienable freehold title for Aborigines. The term is self-contradictory, because freehold title, by its very definition, is alienable. However, Mr Holding has defined the Federal Government's policy as establishing “freehold title which would be vested for and on behalf of Aboriginal communities and which, by its nature, cannot be sold or disposed of”. That is very misleading. If the land is not alienable and unable to be dealt with in the commercial market, we are talking about something quite different from freehold title.

As everyone in this Parliament should be aware, services and facilities provided by the Queensland Government are allocated on a needs basis. I do not think there can be any argument against that, unless the Government built houses and provided health

services where they were not needed. I am unable to determine any area of ordinary life that is denied to Aborigines and Islanders who are a part of the wider Queensland community.

In conclusion, I quote the head of the Human Rights Commission for Australia, Commissioner Jerome Long—Mr Al Grassby's successor—to whose report Mr Bailey attributed his extraordinary remarks. In answer to my question on the telephone as to whether Queensland has been doing the wrong thing in these areas, he said—

“No. The 19 out of 21 arbitrated cases were an indication of where our people are doing their field work rather than where problems exist.”

Later, he said—

“I don't believe that the problems are any worse in Queensland than in any other State.”

And in this important area he said—

“There are relatively good relations with police in Queensland with Aborigines.”

He complained of shortcomings in the Government's deed of grant legislation and opposed its opposition to transferring land to Aborigines. When I explained to him that the new legislation will require an Act of Parliament to excise any deed of grant areas, and that the Government's objection in the Koowarta case was to the ownership of vast areas of this State by the Federal Government and its instrumentalities—and that point was very ably put by the Minister for Lands—and not to the fact that Aborigines would be the so-called beneficiaries of this take-over, he then said that officially and unofficially he would have no criticism to make of the Queensland Government.

It is obvious that Mr Bailey and his Human Rights Commission have gone off half-cocked. I call on him to apologise to this House and to the people of Queensland.

Allegations by Member for Chatsworth; Refutation by Minister for Works and Housing

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing) (11.23 a.m.), by leave: As usual the honourable member for Chatsworth has displayed his ignorance and played to the press. In doing so, he has implied misappropriation of tax-payer's funds and cast a doubt on my integrity and that of the Commissioner of Housing. To assist the honourable member to understand the position, I will not confuse him further with a detailed explanation on Government accounts, but will confine myself to the two major issues he has raised.

Before doing so, I ask the honourable member, “Did the Auditor-General qualify the Queensland Housing Commission's accounts for the year? Did he mention misappropriation?” He did not! The honourable member's inferences are also an attack on the integrity of the Auditor-General, who is directly responsible to this Parliament.

The appropriation amount of \$277m included \$100m for home-ownership finance during 1982-83. It was specifically provided for commercial lending to supplement shortage of funds at that time available through private lenders and to assist a depressed building industry.

As the honourable member should know, the need to supplement private lenders ceased and there was only a small demand for finance under the commercial scheme. The scheme, however, remains available in a support role and to assist applicants unable to obtain finance from private lenders who do not qualify for finance under the commission's interest subsidy home-ownership scheme. The honourable member has been told this many times in this House and still fails to understand.

Simply expressed, the appropriation lapsed because it was specifically allocated for commercial home finance and there was insufficient demand. It was, of course, as the honourable member is well aware, to be borrowed at building society rates of interest for on-lending.

I come now to the \$15.9m allocated by the Commonwealth from wage-pause funds for welfare rental housing. The funds were provided for a calendar year to 31 December 1983, not for the financial year ended 30 June 1983. For this reason, funds were not fully advanced from the Commonwealth until October 1983.

Returns required by the Commonwealth show that, at 31 October 1983, the commission had expended \$15.9 million—the amount allocated—on 250 rental houses. At 30 June

1983, the return showed that \$11.9m had been received and spent from the Commonwealth. This was the amount included in the commission's Appropriation Account.

Queensland completed spending the wages-pause allocation well before all other States except Western Australia. If the honourable member wishes, I will supply a list of rental houses provided from these funds and their locations.

The other matters raised by the honourable member are mechanical. They are normal and are a usual consequence that occurs in all departmental Estimates. As I have already indicated, I do not intend to explain Government accounting to the honourable member.

Finally, I demand that the honourable member apologise to this House and withdraw his insinuations of misappropriation concerning my Ministry, the Commissioner of Housing and his staff and, I suggest, the Auditor-General.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston): I seek leave to move a motion without notice censuring Ministers Lane and Austin and taking remedial steps to ensure that their contemptible action cannot be repeated.

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

Ayes, 30

Campbell	Kruger	Vaughan
Casey	Mackenroth	Veivers
Comben	McElligott	Warburton
D'Arcy	McLean	Warner, A. M.
Davis	Milliner	Wright
De Lacy	Prest	Yewdale
Eaton	Price	
Fouras	Scott	<i>Tellers:</i>
Gibbs, R. J.	Shaw	Burns
Goss	Smith	Hooper
Hamill	Underwood	

Noes, 47

Ahern	Hartwig	Munz
Alison	Harvey	Newton
Austin	Henderson	Powell
Bailey	Innes	Randell
Bjelke-Petersen	Jennings	Row
Booth	Katter	Simpson
Borbidge	Kaus	Stephan
Cahill	Knox	Stoneman
Chapman	Lane	Tenni
Cooper	Lee	Turner
Elliott	Lester	Wharton
FitzGerald	Lickiss	
Gibbs, I. J.	Lingard	<i>Tellers:</i>
Glasson	Littleproud	McPhie
Goleby	McKechnie	Neal
Gunn	Menzel	
Harper	Miller	

Resolved in the negative.

FEES PAID BY CROWN TO PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVERTISING AGENCIES

Order for Return

Mr NEAL (Balonne): I move—

“That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing all payments made by the Government to public relations agencies or consultants and advertising agencies or consultants during the 1982-83 financial year, stating the names of the recipients and the amounts received separately.”

Motion agreed to.

USE OF OFFICIAL AEROPLANE

Order for Return

Mr KAUS (Mansfield): I move—

“That there be laid upon the table of the House a return in relation to the operation of the official aeroplane during the year 1 July 1982 to 30 June 1983, showing in detail (a) total flying time, (b) total number of flights, (c) total number of passengers and (d) names of Ministers by whom the aeroplane was used.”

Motion agreed to.

FEES PAID BY CROWN TO BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS

Order for Return

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham): I move—

“That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing all payments made by the Government to barristers and solicitors during the 1982-83 financial year, stating the names of the recipients and the amounts received separately.”

Motion agreed to.

OVERTIME PAID IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Order for Return

Mr SIMPSON (Cooroora): I move—

“That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing the amount of overtime paid in each Government department (all funds) in 1982-83.”

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice by members were answered as follows—

1. Government Advertising Costs

Mr Wright asked the Premier and Treasurer—

With reference to media advertising by Government Ministers and departments for the period from 22 August to 22 October—

(1) What was the total amount spent by all State Government departments on media advertising through (a) radio, (b) television and (c) newspapers?

(2) What were the separate amounts spent by each Government department on media advertising through (a) radio, (b) television and (c) newspapers?

(3) Do these amounts cover production as well as placement costs for such advertisements?

(4) If not, what are the total amounts and the separate amounts for production costs for advertising in the categories referred to above?

Answer—

(1 to 4) Media advertising by Government Ministers does not come within the responsibility of the Premier's Department or the Treasury. Finance for such projects is allocated from within normal departmental budgets and as such is the responsibility of the individual Minister concerned. Accordingly, the honourable member should address his inquiry to the individual Ministers responsible for the departments to which he refers.

Advertising of this nature is a legitimate Government activity to inform the public of the services available and the policies and activities of the Government generally. Most of the advertising referred to by the Leader of the Opposition was planned or commissioned by the previous Liberal Ministers responsible for those portfolios. However, I can assure him that the expenditure involved is only a minute fraction of the amount now being allocated from public funds to promote the new Federal

Labor Government in Canberra. For example, its misleading advertising on the so-called benefits of Medicare is reported to be costing more than \$3m and a similar amount is being expended in a campaign telling people they should vote.

In addition, the cost of holding the proposed referendum next year, which will be defeated, will be \$21m. In that referendum we will be suggesting to the people that they vote "No, No, No, No" in every instance. That \$21m, I understand, does not include the massive amount of money that will be expended from public funds to put the "Yes" case for the Federal Government. That is additional. I suggest that the honourable member's time would be better spent asking his colleagues in Canberra to justify those amounts instead of denigrating the efforts of this Government to assist the people of Queensland in their use and knowledge of Government services.

2. Jackson-Moonie Pipeline

Mr Wright asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

With reference to a current affairs television program on Toowoomba commercial television on 18 November when claims were made relating to the Jackson to Moonie pipeline—

(1) Is he aware of claims made by the Red Ru Company on the program that a letter dated Monday, 14 February 1983, containing important information, was forwarded to the Government by hand?

(2) Is he aware that the managing director of Red Ru, Mr Nicholas, has claimed that the information contained in this letter was not made known to the Cabinet meeting the following day, 15 February, and, as a result, Cabinet rescinded the decision to invite Red Ru to apply for the licence?

(3) Will he comment on the claims made by Mr Nicholas and indicate whether the letter in question was made available to Ministers who attended the Cabinet meeting on 15 February?

Answer—

(1) I am aware that such a claim has been made.

(2) I am aware that Mr Nicholas had made such a claim.

(3) Red Ru Pipeline Construction Co. Pty Ltd was given adequate opportunity to meet the Government's conditions precedent to the granting of a pipeline licence. The invitation to Red Ru in November 1982 was rescinded in February 1983 when the company failed to meet those conditions.

3. Radar Device Records

Mr Shaw asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police—

(1) What records are required to be kept by police personnel operating radar traps?

(2) Are log books kept detailing times, locations, descriptions of vehicles and speeds recorded?

(3) Does the equipment used compile a permanent record or store information which can be retrieved and permanently recorded at the end of the day?

(4) What procedures are set down to ensure that there is no chance of error as to (a) ensuring that the speed recorded is attributed to the correct vehicle and (b) ensuring that no error occurs in transmitting information from the machine operator to other police officers?

Answer—

(1) The radar operator keeps a record of the radar set number, location, time, description of vehicle, the number of persons in the vehicle (if possible), the speed and the proximity of other vehicles to the offending vehicle. The stopper keeps all particulars on the face of the traffic offence notice. The office copy of the traffic offence notice contains particulars of the driver, built-up areas or signs controlling speed, road and weather conditions and any conversation with the offender.

(2) A record is kept by the operator. To ensure correctness, he and the stopper, on their return to the office, compare details taken by the operator with those on the traffic offence notice.

(3) No.

(4) (a) Once having observed the offending vehicle, the operator calls to the stopper on two-way radio and follows the course of travel of the vehicle until it is intercepted by the stopper. He then confirms with the stopper that the correct vehicle is intercepted.

(b) Two-way radio contact when radar, other than a speed gun, is used. With speed-gun operation, the stopper and operator work together at the location.

An important part of a police officer's radar training is to ensure that the correct speed is nominated and the correct vehicle is intercepted.

4. Railway Fare Concessions

Mr Kaus asked the Minister for Transport—

What is the extent of fare concessions given to various classes of persons in Queensland by Queensland Railways and, in particular, what concessions are extended to war widow pensioners?

Answer—

The extent of travel concessions granted by the Queensland Railways for travel in Queensland is very extensive. I table, for the information of honourable members, details of such concessions.

It will be noted from the schedules that Queensland war widow pensioners are presently entitled to two intrastate free economy return trips to any rail destination in Queensland per annum, and that the eligibility for such concession is determined by the Department of Welfare Services. The extension of concessions for travel in the suburban area has not been extended to war widow pensioners as yet, owing to the difficulty of readily establishing their entitlement.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the document on the table.

5. Gateway Bridge Access Roads

Mr Vaughan asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

As the Gateway Bridge is scheduled for completion in 1985 and with reference to the article on page 2 of "The Courier-Mail" dated 6 October 1983, headed "\$20m roadworks scheme"—

(1) What is the route of the major northern road proposed to join Sandgate Road near Nudgee referred to by Mr Ian Mathers, Main Roads Department Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Division?

(2) When is it proposed to commence construction of this road and when is construction scheduled to be completed?

(3) Have plans to widen Toombul Road from Sandgate Road through to Nudgee Road and to construct an overbridge over the Sandgate railway line at Northgate been finalised?

(4) If so, what is planned for Toombul Road, when is construction scheduled to start and what is the planned completion date?

(5) Is it still not planned to widen Sandgate Road from the overbridge at Virginia through to the Brighton bypass at Deagon?

(6) If not, what plans are in hand to upgrade Sandgate Road to cater for the increased traffic it will carry as a result of the completion of the Gateway Bridge?

(7) When is construction of the road linking Nudgee Road with Sandgate Road at Toombul scheduled to be commenced and when is this road scheduled to be completed?

(8) Have plans to connect this road through to Rose Street, Eagle Junction, and across to Gympie Road been scrapped?

(9) If so, as this road must increase traffic on Sandgate Road through the Nundah shopping centre, are there any plans in hand to improve traffic flow through the Nundah shopping centre and, if so, what are those plans?

(10) What other plans are included in the Main Roads Department five-year planning program referred to by Mr Mathers in "The Courier-Mail" article of 6 October to improve traffic flow on the north-side of Brisbane?

Answer—

Owing to the limited time available to research the matters raised by the honourable member, I am unable to answer his question today. However, he may rest assured that I will have the various matters raised, researched and investigated and will provide full details in letter form as soon as practicable.

6. Mining Lease Application 893

Mr Vaughan asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

(1) Has mining lease application 893, lodged by Minatome Australia Pty Ltd, now called Total Mining Australia Pty Ltd, been granted?

(2) If not, is it intended to grant that application and, if so, when?

(3) If the application has been granted, on what grounds did he decide to override the recommendation of the Charters Towers mining warden handed down on 27 April 1981?

(4) Since the environmental impact statement produced by the applicant company was not released until Sunday, 13 November 1983, and since the company indicated that the public had until 23 December to ask questions about the statement and lodge objections, why did he not at least defer the granting of the application until after that date?

(5) In view of the findings of the Wardens Court in April 1981, why was the matter not referred back to the court for further consideration and public scrutiny?

(6) Notwithstanding the environmental impact statement prepared and released recently by Total Mining Australia Pty Ltd, in view of the sensitive nature of the Ben Lomond area and the views expressed by the Charters Towers mining warden, has any consideration been given to locating the treatment plant away from the Ben Lomond area to avoid the possibility of contamination of the Burdekin River system?

(7) If so, what was the result?

(8) If not, will he undertake such an investigation and, if he will not, what is the reason?

Answer—

(1 & 2) Yes, the mining lease has been granted.

(3) The decision to grant the lease was based on a study of the additional environmental information supplied by the company.

As I indicated in my answer to the honourable member for Chatsworth in October 1981, the warden did not recommend the rejection of the application in toto. He indicated that he was left in doubt on several matters and this precluded his recommending the grant insofar as it related to those matters.

After discussion with the company and after studying the additional information, Mines Department officers are satisfied that engineering, metallurgical, geological and hydrogeological aspects of the proposed mining and milling operations will ensure a safe operation.

(4) The environmental impact statement released by the company on 13 November 1983 was prepared by it for the Commonwealth's purposes, and consisted of a compilation of all the information which had previously been supplied to my department as referred to in (3).

(5) There is no provision in the Mining Act whereby this matter could be referred back to the Wardens Court.

(6 to 8) The location of the treatment plant is a matter for the company, bearing in mind that it has satisfied the Government that the proposed location will not result in the contamination of the Burdekin River system.

7. Nile Perch

Mr Simpson asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

- (1) What progress has been made to introduce Nile perch to Queensland?
- (2) What introductory tests are to be completed?
- (3) When will these requirements be completed?
- (4) What benefits will accrue to Queensland and Australia with the introduction of this excellent sporting and eating fish?
- (5) Is this fish closely related to our barramundi?
- (6) Will this fish live and grow in ponded waters, thus bringing good prospects of improved amateur fishing and tourism?

Answer—

(1) Stage 1 of the preparatory works, comprising construction of ponds, provision of water supply to ponds, control of water discharge and the ducting thereof to proposed treatment area, has been completed. A modular laboratory has been erected on site, and contracts for most of the water treatment and security measures comprising stage 2 of the preparatory works have been let.

Some considerable difficulty has been experienced in obtaining co-operation for the initial consignment of fish from Egypt, which was the original choice as a source of supply. My department is currently exploring alternative sources in other African countries.

(2) Introductory tests will include examination of the possible threat of introduction of fish diseases and parasites not currently occurring in Australia, of the temperature tolerances of Nile perch to ensure that there is no danger of its spread to the Murray-Darling system, and of its interaction with fish populations native to the waters in which it is intended to be introduced.

(3) The evaluation studies are expected to take approximately five years, following which the results will be submitted to the Australian Fisheries Council for a decision on whether the fish can be released into the wild.

(4) Tropical Australia lacks any significant edible sporting fish suitable for stocking the growing number of large fresh-water impoundments on a self-sustaining basis. Nile perch will fill this gap.

(5) The Nile perch is a very close relative of our native barramundi, but the latter will not breed in fresh-water impoundments.

(6) Yes.

8. Wages Pause Scheme

Mr Simpson asked the Premier and Treasurer—

- (1) What works have been completed in Queensland under the wages pause scheme?
- (2) What schemes are still in progress?

- (3) What programs are still to be commenced?
- (4) When is the wages pause scheme expected to be completed?
- (5) How many jobs have been created?
- (6) How much money has been expended so far?
- (7) How much money will be expended at the conclusion of the scheme?

Answer—

(1 to 7) The total wages pause program was \$167.8m spread over a 12-month period. It was funded by—

	\$
Queensland Government ..	110m
Commonwealth Government ..	47.8m
Local authorities	10m

Of the total funds \$95.8m or 68 per cent has been spent in the first eight months of the program, which included the early gearing-up period.

All funds are fully committed and will be fully expended by early in 1984 with perhaps a few projects tapering out to finish towards June.

It is estimated that these funds have provided directly some 6 000 man-years of work and perhaps 25 000 man-years of work all told, including the multiplier effect.

9. Housing Commission Home Purchase Scheme

Mr Mackenroth asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

With reference to the Queensland Housing Commission home purchase scheme for 1982-83—

(1) How many loans, and for what value, were advanced from (a) the original scheme which operated until 1 August 1982, (b) the interest subsidy scheme and (c) the commercial scheme?

(2) What is the current interest rate for each of these schemes?

(3) For loans advanced under the interest subsidy scheme: (a) how many of these loans required subsidy, (b) what was the total amount of this subsidy for the period 1 August 1982 to 30 June 1983 and (c) excluding administration costs, what was the profit made from this scheme for the same period?

(4) How many loans were advanced under the interest subsidy scheme for the period 1 July 1983 to 31 October 1983?

(5) What was the value of these loans?

(6) How many applicants are currently waiting for loans under the interest subsidy scheme?

Answer—

Owing to the limited time available to research the matters raised by the honourable member, I am unable to answer his question today. However, he may be assured that I will have the various matters he raised researched and investigated and provide full details in letter form as soon as practicable.

10. Builders Registration Board

Mr Mackenroth asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

With reference to appendix 3 of the Builders Registration Board of Queensland's Annual Report for 1981-82—

(1) To whom were fees of \$141,404 paid from the general fund and for what purpose?

(2) What travel was undertaken by members of the board or staff with payment coming from the general fund, giving details of which members of the board or staff undertook each trip and the value of each trip?

(3) What service is provided to the board by Electronic Data Processing Pty Ltd and what is the break-down of the payment of \$59,619 from the insurance fund?

(4) To whom were fees of \$24,291 paid from the insurance fund and for what purpose?

(5) What travel was undertaken by members of the board or staff with payment coming from the insurance fund, giving details of which member of the board or staff undertook each trip and the value of each trip?

(6) What service is provided to the board by Electronic Data Processing Pty Ltd and what is the break-down of the payment of \$59,619 from the insurance fund?

Answer—

(1 to 6) The Builders Registration Board is duly constituted to administer the Builders Registration Board Act under my control and is required to submit an annual report which I present to Parliament.

Details of expenditure which represent the justifiable costs in operating the board are submitted in an accountable manner in this report after having been certified by the Auditor-General's Department, and the honourable member should be fully aware of this procedure.

It is not considered necessary to expand on the tabled information to satisfy the whims of the honourable member, who appears to have set himself up a self-appointed public accounts committee.

I have the utmost confidence in the chairman, members and registrar of the Builders Registration Board and the manner in which they conduct their activities.

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise to a point of order. The Premier stated that the 82 members of Parliament are themselves auditors and able to look at the accounts of Government departments. If the information in the annual reports—

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

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: Mr Speaker, it is about time that honourable members showed you the respect to which you are entitled, and it is about time that action was taken to make sure that irresponsible members do respect the Chair, and I do not mind who knows that.

11. Aboriginal Ownership of Land

Mr Stephan asked the Premier and Treasurer—

With reference to a statement in "The Sunday Mail" of 20 November in which it was stated that the Federal Government is endeavouring to aggregate Aboriginal land in Queensland and the fact that the Aboriginal Development Commission now owns or has laid claim to 47 per cent of the Northern Territory—

(1) How much Queensland land is presently under the control of Aboriginal departments, Federal and State?

(2) How much Queensland land has been bought recently or is being negotiated by the Aboriginal Development Commission?

(3) What effect will this policy of a separate State within a State have on development, disease control or defence in an emergency situation?

Answer—

To enable a detailed answer to be prepared, I ask the honourable member to put the question on notice for the next sitting day, when I will give him a really good answer to this very important question.

Mr Stephan: I do so accordingly.

12. Gold Coast-North Queensland Air Service

Mr Borbidge asked the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts—

With reference to a feasibility study by the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation into a direct air service between the Gold Coast and North Queensland—

(1) Would such a service considerably assist the development of the tourist industry in both regions, particularly taking into account the decision of Qantas to operate into the redeveloped Cairns Airport as well as the development of the Gold Coast casino?

(2) When is the feasibility study expected to be completed?

Answer—

(1) There is no doubt that the opening of Cairns as an international point of entry for air travellers and that the completion of the Gold Coast casino project will act as catalysts to accelerate the development of tourism in Queensland and to increase the demand for a direct air service between the Gold Coast and North Queensland.

(2) The feasibility study to which the honourable member refers is only partly completed and it would be impossible for me to make any positive statement or comment until it has been totally completed and subsequently considered. It is expected that the study should be available for consideration shortly before Christmas.

I commend the honourable member for the interest that he continues to display in regard to the tourist industry. The constituents of his Surfers Paradise electorate recognised that fact on 22 October last.

I am also pleased to have the honourable member as a member of my ministerial committee and I will be seeking his advice on a wide range of issues.

13. Police Highway Patrol

Mr Yewdale asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police—

With reference to the Police Highway Patrol and to his statement which implied that new vehicles were being obtained to replace present ones being used on the highway—

Have the replacement vehicles been obtained, how many are there and what is the general description of such replacements?

Answer—

Since the introduction of highway patrols, all highway patrol vehicles attached to the Department of Police, have been replaced. The replacement vehicles purchased have been yellow V8 Commodore sedans, with the exception of five 6-cylinder yellow Falcon sedans.

Four of the Falcon sedans are allocated to Brisbane, with the remaining vehicle being allocated to Ayr.

14. Police Firearms

Mr Yewdale asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police—

With reference to his statement in "The Morning Bulletin" of 29 March relating to shortages of firearms in the Police Department, following which the Queensland Police Union president, Senior Sergeant Chant, called for more weapons to protect North Queensland police—

(1) How long has this shortage existed?

(2) Has he ascertained how many members of the police force purchased their own weapons to defend themselves and, if not, what is the reason?

(3) Will he reimburse officers who purchase their own weapons?

(4) What is the present position concerning arms requirements for police officers throughout the State?

Answer—

(1 to 4) I am not aware of the number of police who have purchased rifles, and the Police Department does not propose to reimburse such officers.

One hundred and eighty Ruger stainless-steel Mini-14 .223 calibre rifles have been issued to police districts and approved stations throughout Queensland, and a number are still on hand for issue.

Since April 1983, issues have been made to Mareeba, Cairns, Townsville and Innisfail.

15. Demountable Building, Slacks Creek State School

Mr D'Arcy asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

With reference to the accident in a demountable school building at Slacks Creek State School on 8 November where a section of the ceiling collapsed—

(1) Is he aware that school authorities believe at least one child would have been killed if the building had been occupied?

(2) How old was the building in question?

(3) How many times had the building in question been relocated?

(4) What action has he taken to assure safety in this school and in other Queensland schools?

(5) How long does he expect his safety survey to take?

(6) Will the safety survey include all Queensland schools?

(7) Will he table his department's report on the Slacks Creek accident?

Answer—

(1) No. Any conclusion in this regard would be purely conjecture.

(2) Approximately 12 years old.

(3) Once.

(4) All buildings provided at State schools are considered to be of a standard consistent with their uses.

(5 & 6) The precautionary inspection of other similar buildings throughout the State is being carried out to establish that the ceiling systems have not been disturbed by others, that is, the human element. The safety of the installation method is not in question.

(7) The formal report on the incident conveys no further information than has already been made public.

16. Manual Arts Block, Atherton High School

Mr Menzel asked the Minister for Education—

(1) When will a new manual arts block be built and ready for occupation at the Atherton State High School?

(2) If it is not ready for the start of the 1984 school year could more facilities be made available, such as a temporary class-room to cater for increased enrolments?

Answer—

(1) Provision has been made in the 1984-85 Budget Estimates for the construction of a combined manual arts/agriculture block at the Atherton State High School. The expected date of occupancy is January 1985.

(2) As an interim measure, the Director-General of Works has already been requested to provide additional manual arts facilities for 1984 to enable the Year 11/12 manual arts to operate more effectively in the temporary construction annexe and thus provide relief to the existing workshops.

17. 1988 Expo

Mr Fouras asked the Premier and Treasurer—

With reference to his often repeated assurances that the 1988 Expo will not cost Queenslanders one cent and that the Expo will be financed from admission fees, rentals and the sale of assets at an enhanced value—

(1) What are the estimated returns from (a) admission fees, (b) rentals and (c) sale of assets?

(2) What would it cost the Queensland tax-payer if the visitors to the Expo totalled 3.6 million rather than the estimated 7.2 million?

Answer—

(1 & 2) I am surprised that the honourable member has asked this question.

On 18 August, the then Deputy Premier and Treasurer (Dr L. R. Edwards), provided the Leader of the Opposition with a full, detailed briefing on the whole Expo proposal. This included an easily digested cash-flow summary, comments on the importance of attendances and other matters critical to the financial projections on which the decision to go ahead was based.

The Leader of the Opposition has declared quite unequivocally the Opposition's support in principle of the Expo concept. He has been given all this information in a spirit of goodwill. I have the briefing paper that is already in the possession of the Opposition and now table it for the information of the honourable member, so that he may read it again and perhaps digest it this time.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the paper on the table.

18. Toilet Facilities, Dundula Pre-school

Mr Randell asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

With reference to his last visit to my electorate, when he met a delegation from the Dundula Pre-school committee regarding the need for toilet facilities at that pre-school—

(1) Has he received a report from his department following an investigation into their needs?

(2) If not, when does he expect such a report?

(3) When would he anticipate a start being made to construct these urgently needed facilities?

Answer—

(1 & 2) A scheme is being prepared to provide toilet facilities for pre-school pupils at the Dundula State School.

(3) It is expected that this work will be put in hand early in the New Year.

19. Boundary Road/Bruce Highway Intersection

Mr Randell asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

With reference to the Boundary Road/Bruce Highway intersection near Mackay—

Will he take urgent action to investigate the need for improved lighting there and have it installed as quickly as possible to ensure the safety of motorists and residents of the area generally, especially people from the suburb of Planlands, as traffic volumes using the intersection have significantly increased?

Answer—

The lighting design for this intersection involves the installation of 19 lights. Three are installed at the present time on the intersection's eastern side. The balance are dependent on implementation of a council lighting scheme adjacent to the intersection, which involves upgrading of the power supply to the council's scheme and the intersection scheme. I have arranged for the Main Roads district engineer in Mackay to approach the council with a view to expediting the work.

At 12 noon,

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 17, the House proceeded with the debate on the Address in Reply.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Resumption of Debate—First Allotted Day

Debate resumed from 24 November (see p. 75) on Mrs Chapman's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr WRIGHT (Rockhampton—Leader of the Opposition) (12.1 p.m.): At the outset of my response to the Governor's Opening Speech to this Assembly, I take the opportunity to congratulate all members on their election to this, the Forty-fourth Queensland Parliament. Although I do not agree with some of the political ideologies and philosophies that are espoused by Government members, I readily acknowledge that each and every member has been elected by a democratic process, and I therefore congratulate them individually on attaining membership of this Legislative Assembly.

It is my intention to respond to many of the claims and assertions that were made by the Governor in his Speech but I wish to stress right from the outset that I cast no aspersions on the Governor himself, for it is well-known that, although the Governor delivers the Speech, it is in fact prepared and written by the Government.

The National Party must be given credit—and I say that with tongue in cheek in a way—for the way that it has developed a propaganda machine throughout this State because that machine has regained the control of the Treasury benches. However, the party does not get credit for winning government in its own right because it did not do that. It received only 38 per cent of the popular vote and, had it not been for the defection of the two Liberals (the members for Merthyr and Wavell against whom there should have been a censure motion this morning) the National Party would not be in a position to govern in its own right. So, despite the claims of the National Party prior to the election that it would win up to 49 seats and therefore govern in its own right, it won only 41 seats, some of them by a handful of votes.

As I have said, the National Party should be given some credit, and that credit comes back to the propaganda machine. But, in turn, the party ought to be condemned for the way that it has been able to condition so many people in Queensland to cast aside their concern for, and their interest in, integrity, honesty and responsibility in government. Only in Queensland under the National Party could it happen that, during an election campaign, Ministers spend tens of thousands of dollars of the people's money—State funds—promoting themselves and their party. Only in Queensland under the National Party could a minority Government get away with using State funds to run party political advertisements against a Federal Government program, such as this Government is doing against Medicare.

Only in Queensland under the National Party could departmental heads, such as one of the National Party candidates in Cook, nominate as candidates and abuse their position by using State funds to send telegrams and propaganda to constituents. Only in Queensland under the National Party could a party get away with contacting a newspaper and forcing it to change headlines and stories because they did not suit the party. It happened again yesterday when a report appeared in the "Telegraph" under the heading "Hayseeds Stack the Odds" Pressure was applied on the newspaper, and the heading in the afternoon edition was changed to "Nats"

Only in Queensland under the National Party could a minority Government get away with denying the Opposition proper facilities, be they air-fares, air trips or staff facilities, during an election campaign. Only in Queensland could a Government spend \$500,000 on "Queensland Enterprise" to promote itself before an election. It could happen only in Queensland. For that reason, I believe that there is great substance in my criticism that this is a Government that is dishonest, deceitful and disreputable.

I shall refer to the Governor's Speech to support those arguments. I ask honourable members to think about what the Governor said, and I shall refer to many of his comments. One of them was—

"In the past fifteen months since I last addressed the House, the economic conditions prevailing throughout the State and indeed throughout the nation have been difficult. However, constant efforts by my Government have ensured that Queensland has maintained its pre-eminent position, among all the States, in the struggle for the increased betterment of its citizens."

I can only repeat my earlier comments that such a claim is not supported by the facts. I fail to see how Queensland has maintained its so-called pre-eminent position among all the States in the struggle for the increased betterment of its citizens when it spends less than any other State on education, health, social welfare, welfare, social services generally and law and order. Queensland is a low-tax State in some respects, but it is certainly a low-service State, and figures support that.

It can be seen that the Commonwealth Government measures all the States by using a basic unit of 100. In Queensland, the implied service level for education is 82.8, for health it is 74.4 and for law, order and public safety it is 92.5. Whereas the average national measure for total social services is 100—that is, the unit measure given—Queensland's is 80.6. So, Queensland's so-called pre-eminent position is not supported by those figures.

An examination of the figures for income per head of population for 1980, which are the latest figures available, reveals that Queensland had the lowest income figure of all States except Tasmania. For Queensland, the per capita income was \$6,894 per year, for Western Australia it was \$7,295, in the ACT it was \$9,135, for the Northern Territory it was \$8,544, and for New South Wales, the State that Government members constantly malign, the figure was \$7,628. I say again that Queensland's average income was a miserable \$6,894 per head per year.

From the money given by the Commonwealth Labor Government under the tax-sharing formula, New South Wales received a pittance of \$481 per capita, whereas Queensland received \$707. So, if credit is to be given for some of the services provided in this State, surely that credit must be given to the Hawke Labor Government.

His Excellency also said—

"The State is now placed advantageously to benefit quickly from an upturn in the economy."

Later, he said—

"My Government believes Queenslanders can look back with satisfaction at the achievements of this State and, at the same time, can be optimistic about the future."

I would suggest that whoever wrote His Excellency's Opening Speech was looking through rose-coloured glasses and had the same tunnel vision as National Party members have, because those claims are certainly not backed up by the facts and attitudes of other people, such as Professor Ted Kolsen, Professor of Economics at the University of Queensland.

In September this year, in an article entitled "Joh's Boom A Myth", written by Glenn Milne, Professor Kolsen is reported as saying—

"The Queensland economy is certainly not booming.

But we do have figures from the engineering and construction industry which show that the value of the projects which are being undertaken—not the mythical ones that might happen in the year dot—has declined very severely and is expected to continue to decline."

He also points to employment and coal, and, in doing so, says—

"Employment—down every month this year on the corresponding month last year.

Coal—badly hit by the worldwide drop in oil prices with Queensland overtaken by NSW as the major coal-producing and exporting state."

From the way the Minister for Mines and Energy talks, it appears that everything is happening in Queensland, and for that he takes all the credit.

I turn now to construction and engineering, which, according to the Australian Federation of Construction Contractors, is facing a downturn of quite dramatic proportions. That downturn could result in a loss of 9 000 Queensland jobs.

Professor Kolsen went on to say—

“Not only was Mr Bjelke-Petersen not responsible for Queensland’s growth and development, but his failure to direct the boom when it was on has led the State into its current troubles, troubles which began to bite in March this year.”

Professor Kolsen also commented about the so-called migration of people from other States to Queensland. He believes that the number of internal migrants is about half the number claimed by the Premier, and that the Premier apparently fails to realise that although 1 000 southerners are crossing into Queensland every 7 days, about 400 or 500 Queenslanders are packing their bags and heading the other way. One must not lose sight of the truth.

However, it is not only people such as Professor Kolsen who criticise the claims made by the Government. I refer also to a member of one of the Government departments, a man who is very well-respected—Mr Syd Schubert, the Co-ordinator-General.

In a report by Tony Koch, on 17 November 1983, there is reference to a special report that was made known to Cabinet. In that report Syd Schubert claims that Queensland should take a leading role in technological development to overcome the State’s low productivity growth. The report states—

“Despite the very strong growth of Queensland’s key minerals sector—which directly employs only 2 percent of the workforce—the relatively low productivity growth of other sectors did not permit a high overall rate of growth in per capita State product.”

The article by Tony Koch further states—

“The report concludes that the rapid growth in the mining and mineral-processing industries will be more difficult to achieve in future because most such projects are capital-intensive and Queensland is now a high-cost area in the construction industry.”

Those comments are supported by reports that have appeared in the well-known magazine “The Bulletin” The front page of that magazine on 23 August this year, referring to Queensland, carries the caption “The sinking economy” It attacks Queensland’s claim that it is a low-tax State and the land of great development. The fact is that that claim cannot be substantiated. Queensland is facing problems. “The Bulletin” states—

“The Budget of the low-tax State is being maintained by Canberra’s extraordinary generosity to Queensland at this year’s Premiers’ Conference and, in any case, is not as healthy as the northern government would have the people believe.”

That was a comment by an independent commentator, David Armstrong. The person who made those allegations was not a member of the ALP.

The commentator stresses that the resources boom is waning. His article further states—

“‘The Queensland economy was incredibly buoyant last year,’ he said, ‘But it is not as vibrant now as it was six or 12 months ago.’ Conditions in Queensland now were ‘just a little better’ than elsewhere.”

Throughout that article reference is made to the employment problems and to the problems in the coal industry.

The executive director of the Australian Federation of Construction Contractors said that Queensland faces a “downturn in engineering construction of quite dramatic proportions”

So all is not well. Despite what the Premier and his Ministers might say, the independent observations and comments clearly fly in the face of their claims.

“The Bulletin” further states—

“Queensland Economic Forecasts reports ‘some disquiet’ over export earnings in 1982–83: signs of expansion in the September quarter were followed by a 13 per cent fall in the December quarter. QEF also notes falls in retail sales.”

I give the Government credit for its propaganda machine, because it has conned the people of Queensland into believing that all was well. There is reference in the article to the black cloud over Queensland.

Yesterday, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to the passage in the Governor's Opening Speech in which he said that Government would stand by the Westminster system. Only 24 hours after the Governor said that the Government reaffirmed its allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen and gave an assurance that it would continue to uphold the finest traditions of the Westminster system, it voted to destroy the very basis and core of the Westminster model. Government members broke down the structure of committees. Not one back-bencher had the guts or the courage to do anything about it. Government members will remember that. I believe that the same thing will happen with the Committee of Subordinate Legislation and the Privileges Committee.

It is no wonder that we have read reports such as the one that appeared in the "Telegraph" on 11 August in which Quentin Dempster reported—

"Westminster practice and principles have been breached and abused so many times in the Queensland Parliament that they have been rendered virtually inoperable."

He said the same thing yesterday, and if he has the courage of his convictions he will go on saying it. That is what has happened in this State. There is no adherence to the Westminster system; there is adherence only to a concept of National Party control at any cost and at any price.

In his Opening Speech, the Governor also stated—

"Despite economic difficulties in 1982-83, Queensland concluded the year with a balanced budget."

One of the new Parliament's first tasks will be to consider the State Budget for 1983-84. My Government is confident it will again reflect the soundness of the State's economy and the fruits of years of prudent financial management."

It needs to be remembered that "balanced Budget" refers to the balance of the Consolidated Revenue Fund alone.

Yesterday, the member for Burnett and the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer stated that all the funds were balanced. That is totally untrue. The accumulated Budget deficit for Queensland, presently standing at \$1,113m, is the highest for any State in Australia. I look forward to a close analysis of the 1983-84 State Budget. The Government has already increased thousands of costs in this State. It has put up its fees, and now will introduce a Budget and say, "Aren't we wonderful? Look at this. We are not charging the people any more."

Much has been said about the economic status of Queensland. I refer to an independent opinion expressed by the Westpac Banking Corporation as a result of a survey done this year. It said—

"It was clear from that survey that business believes Queensland has the worst general business situation of any State apart from Tasmania. The same survey found that Queensland was the only State in which the majority of respondents expected a decline in output. At the same time, the survey showed that for Australia as a whole the outlook was for an increase in output."

I repeat that in Queensland a downturn was expected; yet the Government constantly says how wonderful things are.

I will deal now with some specifics. I again refer to comments made by the Leader of the House in the past and recently. In his Opening Speech, the Governor said that housing would benefit from a record investment. He said—

"Rent Relief also will allow houses to be bought and thus expand available crisis accommodation."

I welcome that. The investment is long overdue. It is greatly welcomed by me and by other members of the Opposition. It has been advocated by us time and time again. However, that in itself does not absolve the Government, which is to blame for failing to take adequate steps to meet the crisis that exists in public housing.

I was pleased to hear the member for Greenslopes speak yesterday about the crisis that exists in housing and accommodating the aged. We may find some courage coming from that member, for at least she is prepared to criticise the Government. I hope that other members of the National Party are prepared to do the same.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr WRIGHT: I would have to be hopeful. At least she said a few things. I have heard the allegation that she did not write all of her speech, but I am prepared to give her the benefit of the doubt. Certainly her comments were critical of the Government and ought to be taken cognisance of by the Minister. His own back-benchers are critical of him and his performance. It needs to be remembered that \$73m remains unspent from the previous financial year.

Mrs HARVEY: I rise to a point of order. May I explain something? I find the honourable member's statement very offensive.

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

Mrs HARVEY: That's it?

Mr WRIGHT: I will take the point of order. What does the member for Greenslopes wish to say?

Mrs HARVEY: The honourable member said that I did not write my speech. I invite the Leader of the Opposition to see my handwritten notes.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Greenslopes will resume her seat. There is no point of order.

Mr WRIGHT: I am prepared to accept the member's statement that she has handwritten notes. I would hate to cast aspersions on her. However, it would seem to me from some of her praiseworthy comments that it was well written by some department. I repeat that her criticisms were valid. I have no doubt that the Minister will not like having the member for Greenslopes in the party room, because she will give him a hard time.

Let it not be forgotten that \$73m allocated to the Minister was not spent. That was tellingly elaborated on by the member for Chatsworth (Terry Mackenroth). Further, but for Federal funding—the money provided by the Federal Labor Government—the Government would not be able to achieve part of what it is now able to claim.

What is the real position? There is a waiting-list of 10 000 people—and that is on the Government's own figures.

Mr Wharton interjected.

Mr WRIGHT: What is the number?

Mr Warburton: 9 999.

Mr WRIGHT: What a miserable record! The Minister for Works and Housing, who is the second most experienced Minister in the House, has the audacity to come into the Chamber and praise himself on his record when 10 000 Queensland families cannot obtain adequate accommodation. The Governor, doubtless doing what the Government wants, says that we can benefit from its fine record. What a joke, Mr Speaker! What a joke!

The Governor also said—

“Youth unemployment and greater retention rates account for much of the growth in secondary schools and technical and further education colleges

Additional teachers will be employed to cater for increased enrolments and to further reduce class sizes.”

We all say, “Hooray! It's about time!” During the election campaign the National Party was the only political party that refused to accommodate the expectations and demands of the teaching profession. The National Party was prepared to do nothing about them. I am pleased that at long last the Government is taking some cognisance of, and giving some recognition to, the problems involved.

I now take the Government's own Syd Schubert's comments about the Government in this area. In his report he said—

“The report warns of negative public reaction to the introduction of technology because of the fear of job losses and claims Australia, and in particular Queensland, has a low-skill and low-education workforce

In comparison with the rest of Australia, Queensland has a lower-skill workforce. For example, 57 percent of the Queensland population left school at 15 or earlier, compared with 49 percent for Australia as a whole.

Of those with formal qualifications, Queensland has a lower-than-average proportion with degrees and diplomas and a higher-than-average proportion with trade qualifications.”

That claim gives the Government nothing to skite about. That is not my comment; it is a report to Cabinet prepared by the Co-ordinator-General (Syd Schubert). Clearly, much more needs to be done. The Labor Party has said that. It has urged greater effort on education spending and I hope that the coming Budget that the Government is already crowing about will at least bring forward a new deal for the students and young people of this State.

The Governor said—

“The Government remains committed to combat the road accident toll. Road safety and defensive driving courses will be ongoing in many centres.”

I do not think I have ever seen a better example of a Government merely paying lip-service to a major social problem than this Government's attitude to the road toll. In Queensland the Highway Patrol is a hoax; it is a phoney. All the Government did was to put new stickers on existing cars. Four years ago the Townsville mobile patrol had more cars than it has now.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: They even hired some.

Mr WRIGHT: I believe that that is correct.

In front of the Parliamentary Annexe the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) and the then Minister for Police (Mr Hinze) created a great deal of publicity about the new Highway Patrol. What a joke! The Government stands condemned for the lives that have been lost through its apathy and procrastination. The Government says that it intends to appoint a couple of hundred extra police. That is totally insufficient. The State needs some 600 additional police. It is time that funding was made available.

Road funding and road maintenance need a brand-new approach. Not so long ago the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police, who is now in the House, was in central Queensland and went on record in “The Morning Bulletin” saying that the main cause of road problems was the condition of the roads. I hope I am not misquoting him. I am sure he said that the roads were death-traps. That was certainly the tenor of his comments when he visited a local police establishment in central Queensland. The Government has displayed total blindness to the needs of Queensland's roads. They are in a shocking condition and in many instances are merely goat tracks. However, when the Government got additional funds from the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Program, it misused them. Instead of keeping its promises to the people of north Queensland to use the revenue from the extra tax on petrol to reduce the number of single-lane bridges and to upgrade the roads, the Government used the money to electrify the Brisbane rail system. The Government does not care about the number of people who die on the roads in central and north Queensland, but the Governor stated that the Government remains committed to combating the road toll. It is a joke! If it were not so hypocritical, it would be laughable.

The Governor also said—

“My Government will continue its fight against the illegal drug trade with the introduction of a new Drug Trafficking Act to provide harsh penalties for drug pushers.”

It was only during the election campaign that the Government suddenly realised that Queensland had a drug problem. The Government is blind to the excessive use of analgesics and barbiturates; it is blind to the hard drug trade. It has been blind to the fact that the State has only a miserable 23 Drug Squad officers trying to fight the war against crime throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. The Government has

had its head in the sand for so long that things have got out of hand. The personnel of the Drug Squad should be doubled immediately. When the Government considers increasing police numbers, that squad should be one of the first to be considered.

I received a confidential report that no doubt also went to the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police. In it, Drug Squad officers said that their lives were at risk and that they did not have the facilities, the weapons, the equipment, the manpower or the money to do their job properly. They said that the criminals had more sophisticated equipment than they did. They said that their communications were being monitored and that they could not move through the State without the criminal element knowing where they were and what they were doing. What has the Government done about it? Nothing! Not a thing! Months and months have gone by and nothing has been done. I will watch very closely what is proposed in the Budget. I was amazed that the Governor would say that the Government intended to continue the fight. It has not even started the fight! Recently two young people died in a hospital in central Queensland from an overdose of heroin. Heroin is being sold in Blackwater, Biloela—in the streets of virtually every country town.

Hard drugs can be purchased anywhere. Drug Squad officers have told me that drugs are coming in from New South Wales, from the north, and everywhere else. But the Government does nothing about it because it does not care. Government members should talk to the parents of those young people who died to see what they think of its policies, what they think of its law enforcement efforts against drug-pushers. These criminals are killers, and ought to be treated as such.

The Governor also referred to the rail electrification program in these words—

“The electric line recently opened from Brisbane to Thorneside will be extended to Cleveland. A conceptual route has been identified from Beenleigh to the Gold Coast.”

It is reassuring to hear that a conceptual route from Beenleigh to the Gold Coast has been identified, but one is left wondering why the original line was torn up in the first place. It is noteworthy that no mention has been made this time of the Redcliffe rail link. I wonder whether it is party politics again. Is it pork barrelling in reverse? Redcliffe has a Liberal member whom the Premier will not cop in any way, so he simply wiped that project. The Premier is not hurting Terry White; he is hurting the people of Redcliffe. When will Government members learn that they are supposed to govern in the interests of the people, not in the interests of power politics or themselves? I believe that the situation will remain unchanged as long as a Liberal holds the seat of Redcliffe.

I give the Government credit for what it is trying to do in central Queensland. Of course, it had no alternative. If it did not make a start on electrifying the central Queensland rail lines, the overall cost of replacing the existing equipment would be enormous. I am waiting to see the schedule of construction for this project. I welcome the expenditure in the area because it is in the interests of the State and certainly of my own region.

The Governor also referred to the fishing industry. I noted the following comment because it identifies something about the attitude of the Government. The Governor said—

“New legislation beneficial to the fishing industry will be enacted.”

Could I use that sentence as an example to ask—not to plead—that, before the Government introduces legislation, it talks to those who will be affected by it? A month before the election the Government imposed new fees, charges and fines on the fishing industry ranging from \$30 to \$8,000 a year, but there was no input from the fishing industry. Instead, on the one hand, the management board is willing to spend \$100 on personalised licence plates for each of its Fairmonts, while, on the other hand, ordinary fast-food stores are being caught up in the taxation system with increased costs that will eventually be passed on to consumers.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Mike Ahern is Fisherman of the Year.

Mr WRIGHT: I heard about that. I did not know whether to laugh or cry. How could Mike Ahern be made Fisherman of the Year after what he has done to the fishing industry? It seems, in this State, that the worse a person performs and the harder and tougher he is on some issues, the more he is given credit for some of the positive results. It is amazing. I ask that legislation relating to the fishing industry and to other areas be discussed with those affected by it before it is introduced instead of afterwards. Surely the democratic process requires that the Government at least talk to those who will be affected by legislation.

The Governor's Speech placed enormous emphasis on Queensland's performance and potential in the mining sphere and the massive benefits flowing from it, especially the glowing prospects of the coal industry. He said—

“Queensland is well placed to take advantage of any upturn in the international market-place for minerals. Encouraging signs of economic recovery in the United States and Japan hold promise of future trade opportunities.”

An examination of the forecast by Mr Syd Schubert reveals that that is not so. His report, which concludes that the rapid growth in the mining and mineral-processing industries will be more difficult to achieve in future, reads—

“Competition from other countries has intensified in the most rapidly growing and profitable mineral industries

The likely stabilisation of energy prices over the next few years will slow demand for the State's energy resources.”

We should be starting to realise that the mining companies, in many instances, are having a rough time. Later, I intend to highlight the disparities in freight rates. It is up to the Minister for Transport to explain the allegations that some companies pay as little as \$8 a tonne and others pay as much as \$22 a tonne. How can companies that are being ripped off in freight rates be expected to compete against South Africa and America, which can dump about 100 million tonnes of coal on the grass and flog it off to Japan?

We expect a reasonable return for the people of Queensland. The Government should not kill the goose that lays the golden egg, but that is the risk that it is taking in this instance. I give the Minister credit for being aware of this danger. I know that he and many members on both sides of the House are concerned about it. We need reasonable revenue, but let us not destroy the industry. Coal-mining companies must be able to compete internationally, and Syd Schubert said that that will not happen unless some changes are made.

The Governor referred to special attention being devoted to the careers of apprentices. I mention this matter to demonstrate the Government's hypocrisy and to show that its approach is the reverse of that outlined in the Governor's Opening Speech. His Excellency said, “Special attention will be devoted to the careers of apprentices”. He is indeed right, because the Government did give the careers of apprentices special attention. It cut them back! For 1984, the Works Department has cut back the number of apprentices it will employ by 35 or more than 25 per cent of the previous year's staffing level. Yet the Government says that it will give special attention to the careers of apprentices.

The Government refuses to employ anyone from private enterprise. When we have approached the Railway Department or the Works Department on behalf of young people who had completed two or three years apprenticeship and had been sacked or displaced because their employers went out of business, we were told that the policy is not to employ anyone, any apprentice who has—

Mr Wharton interjected.

Mr WRIGHT: It is true. In fact, a memorandum was sent through the Railway Department—

Mr WHARTON: I rise to a point of order. It is not true that there is such a policy. The honourable member is talking a lot of rot.

Mr WRIGHT: I will show it to the Minister in writing.

Mr Wharton: I don't give a damn if you do show it.

Mr WRIGHT: I take the Minister's interjection. I will produce correspondence from the Railway Department outlining that the policy is not to employ people from the private sector. When I do so, I will expect the Minister to apologise to the House for trying to mislead it.

The Governor said—

“The Factories and Shops Act 1960-1983 will be reviewed with the object of protecting the interests of owners of small shops.”

I was pleased to hear the speech of the honourable member for Greenslopes. It proved that at least one member on the Government side is prepared to put up a fight for small business people. I suggest to her that she is on her own. She is a Robinson

Crusoe in a skirt. For four years National Party members have promised to help small business and bring down some type of protective law against the excesses of landlords, but nothing has been done. The Government has refused to stand up to BOMA.

Mr Gunn interjected.

Mr WRIGHT: The Minister is the one who is guilty. He and the former Minister (Mr Sullivan) are guilty.

Mr Gunn: They are not doing it in Victoria.

Mr WRIGHT: Of course they are doing it in Victoria. They are taking action to protect small business down there but the Minister is not prepared to do so. He promised to. He has told the House time and time again that something would be done. He even gave an undertaking. Indeed, he set up a special committee of inquiry and said that he would consider its recommendations.

Mr Gunn interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WRIGHT: It is difficult to concentrate when the Minister is interjecting.

I return to the issue of small business and, to see whether my statements can be substantiated, I refer to the ESBAS summary of the policies of the various parties. This document, which was prepared by an independent group prior to the election, states—

“Being realistic, we must put the A.L.P. at the top of the class. They have surprisingly done a very professional job in researching and assessing the practical and realistic needs and requirements of the small business sector.”

The organisation uses the words “surprisingly done”, because it did not expect us to do that; but the fact is that the organisation recognised that we did it. The document continues—

“We would have to say that this policy is the best ever presented by a political party for the small business community. The Nationals, regrettably, have made a monstrous boo boo. They have virtually committed political suicide in the eyes of the small business sector by taking small business for granted and demonstrating their ‘I don’t care’ attitude. The Nationals should be ashamed of themselves for presenting such rubbish, particularly in view of the fact that what they have presented in 1983 is a duplication of what they presented in 1980.”

It is no wonder that Labor members have been able to say that at that time the members of the National Party made 53 promises and that they have not bothered to honour 50 of them. The document continues—

“The Libs have made a valiant attempt to get into the act for small business but, we are afraid, overall their policy has no impact.”

This Government has failed and refused to act to protect and promote small business interests. Instead, it has been promoting big business, the various groups that support the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation. In the coming weeks I intend to develop the issue of Red Ru. I want some more answers from the Minister. I have some telexes and documents on this matter, too. This issue is a typical example of the approach that the Government adopts towards business.

Mr Milliner: They support Oskar.

Mr WRIGHT: I was about to make that point. In this State it seems that if a person’s name is Maia, Shrian Oskar or Iwasaki, or if he comes from Japan, Brazil or if his country of origin is unknown, such as in the case of Oskar, he will get the support of this Government; he will get special treatment in Cabinet; a motion will be put through Cabinet giving him \$6m in principle, even though Treasury rejects the proposal and the Minister for Primary Industries is against it. At that time even the Treasurer (Dr Llew Edwards) was against it. Oskar will still get the money because the National Party treats foreigners better than Australians. It is no wonder that, in September of last year, the Premier and Dr Edwards said that they had been over in Japan selling Queensland. They had—lock, stock and barrel!

Mr Gunn: Did he get it?

Mr WRIGHT: Almost. The Minister tried a dozen times to get the loan for Oskar. He was willing to give him anything. He was doing the bidding of the Premier. It was not the Minister's conscience that was involved. He was prepared to do anything. I wonder what was in it for him. Perhaps he will tell the House what was in it for him and also for Sir Wally Rae.

The Governor went on to talk about the Agent-General's Office in London and how it has continued to provide an effective presence in the United Kingdom and Europe. He continued—

“Priority is given to investment and industrial enquiries and support for trade missions and visits by business interests.”

I acknowledge that good work has been done in London, but a thorough analysis of the effectiveness of the Agent-General's Office needs to be undertaken to determine whether we are really getting sufficient benefit from its operations.

I would welcome a move to develop trade on the west coast of the United States. It is time that we looked at the establishment of permanent trade missions to tap potentially massive markets in the South Pacific and in South East Asia, particularly China. I was pleased that the Premier was able to say to, I think, the Deputy Premier of China, who was in this country recently, that he was willing to visit China. I hope that he will go. I also hope that he is prepared to promote trade in that country.

We need to market our products. However, we need to start thinking more about Queenslanders, and that point was missed in the Governor's Speech. No reference was made to those people for whom the Government has no time—the homeless, the jobless, the disadvantaged, the aged and the minority groups. If ever there was a need for a Government to rethink its policies, it is in those areas. The Government needs to rethink its responsibilities.

In the few moments that I have left, I ask those National Party members who want to make a name for themselves and who really believe in some of the philosophies and policies about people that they espoused during the election campaign to make a stand in their party room for the people of Queensland.

The National Party-led Government has a shocking record in meeting the needs of homeless people and in providing housing for ordinary Queensland families. It has a shocking record in the creation of employment; in fact, it has brought about a loss of jobs. It also has a shocking record in providing help for small business. The little person in Queensland is a nothing, and that is the problem.

Mr Gunn: That's you!

Mr WRIGHT: No, it is the Minister; he is a nothing.

In contrast, a person who has money and who is willing to give money to the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation, a person who is willing to pay his way, whether he is engaged in the operation of a massage parlour or foreign enterprise, will get anything in this State.

The time has come for Government integrity—something that this Government lacks. That is the difference between a Labor Government and a National Party Government. There has to be a change to fill the vacuum created by the Government's lack of integrity. The Government should be accountable to the people and it should be responsible to the people. The Government needs a new brand of honesty and integrity.

(Time expired.)

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine) (12.42 p.m.): I congratulate the honourable member for Pine Rivers on the way in which she moved the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, and, likewise, I congratulate the member for Greenslopes on so capably seconding the motion.

I take this opportunity of expressing my loyalty and that of my constituents to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and to His Excellency the Governor. I congratulate His Excellency on the dedication he shows to his vice-regal duties, demonstrated so clearly by both his address in opening this Parliament and his numerous visits to all areas of Queensland.

I also congratulate the Premier on his recent successful campaign. I find it stimulating to enter Parliament as a member of the National Party, a party that, for the first time in our State's history, will govern in its own right.

I congratulate you also, Mr Speaker, upon your elevation to the high office you now hold. For my own part, I have been committed to the National Party for in excess of 10 years and I take great pleasure in seeing the policies of our party being embraced by so many people of Queensland.

Mr Hooper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that this is the maiden speech of the honourable member for Condamine. He will be heard in silence.

Mr Hooper: He spoke to the condolence motion yesterday.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will name any member who disobeys my ruling.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The fact that I have been elected to this high office is a result of great support given by the majority of people in the Condamine electorate, the party organisation as a whole and, in particular, the scores of dedicated party supporters throughout my electorate who responded so readily when called upon at election time. They were rewarded for their efforts by my securing a record majority of primary votes in the election.

My own elation at such an election result must be understandable. However, I am quick to recognise the tremendous support given to me by my wife, Peta. This new life-style as a parliamentarian will call for many changes, but I feel sure that together we can provide a happy and secure home for our three children and still give energetic service to the people of Condamine.

I must admit to experiencing a number of different feelings as I address this august Chamber in my initial speech. I feel great humility when I consider the history and tradition of the Parliament of Queensland and compare the significant decisions taken in this room with my own humble situation of being a new, inexperienced member. I feel great pride, also, knowing that I have been afforded the honour of representing the people of Condamine in this, the 44th Parliament of Queensland.

I have always been deeply committed to the people of the Darling Downs. I was raised in the area and have spent most of my life among the people I admire greatly. I am the third generation of my family to be associated with life in all its aspects in the Chinchilla district. I am fully aware of the great determination needed by my grandparents to clear the scrub and build temporary housing on the blocks they selected in 1907.

I have seen the same country later cleared of ringbarked scrub by my father to make way for the plough, and I have personally experienced the hardships of drought, flood and depressed markets. I have been fortunate enough, also, to benefit from the labours of my forbears and to witness great progress in an area of the State that provides such wealth. Similarly, I have seen the birth and growth of local organisations. The combined efforts of local people have established such bodies to improve the way of life of the community. I recognise their importance. I have been closely involved with many and will liaise closely with them as their member.

In addition, I enter this Chamber with a fierce determination to ensure that all the people of this State of ours, especially the people of Condamine, enjoy the highest quality of life possible, bearing in mind that the rewards to individuals should be in relation to the efforts they expend.

I am acutely aware that I am following in the footsteps of a man who served this State so well for 23 years. The Honourable V. B. Sullivan, during his term as member for Condamine, served as a Cabinet Minister for 16 years and for a short time was Acting Premier—a great parliamentary career.

The contributions made by the Honourable V. B. Sullivan in a number of portfolios were significant. Possibly his greatest achievements were in the negotiations of the International Sugar Agreement at Geneva and his own personal initiatives in Japan in 1974 which opened the Japanese market for our beef exports that had been devastated because of the oil crisis engineered by the OPEC countries earlier in the 1970s. It is my earnest desire to serve the people of Condamine with the same dedication and ability.

My election to this Parliament was made much easier because the Honourable V. B. Sullivan acted as my campaign manager. His political skill and popularity helped me immeasurably. I welcome this opportunity to thank him sincerely for his great service to the people of Condamine and I wish him well in his retirement with his wife, Gwen, at his beloved Jandowae.

It was with regret that I learnt recently of the death of Mr Les Diplock, a former member for Condamine. He had served the electorate with distinction for a period of 18 years prior to the Honourable V. B. Sullivan's term of office.

A person's attitudes to life are shaped by his own experience and his observation of his friends. I am aware of tremendous changes in so many ways since I was a schoolboy in the 1950s. Queensland was a raw, emerging State. Sir Francis Nicklin had just come to power and life promised so much for everybody. For a young person leaving school, it was a matter of selecting the job or career he preferred, not securing employment if he were lucky, as it is today. For a young fellow keen to return to the land, the situation was that his father probably had a block mostly ringbarked and partly cultivated. The farm was prosperous and had the potential for the son to be greeted with the opportunity of joining his father on the block and being secure in the thought that there was a living for both.

Today, when a young lad finishes school and looks to returning to the family farm, he finds a completely different situation. The farm is now cultivated from fence to fence, the sheds are full of machinery worth at least a quarter of a million dollars and the father has to tell his son, "Sorry, boy, but there is not enough earning capacity in the farm to support both of us. To tell you the truth, I will have to buy out my neighbour so that I can remain viable."

The question I ask myself is this: Why is it that a piece of land that has been brought into full production has lost its ability to support two families, and why is it that a man who has worked a lifetime finds that he is hard pressed to retain his economic viability when his level of production has been raised enormously? I come to the conclusion that other sectors of our nation have taken more than their share of our nation's wealth at the expense of the primary producers.

I have watched the lives of my contemporaries who have grown up in the towns and whose parents were wage or salary earners. The suburban family of the 1950s was more than likely a one-income home. In comparison, they had a quality of life at least equal to that of the farming family of my district. They could afford a holiday every year. They could afford secondary education for their children and the father was secure in his employment where he worked 40 hours a week.

In the intervening 30-odd years until today, many things have happened. The salary earner now does no Saturday work, he enjoys longer holidays, he receives a 17½ per cent loading on his longer holidays; he may now work 35 hours or 37½ hours a week, and he may even work a nine-day fortnight or flexitime. His employer has improved his working conditions and he has sophisticated equipment available to take away any heavy physical work.

The employee has seen great progress over the last 30 years, but at what cost? More than likely his wife is out working, not always through her desire to work, but, more than likely, out of economic necessity. Let us not forget the employment opportunities available to his offspring. Thirty years ago the father had the chance of a number of careers. Today, his child faces the prospect of no career employment, or even of no employment at all.

I find it hard to reconcile the logic of what has happened. I firmly believe that some unions have been over-officious and have shown a disregard for the economic well-being of our nation and simply followed a policy of grabbing more and more for their members, regardless of the overall consequences.

We have now reached a situation where the nation is paying for such folly. We have now reached a situation where the jobs the unions have fought to make more prosperous are being lost because the economy cannot sustain such imposts and remain viable. It is my firm belief that the organisers of labour have done our nation a great disservice. My opinion is strengthened by the knowledge that Mr Clyde Cameron, a former Minister in the Whitlam Government, admitted in his autobiography that the ACTU's policy of awarding adult wages to 18-year-olds was a great mistake, a great disservice to young Australians.

For too long, it would seem, the trade unions have regarded Australia as a bottomless pit of wealth, believing that it was simply a matter of dipping in and getting out as much as possible. I put it to honourable members that, in our free enterprise society, a very close relationship exists between the level of profit from investment and the level of employment. It must be understood that, if wage demands are excessive, they reduce profitability and, as a consequence, the wage-earners put their own employment in jeopardy. "Profit" is not a dirty word. It is an essential ingredient in our system and it must be present to at least a suitable degree, or the whole system loses its viability.

In 1970 I was fortunate enough to spend three months in West Germany as a Rotary Group Study Exchangee. I was able to look closely at the government and economy of that crowded industrialised nation and, upon my return to Australia, I made the statement that Australia was short of two things: people, and capital. To develop our abounding potential we need more people and more capital. It therefore seems absurd to me that, when we are so short of people, 10 per cent of our people are unemployed. It seems absurd to me, also, that when we are short of capital, some unions impose demands upon our capital to the extent that people cannot, or will not, risk their capital.

The blame for much of our present economic problems can be laid squarely at the feet of some trade unions, and it seems wrong to me that our unions are still looking after those who retain their jobs and salaries, but deserting their members who have been retrenched. It is my earnest desire to see the people of Australia put aside the "them and us" attitude and realise that our future depends upon the development of the attitude "us", where the nation is one united work-force.

My hope of unity within Australia carries across to ethnic affairs, as well. I am concerned about the lack of unification between the Aboriginal community and the population at large. The referendum of 1967, which overwhelmingly voted in favour of assimilating the Aborigines into our society, resulted in the correct decision. I believe, also, that, if the same referendum were held today, we would achieve a similar result.

What concerns me is the Federal legislation proposed as a result of that referendum. Many of the initiatives pursued by the Federal Government I find to be counter-productive. Rather than assimilating the Aborigines, they are, in fact, creating a race apart.

To put the situation succinctly—I wholeheartedly support the Aboriginal community in its quest for self-dignity. But dignity comes from within; money cannot buy it. The things that concern me most are—

- (1) Legislation that grants land rights and mineral rights to the Aborigines, when other Australian landowners have no such mineral rights—a step sure to create disunity.
- (2) The extent of free legal aid available to Aborigines, free legal representation as far as the High Court of Australia. I believe that this is being abused to the extent that many Australians with a just grievance, knowing that they cannot hope to meet the legal costs that could emanate from a legal challenge, simply do not pursue their legal rights.
- (3) The nation and our State have first-class social security and welfare services that cater for all Australians, regardless of creed or colour. Why, then, cannot the Aborigines be assimilated into the mainstream of our population and simply be helped by these services, rather than have a separate department that sets them aside and perpetuates separateness?

It appears to me that our nation is desperately in need of some statesmanship on such issues, rather than the politicking that shapes so many of our decisions to date, with unfortunate consequences a very likely result.

The matter of electoral redistribution is debated frequently. The proponents of one vote, one value fly in the face of considered opinion from such an eminent political analyst as Professor Colin Hughes, who finds no great gerrymander in our electorate weightage. It is obvious that these same proponents of one vote, one value completely disregard the voting rights of individual nations at the United Nations, where votes are allocated to nations regardless of population. They also conveniently overlook the fact that each sovereign State of Australia is entitled to ten senators, regardless of population.

Closer to home, I am aware that the population within electorates of the greater Brisbane area varies enormously, yet there is no great call of gerrymander here. In my experience as a schoolteacher, I found that the vast majority of Brisbane and coastal-born teachers, when serving in the inland, could not get back to more favourable areas quickly enough. The Queensland Teachers Union repeatedly argues that inland remote areas are unfavourable areas to live in because of distance, difficulty of communication, cost of living and lack of facilities.

I find it rather hypocritical that these people and others like them who work for a while in inland Queensland, complain about the inaccessibility of the inland, yet when they return to favourable areas along the coast, take on the attitude of, "I'm all right, Jack, forget about the other fellow." From the tenor of my remarks, there can be no doubt that I fully support electoral weighting and I can assure this House I shall continue to support it, for I believe it to be correct and just.

The electorate of Condamine is a very fertile area, populated by a progressive and capable people. The grain and livestock produced in the area are equal to any in the nation. The initiatives taken by the people have heralded greater production and created new rural industries and services. The area does, however, have two resources that are not, as yet, being fully utilised. I speak of coal and people. In recent years, coal reserves in the hundreds of millions of tonnes have been proved in my electorate. In addition, we have hundreds of well-educated, intelligent young locals who have proved themselves against their peers throughout the State and yet many wither on the vine.

The incidence of youth unemployment in Condamine is much higher than the State and national average. The opportunity for career employment is also well below what can be expected in urban areas. For the good of this State and for the good of these young people of Condamine, I urge this House to accept the fact that we have a pocket of young people severely disadvantaged and that it is within our power to ensure that these two resources—coal and people—are fully developed. I am asking the honourable members of this House to put aside whatever local restrictions there may be to ensure that a railway and port complex are developed to allow development of this coal reserve for the overall advantage of the State and for the sake of these fine young people. Such a development would precipitate overall growth in Condamine and this, in itself, would give the area the extra population it needs to support another facility lacking in Condamine.

I speak of technical and further education facilities. The young people of Condamine are severely disadvantaged in this regard. Many miss out on tertiary education because it is beyond the financial capabilities of their parents to support them away from home to attend such institutions. The initiatives taken by the Minister for Education (the Hon. Lin Powell) in trialling TAFE courses in some high schools throughout the State are to be commended. Should these schemes prove to be successful, the resulting benefits to the young people of rural Queensland will be tremendous. The need for TAFE facilities for all students of Queensland today is equivalent to the need for secondary education for all in the 1960s—a need the Nicklin Government recognised and met.

Soil conservation and water harvesting are two allied issues within my electorate in need of State Government funding. With so much of Condamine's fertile soils now under cultivation and with the development of on-farm ring tanks and related head drains and tail drains, tremendous damage and inconvenience is being suffered by many land-owners.

The DPI has played its role in recommending stubble retention practices and providing soil conservation staff to advise on strip cropping and contour banks. However, the problems extend beyond the farm boundary and become a matter of the total water catchment area, which needs a co-ordinated approach. Such an approach can only be implemented and financed by a government. The development of flood irrigation schemes associated with ring tanks on individual farms can cause ill effects for neighbouring land-owners. I see the need here for some co-ordinated effort between land-owners and a State instrumentality that can come up with a policy suitable to all that is supervised by the instrumentality.

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): The honourable member for Condamine.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: You were at the stage where you discovered the stump.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the honourable member for Wolston and all other honourable members that maiden speeches will be heard in silence.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Before the luncheon recess I was speaking about the beef industry as a whole and in the Condamine area in particular. It is a very complex industry with many different aspects. It is in a state of flux at present following new initiatives associated with the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation. Of particular concern is the cost of inspection fees. There is a duplication of these services which I advocate should be overcome by having federal meat inspectors in charge of inspections at export works and State inspectors servicing the domestic abattoirs.

The Government should also assist the beef industry in its efforts to have the number of meat inspectors employed brought into line with the situation that existed in 1980. Today, most works are operating at about 50 per cent of 1980 killing capacity, yet they retain the same number of inspectors. In addition, the benefits and conditions given to those inspectors have increased in cost dramatically. Unless inspection costs are made more realistic, the future viability of the beef industry is in jeopardy. To make matters worse, Australia is the only nation among the major beef-exporting nations that charges the industry for such services. All of our competitors pay for such services out of consolidated revenue. The beef industry is a key exporter and its viability is essential for the well-being of Queensland.

This Government has co-operated with the grain industry in the establishment of the new Grain Handling Authority and its plans for port and rail developments. The grain industry has suffered a severe set-back with the financial crisis in the Queensland Grain-growers Association. I feel confident that the Government recognises the importance of the grain industry. I hope, when the QGGA can be specific about its situation and its needs, the Government will provide it with assistance.

The local authorities in the Condamine electorate face many problems. In particular, they are worried about the deterioration of our roads because of the above-average rainfall and floods in recent years.

The local authorities are stretched financially to even maintain existing roads and I will be pressing hard, as their parliamentary representative, for the upgrading of the road systems that are so vital for the transportation of local people and produce.

Those are but a few of the issues that I have identified as being in need of attention by this House. I look forward to being part of the legislative body that addresses itself to such problems.

May I conclude my maiden address to the House by informing honourable members that it has been my practice in life to treat all people as being of high regard, unless they prove themselves to be otherwise. I am well aware that many different points of view exist within the House and that we will have many differences of opinion, but I hope that, whilst I am the member for Condamine, I conduct myself in a manner befitting the Parliament of Queensland and make worthwhile contributions to the well-being of the State.

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (2.18 p.m.): I thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, for this opportunity to participate in the debate on the Address in Reply, and particularly for the opportunity to make this, my maiden speech, in this illustrious Chamber. I mean the words, "illustrious Chamber" because, although at times it may have been debased and may not have lived up to the high expectations held for it, it is still an illustrious Chamber. I do not make those comments based on any personal observation in my short tenure here, but on a reading of the editorial in yesterday's "Telegraph" This Chamber does represent the very essence of our way of life in Queensland. It is housed in a magnificent building, and I am very honoured and pleased, and a little intimidated, to be participating in the show that goes on here.

It is customary at this time to associate myself with the oath of loyalty. Therefore, on behalf of the electors of Cairns, I pledge my loyalty to the institutions of government. In fact, I go one step further. I pledge my loyalty to the principles that those institutions represent, because it is no good having institutions or symbols unless they have expression.

The principles that I refer to are those of democracy, freedom and responsible government. Sometimes those symbols are used to deny the very principles that they are supposed to represent. It has been suggested at times that that has happened in this House.

I pledge to the people of Cairns that I will use this Chamber to the best of my ability to promote their cause and to ensure that they get a fair deal from the Government of Queensland. I am of the opinion that, in the past, they have not always got a fair deal. I also pledge to use this Chamber in the right and proper way and not to abuse, or use irresponsibly, the privilege of free expression that this Chamber guarantees.

It is customary on an occasion such as this to congratulate the mover and seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I congratulate them on their speeches. I also take this opportunity to welcome the ladies. I have always believed that we should have more ladies in politics and in this Chamber. I am certain that they will bring their own distinctive character to the House and perhaps raise the tone somewhat. I support them in thanking His Excellency for his Speech.

Through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I express my congratulations to Mr Speaker on his election to that high office. I pledge to support him and offer him my co-operation in his stated endeavour to uphold the finest principles of the Westminster system, which was the subject of considerable debate yesterday when we were electing members of the parliamentary committees. Obviously you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and Mr Speaker have a very difficult job.

I congratulate all honourable members on their election. As my leader said this morning, we certainly do not share the same philosophy and opinions but, fundamentally, we are all here for the same purpose, that is, to make this great State of ours a better place in which to live.

I express my sincere appreciation to the people of Cairns for the faith and confidence they showed in me at the last election. I am deeply conscious of the honour they bestowed on me. My response will be to justify that confidence through diligent, full-time representation. I reaffirm today my pledge to represent everyone, irrespective of political persuasion.

I take advantage of this opportunity to publicly express my gratitude to the many people who assisted me during the campaign and on polling day. I thank my campaign director, members of the campaign committee, office workers, the people who worked on the polling booths, the scrutineers, members of the branches in the Cairns area and the many other supporters, particularly those who put their hands in their pockets to help pay for the increasing cost of running an election these days. I also thank my loyal friends, and my wife, my daughters and my parents for their assistance and moral encouragement. Without their encouragement and assistance, I would not be here today.

Whilst I am throwing bouquets, I express my appreciation of the assistance and guidance given to me by my predecessor, Mr Ray Jones. I pay a tribute to him. As honourable members know, because of the untimely closure of Parliament prior to the election, Ray was denied the opportunity of making a final address in this Chamber. I am sure that there were many things that he wished to say.

I have a great deal of respect for Ray Jones. We have worked together for the Labor movement in the Cairns area for a long time, towards similar ends. However it was not until I started campaigning for the seat of Cairns that I realised the immense popularity that Ray enjoys. I might say that it is a popularity that transcends political boundaries, and I think that that is a measure of the stature of the man.

He came from a very humble, working-class family. Before entering Parliament, he was a railway guard. He was a Labor man first, foremost and always. He never pretended to be anything other than what he was. I guess it is because of his humility, sincerity and generosity that he is held in such affectionate and high regard.

During the campaign, together with many hundreds of residents of Cairns, I had the honour of attending the function at which Ray Jones was presented with life membership of the ALP by the Prime Minister of Australia, Bob Hawke. It was a moving and memorable ceremony and, I believe, a fitting tribute to the person who was the longest serving parliamentary member for Cairns and the man in whose shoes I intend to follow. I am certain that all members, particularly those who knew him well, join with me in wishing Ray and his wife, Fay, a long and happy retirement together.

Although my winning margin in Cairns gave me a comfortable victory and an absolute majority, it was a little disappointing. I accept this insofar as there was a message in it for me and the ALP. To a large extent, I attribute the decrease in the majority to the loss of the personal vote for Ray Jones. However on only two occasions during the 18½ years that he spent in this Parliament—in 1966 and in that bad year for the ALP, 1974—his winning margin was reduced to a similar size.

I look forward to the future with a great deal of confidence. During the next three years I intend to move heaven and earth to build up my majority in the way that Ray Jones built up his. The seat of Cairns has virtually always been in the hands of the Labor Party. The Queensland Parliamentary Handbook shows that the first official Labor member for Cairns, John Mann—not the legendary Johnno Mann—was elected on 27 August 1904. Apart from a few years in the 1940s when the seat was held by Mr L. J. Barnes, who, I am told, was the son of the famous “Bombshell” Barnes—

An Honourable Member: Brother.

Mr De LACY: He was the brother of “Bombshell” Barnes. He held the seat of Cairns as an Independent Labor member. The Labor Party has held the seat ever since. I look forward to the future with confidence and with a conviction that this historical precedent will continue to prevail in this great northern city.

In his maiden speech Ray Jones said that the population of Cairns was 27 000 and that it was the seventh city in the State. The present population of Cairns statistical district is about 65 000 and, by my reckoning, it is the fourth city of the State behind Brisbane, Gold Coast and Townsville. It is on a par with Toowoomba and Ipswich. Cairns has an average daily visitor population of 8 000, which would put its population into the 70 000-category.

Over the last decade, the average annual growth rate of Cairns has been almost 5 per cent which, I am led to believe, is one of the highest sustained growth rates in the country. During that decade, the population has increased by more than 20 000. Because of this growth rate Cairns has emerged as a tourist centre of major national and international importance. In 1982, the region received 700 000 domestic and 60 000 international visitors.

It is appropriate in my maiden speech that I should refer to the reasons why Cairns is becoming such a prime tourist destination and why it is enjoying such a spectacular growth rate. I would also like to reflect on where that growth is leading Cairns.

Obviously, one of the major assets in Cairns is its vast array of natural tourist attractions. It is Australia's tropical paradise, and conjures up exotic images in the minds of most people. Honourable members know what I mean: lush green vegetation, swaying palm trees, blue waters and beautiful, tropical islands. When people arrive in Cairns, they are not disappointed with what they see.

Cairns itself reflects the life-style of the people. It is low-set, spread out and nestled among the trees. It has very wide streets and for this a debt is owed to some long-gone town-planner who had the courage and foresight to value grace and charm more than real estate. Cairns is not like some other towns—I will not name them—in which one can shake hands across the main street.

The natural attractions of the Cairns area are legendary. I stress that they are natural attractions and not artificial ones such as casinos and artificial reefs. I wish my parliamentary colleagues from Townsville all the very best with their casino and I share with them their concern at the way in which that project is dragging its feet. I know that in Cairns it is not always popular to espouse such a view, but I believe that Cairns does not need a casino. It has enough natural attractions to encourage as many visitors as we can accommodate. One of our most important attractions is the pleasant, low-key, friendly life-style which the people enjoy. To me a casino is at odds with that concept. When Cairns failed to secure the casino project and Townsville was successful, there was a great deal of wailing and gnashing of teeth in official circles but the average population breathed a healthy sigh of relief.

Whilst I am speaking about Townsville, I must mention that there is some resentment in Cairns about Townsville's artificial reef project. I believe that the resentment is not to the project itself or the initiative behind it, but to the State and Federal Government funding of an essentially commercial project, which inevitably means that less funds are left in the coffers for the provision of more necessary services.

I would like, however, to discuss further the natural attractions of the Cairns area. The most famous of all tourist attractions in Australia is the Great Barrier Reef and it is disturbing to learn of the high percentage of visitors to Australia who never see it, even though it is an international wonder and attraction. The reef is known internationally for its outstanding natural beauty and ecological value. It is more accessible from Cairns than elsewhere because it comes closest to the Queensland coast at that point. I could wax lyrical about the attractions of Cairns for most of my speech, but I will not bore honourable members.

I should mention the attractiveness of the coastline and the coastal lowlands which are surrounded by rain forests and hills that afford marvellous views of the coast and the beautiful gorges in the area. The Atherton Tableland, with its rich volcanic soil, is a scenic wonderland—the dairying country, the farm lands, the crater lakes, the dense rain forests, the rivers and the gorges.

The vast cattle lands are to the north and to the west. Lately the Aboriginal communities have been in the news. The little, quaint fishing villages and the old gold-rush towns add diversity and interest to what is the premier tourist destination of the north. I will not continually refer to those attractions. There are many problems associated with maintaining tourist attractions and sustaining development of the type that has taken place in Cairns in recent years. Some hard decisions need to be taken soon.

Cairns is enjoying an unprecedented growth rate. At present, it is in the middle of a building boom. I do not know how that accords with what is happening in the remainder of the State. I have been told by builders that they are all busy and that building approvals have increased dramatically.

However, Cairns is land-locked; there is no room for expansion. If Cairns is to expand, it has three options. One option is to expand and encroach further into the prime agricultural land, particularly on the southern side. The second option is to build up the hillsides, Hong Kong style. The third option is to build up in the air, Gold Coast style. Needless to say, all three options have their vocal critics, among whom I number myself. It illustrates that some very clever and proper planning is needed. The worst thing that the people of Cairns can do is stick their heads in the sand and pretend that everything is OK. Most of the things that we treasure and most of the things that we value are under threat, and unless we consciously work to ensure that they are preserved, they will no longer be there for the benefit of our children and future generations.

I never cease to be amazed by the fact that people are migrating and flocking to Cairns from all over Australia. Those persons are fleeing the concrete jungles and the rat-race of the southern cities. They are seeking a more tranquil, more human existence and a better life-style that can be offered in Cairns. As soon as those persons arrive in Cairns, they immediately set about re-creating the type of conditions from which they have just fled.

The worst possible thing that can happen would be to allow decisions on development to be made only by the developers themselves. The direction of Cairns cannot be left only in the hands of those people who are destined to make a great deal of money out of it.

Recently I was advised by members of the Far North Queensland Promotions Bureau that the sugar industry is set to become the second most important industry in the Cairns region; tourism is about to become the most important economic industry. The tourists who go to Cairns and who provide input into its economy go there to see the attractions to which I have already referred. If those attractions are not safeguarded, or if they are allowed to be downgraded and to become commonplace, the tourist industry will not prosper and the tourists will move on to other areas offering something unique that Cairns used to offer.

For those reasons, I welcome the Cabinet decision, announced on 26 September when Cabinet was assembled in Cairns in the Government's great pre-election stunt, to have prepared a Cairns area development strategy at a cost to the Government of \$100,000. I welcome that initiative. It is a step in the right direction. It accords with the views that I hold and which I have already expressed.

Naturally, I have some reservations about the study. I have a general concern, which I am sure is shared by many Opposition members, that too often in this State when studies into developmental projects are announced, such studies are really only post facto justifications of decisions that have already been taken, as I suspect that the Cabinet decision to have an inquiry into the road transport of sugar will be.

I am concerned also that the \$100,000 upper limit on the study may result in its being restricted and not sufficiently wide-ranging. I am concerned about the composition of the study group and its terms of reference which, incidentally, I have not seen. Another concern I have—and this always worries me—is that, although it is a worthwhile study, the valuable recommendations proposed will not be adhered to and will go into the too-hard basket.

To cite just one example of that happening, I refer to the PATA report, which resulted from an invitation by the Far North Queensland Promotions Bureau. The study was conducted by the Pacific Area Travel Association, which is based in California. The task force was made up of individuals who had travelled extensively and had broad professional experience within the tourist industry. The findings make the point that the tourist potential of the area is unlimited but that the quality and sophistication of the accommodation and other man-made facilities are not of the calibre to attract international travellers in large numbers or to provide satisfaction to those who incur the considerable expense of travelling to far-north Queensland.

I am pleased to point out that, since the study was completed, the Pacific International Hotel has been opened in Cairns. I am of the opinion that it meets the very highest international standards and is a great asset to our city and to the tourist industry. I acknowledge also that, when it is opened in March next year, the new Cairns International Airport—a \$32m development with all the associated facilities, air bridges and the like—will fill a very important need. I was never an enthusiastic supporter of the need for an international airport at Cairns. However, I accept that it is now a fait accompli and that it has generated and will generate a great deal of wealth and, more importantly, a large number of jobs. On the other hand, I am a little concerned about the cargo-cult mentality developing in Cairns round the notion of an international airport. There are those who think that it will be the panacea for all the evils in the area. That is not altogether a healthy notion.

I return to the PATA report. Though the members of the task force acknowledged the tremendous potential of the area, they made a number of sobering observations and recommendations. They said—

“A special sense of place is needed to justify the time and expense required to reach Cairns.”

They went on to say that a special appeal of the area is the life-style and the quality of life enjoyed by the residents of the region. I could not have put that better myself. The quality of life is certainly better than that enjoyed by members of this Parliament while it is in session. The report says that examples of existing charm are the luxuriant tropical plantings, the wide streets, raised houses, friendliness and humour of the people, the tradition of no tipping—I ask honourable members to remember when they come up in winter-time that they do not have to tip in Cairns—the history of the area, the patterns of settlement and Aboriginal culture. Commercial development has been dominant whilst community development and the conservation of its culture appear to be all but ignored. It appears that much of the recent development in the area has been at the expense of the best aspects of quality, history, community, races and style. It is these qualities and characteristics of the area that will best serve long-term quality tourism into the future. I concur wholeheartedly.

They go on to say—and again I agree—that, visually, Cairns is rapidly becoming commonplace and will, if not redirected, become virtually indistinguishable from all other Australian and American cities. The report makes the point—and again I agree—that, if the area is to develop its full potential, it will take a great deal of work by many skilled people not presently being mobilised, involved or consulted about the area's future development including planners, architects, historians, environmentalists, artists, actors, landscape architects, writers, librarians, publishers, poets, old-timers and school children. These people should be involved, not necessarily in travel development but in their own community development. The report states that their participation could weave a fabric that would enhance and support international tourism.

The report goes on to state that in order to initiate action the State and Federal Governments must take the lead and give a clear lead to local authorities. The local communities should be the implementers, but objectives, criteria and incentives must come from the State.

The sad thing about this comprehensive and in-depth report into the future development of the tourist industry in Cairns is that nobody has taken any notice of it. It made 40 recommendations, not one of which, as far as I am aware, has been implemented.

One of the recommendations is that there should be clearly stated standards and guidelines for the preservation and rehabilitation of outstanding natural features and important man-made structures. However, Bellevue-like, in the early hours of Sunday morning, 4 September this year, demolishers moved in and levelled the beautiful, old, historic Burns Philp building in Abbott Street. As I stood there watching that marvellous old building demolished under the hammer, I felt a sense of outrage that that kind of wilful disregard for important items of our heritage could occur without so much as a whimper in a so-called enlightened society. It was so contrary to the needs of the tourist industry and so out of line with the recommendations of the PATA report. My call to the Government is that when it begins the development strategy study it should go back to the PATA report, consider the observations and recommendations and begin from there. I will certainly be pushing for that to be done.

The great thing about Cairns is that it does not depend on a single industry. Tourism happens to be the growth industry at the moment and, therefore, it is the subject of a great deal of attention. However, Cairns has a diversified economy and a fairly broad industrial base. It is important that that industrial base be preserved, because it provides a balance to the economy and much needed job opportunities for the people of Cairns and their sons and daughters. North Queensland Engineers & Agents Pty Ltd is a large engineering and shipbuilding firm which depends to a large extent on Government contracts for its continued viability. I urge the State Government to do what it can to assist NQEA Pty Ltd to remain viable. Both from the point of view of providing jobs and also demonstrating that the Government is paying more than lip-service to the notion of decentralisation, that is important.

Despite all the things that Cairns has going for it and its rapid growth rate, it has an unemployment rate that is higher than the national average. By any standard, it is unacceptably high, and it has been estimated at as high as 20 per cent.

This problem of monumental proportions creates all kinds of associated problems. One that comes to my mind is social dislocation. The crime rate in the Cairns area is increasing alarmingly. It is now not advisable to walk around the streets of Cairns at night. There have been calls for more police, for police patrols and, earlier this year, there were experimental police patrols. I agree with the deterrent effect produced by a few policemen on the beat, and I support calls for both foot patrols and for more police. However, it is important to realise that the problem goes much deeper than that, that the main contributing problem is the lack of employment opportunities.

For most of this century, the economy of the Cairns region, and, in fact, the economy of the entire Queensland coastline, has been largely dependent upon the sugar industry. It is one of the most successful of Australia's primary industries, and certainly one of the most efficient. I attribute that to the fact that it is a very orderly organisation. The system of assignments, mill peaks and Government acquisition has led to a period of stability and prosperity unmatched by any other areas of Australian primary production.

It is interesting to note, however, that the stabilisation scheme that has led to the long period of stability and prosperity was introduced and refined many years ago by a Labor Government. It was accepted by the present Government without murmur. It seems to me that Government members tend to go round the countryside talking about free enterprise, but they never seemed to do very much to implement it, and I criticise them for that.

In recent years, however, the sugar industry has fallen on hard times. Last week a farmer said to me, "We can no longer be complacent about the future of the sugar industry. It is not certain that we will wake up every morning and the industry will still be there." That is a sobering thought.

Most of the problems that beset the sugar industry revolve around the question of price. Sugar farmers have been caught up in the cost-price squeeze that is so familiar to primary

producers around the country. I do not believe that in this speech I should canvass the reasons for the poor price, but there is one matter I should mention that augurs badly for the industry. I refer to the fall in the annual consumption of sugar in Australia.

Since 1979, consumption per head has fallen from 49.3 kg to 46 kg. That represents a cumulative loss of 51 000 tonnes of sugar per annum or, put another way, \$25m at current prices. If that trend continues the sugar industry has some bad times ahead. All I need to say is that I recognise that the sugar industry has a number of problems and I will certainly be talking about them at a later date. I recognise the industry's problem and the Labor Party recognises its problems. We will always be constructive. We are proud of the role we have played, both legislatively and in other ways, to make the industry secure and I, as the member for Cairns, will continue to be concerned and will be a vocal advocate for and on behalf of the sugar industry.

While I am talking about the sugar industry, I should mention one other issue that has surfaced recently. During the election campaign, the road transport of sugar was mentioned. Twenty years ago the sugar industry entered into a contract with the Railway Department to cart sugar from the three mills on the south side of Cairns to the bulk sugar terminal in Cairns. That contract is due to expire at the end of this crushing season. The mills have indicated that they are keen to change from rail to road transport. They maintain that it is cheaper. If in fact it is, I have some sympathy for them, because I understand the financial plight in which they find themselves. The mills have a responsibility to their growers and shareholders to do everything they can to cut costs.

However, I do not support the proposition to change from rail to road. I believe it is flying in the face of history and would be a retrograde step. All round the world there is a switch from road back to rail. It simply does not make sense to put more trucks on already overcrowded and congested roads when there is an underused railway system crying out for work.

The Government has an obligation to the wider community because many other issues and ramifications are involved in the decision to carry sugar by road, such as greatly increased congestion on an already congested road. The road system between Edmonton and Cairns is overcrowded and totally inadequate. The proposed southern heavy vehicle access will not solve the problem for the whole distance. Environmental, noise, air pollution and road-safety problems will be created. Children attending schools adjacent to the road will obviously face greater dangers.

The loss of the sugar contract will result in the immediate loss of 16 jobs. The railway workers are very concerned, and I share their concern. Only this week a special departmental committee in Cairns was looking at the workshops. The employees are concerned about their job security and their whole future.

Next week I will be presenting a petition signed by 4 500 concerned citizens of the area expressing concern and asking the Government to do what it can to keep sugar off the roads.

I welcome the Government's initiative to establish an education region based on Cairns. I am pleased that the Government was able to match the promise made by the Labor Party prior to the election. I am sure that some very real problems in the area will be solved when the promise is fulfilled.

Prior to the 1980 election, the then Minister for Education promised at the opening of the Woree State School that a new high school would be built on adjacent land. That promise was not honoured. The parents in the area and I believe that education was sacrificed for political reasons. Just prior to the last election, at the famous launching of the National Party's campaign in North Queensland, that promise was repeated. I am not as cynical as some of my colleagues. I am prepared to accept that promise at face value. I should record that my predecessor, Mr Ray Jones, told me that he had a personal assurance from the Minister for Works and Housing that this school would be built. I do not know the Minister very well, but Mr Jones told me that unlike others he could mention, the Minister for Works and Housing is a man of his word. I am prepared to accept Ray's judgment until I have reason to do otherwise.

(Time expired.)

Mr CAHILL (Aspley) (2.58 p.m.): I am very pleased to be following in the footsteps of the honourable member for Cairns who made his maiden speech in the House. He comes from probably the second most important town in North Queensland. I am sure that the honourable member for Mourilyan will agree with me on which is the most important town.

I reaffirm my loyalty and that of the electors of Aspley to Her Majesty the Queen. I thank the electorate for its faith in doing me the signal honour of having me represent it in the Parliament and as a member of the Government of Queensland.

I want it understood very clearly that Aspley is represented now by someone—very likely it was so represented before—who has an overwhelming faith and belief in Almighty God and all His powers and works. It was our Lord who said, "Without Me you can do nothing." I commend that quotation to certain members of the Labor Government in Canberra who, besotted with or brainwashed by secular, materialistic humanism, are determined to remove "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" from the councils of this nation. They will not impose their agnosticism on Queensland—certainly not as long as this Government guides our destinies and for the long time that the electors of Aspley, I trust, continue to return me as their representative in this place.

Mr Hooper: God willing!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I reminded the House a while ago that members making their maiden speeches will be heard in silence.

Mr CAHILL: Mr Deputy Speaker, would you please convey my congratulations to Mr Speaker on his elevation to the highest office in this Parliament and perhaps the most honourable in the State, given that he has become the guardian of the House of the people, which is the most important institution in this State. I know that he will fulfil his duties with his customary courtesy and impartiality, and I trust that the courtesy that he will extend to us will be reciprocated by all honourable members. I can assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker—and I ask you to pass my message on—that I will make my best endeavours in that regard.

The lady who represented Aspley in this place for the previous three years gave of her best for her constituents and, on their behalf, I thank her for that.

It is natural enough for a member to consider that his or her electorate is the best, or one of the better ones, in the State. If that were not the case, one presumably would not seek to represent it. Let me say a little about the electoral district of Aspley so that it may be shown that it is not an idle boast to say that it is an area that one is privileged to represent.

The schools in my electorate are the envy of many areas of Brisbane. I hope that the House will forgive me for having to read something. Chermside State School has 150 students and seven teachers. That shows how the Government has looked after its educational institutions. Craigslea State School has 612 students and 21 teachers, with six specialists and four aides. The ratio seems fairly good at that school. It has a large enrolment of handicapped children and does a splendid job. It has won the "tidy schools" competition. Aspley is a very tidy place. The people there have tidy minds; hence the representatives they return to Parliament. There is an outdoor adventure club at the school as well. Aspley State School has 718 students, 25 teachers, five specialists and four aides. That is another very good ratio.

The Aspley electorate has two independent schools as well as high schools, which I shall mention in a moment. St. Dymphna's School has 530 students, 20 teachers and 10 specialists. It is a splendid place. I was there recently with the Minister for Welfare Services and Ethnic Affairs. The school won the "Best Heart Condition Skip the Rope" competition. Naturally, it is very proud of that. St Flannan's School has 483 students, 17 teachers and one aide. The boys and girls out there win things all the time. Of course, being a church school, they attend to their Christian duties. A class mass is held each year. It is only a primary school, but the teachers encourage children in Years 5, 6 and 7 to attend "Eventide" at Sandgate, to bring together, as it were, the new generation and the generation in the autumn, or even the winter, of its life. For this, they are to be congratulated.

Aspley has two high schools—Craigslea High School and Aspley High School. Craigslea High School was planned as a prototype for a new building design for secondary schools in Queensland. It is a low-plan school. The design follows a faculty-based layout, which takes in various centres. Craigslea High School takes in some handicapped children. Some of them are quite severely handicapped, but they can be accommodated there and be part of the Craigslea High School community. The school has a teaching staff of 64, and the students number about 1 000. The pupil/teacher ratio is about 1 000 to 64, plus specialists and so forth. The school has three bands and engages in other multicultural activities. It is a first-class school.

Aspley State High School has an enrolment of 1 650 pupils. It has a minor problem but not in the teacher to student ratio. However, it has been there for 21 years. I can assure the headmaster that any problems the school has suffered in the past will be rectified as soon as the Government can tackle them. On that I have the word of the Minister for Education, who, when he is approached properly and talked to, tends to concentrate on the job he has to do and looks after the schools in the various electorates. I am sure that honourable members will agree with me on that.

The Aspley electorate contains some Special schools. In particular, it has a very fine one in Zillmere Road. All honourable members are invited to visit it to see the superb work done by the headmaster, Mr Swenson, and his staff. I would not know where to start to teach the children at that school. It is an achievement for them to be able to open a book, let alone read it. Those dedicated people teach at that school because they want to make useful citizens out of apparently useless children.

Of all the good schools in Aspley, the one I would most like to mention is this school for the handicapped. To describe the children of that school as "handicapped" would be to understate the situation, for they start off being handicapped in two or three ways. The teachers who look after these children are mostly young, fit and healthy persons and in the way they get on with their business they make me, as a high school teacher, ashamed.

A TAFE college is situated just outside Aspley, as is a very fine Church of England boys' school, St. Paul's. The Carseldine campus of the CAE is in Aspley so we are very well served with educational establishments.

However, while on the subject of education, I must say that I do not appreciate the attitude of some members of the Federal Government who would like to deprive independent schools of their rightful place in our community. Some people in the Government in Canberra would introduce a form of educational apartheid and make the independent schools different. If in the past the independent schools had been robbed by various Federal Governments, many members in this Assembly would not have received the education that they did receive. I refer to members on the other side of the Chamber as well as those on the Government side. At least six members of this Assembly received their education at Nudgee College. Some of those members are Dr Murphy, Mr Lester, Mr Price and Mr White. There are several members from Downlands, such as Mr Veivers, and from St. Ursula's. That is not to say that the great high schools of Queensland have not produced members of Parliament. Members have come from the primary schools, too—men who had to leave school at an early age.

Queensland needs a joint system of education. This State should not have to tolerate statements such as the one made by the private secretary to the Federal Minister for Education to the effect that parents who choose non-Government schools can be confident that the Government recognises that its policies on schools are based firmly on the concept of need. That lady or her advisers would go to a school that has gates costing \$50,000 outside it and would say, "That is a rich school; look at all the bricks." One can go to any of Queensland's top private schools in terms of education and say, "Because St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace, is sitting on \$4m worth of real estate, it is wealthy."

The editorial in "The Australian" of 12-13 November states—

"Reopening an old wound on state aid

At present about 13 per cent of the Commonwealth's education budget is directed to private schools. It also means that, if the private schools were to close, the additional cost to taxpayers would be \$800 million a year."

Tax-payers do not want to pay that sort of money. The Federal Government now proposes that the nexus should be broken so that all schools will receive less in 1984. So that I am not accused of having any religious bias, I would point out that all the schools subject to the cuts are protestant schools. The editorial continues—

“This has led to the inevitable suspicion that Catholic schools were deliberately excluded in order to resurrect sectarian differences . . .”

I hope that the Government and the Parliament will never rob the people of Queensland of their right to send their children to whatever school they choose and not be penalised for it by some socialistic, materialistic and agnostic Federal Government in Canberra.

Mr Hooper: That's good stuff!

Mr CAINILL: It is very good to see that one has an appreciative audience. We look after the elderly people. Perhaps the honourable member for Archerfield can retire to the salubrious surroundings of Aspley. A Uniting Church home for senior citizens and the Holy Spirit Home are located in the Aspley electorate. There is even a choir there. The people have a wonderful time. Every Sunday a great sing-song is had at religious services.

\$12m was spent by the Government to build the Prince Charles Hospital. It may be the number one cardiac unit in Australia. That is a very proud boast, in the proper sense of the word, of the Queensland Government. It is a wonderful hospital. With some pressure on the Minister for Health, it may be designated a general hospital.

The people of Aspley like to entertain themselves. They have a very fine bowls club, an RSL club, a bocce and bowls club for the Italian residents of the area, an Australian Rules club and a junior Rugby League club. Everyone is catered for.

There is something very special in Aspley. It is called Aspley Care. A group of concerned citizens look after people in trouble. At their own expense, they lease crisis homes so that if a man, his wife and two or three children have nowhere to go, there is a place at which they can live for a month at no charge.

I wish to refer to another place called Handihome. I thank the Minister for Lands for providing some land to Handihome. I hope that the Minister for Education, too, will agree to give us some land. Crippled children and adults need a spell. Units will be built for them so that they can have a short spell from their self-imposed burden for a week-end. Aspley is very proud of Handihome.

Seventy-nine per cent of the 19 700-odd people in the electorate of Aspley claim the Christian religion. Of the remaining group, a great number of persons professes a belief in a divine being.

Aspley has a high proportion of small business people. We are very proud of that. I thank the Government for creating a Ministry for Small Business so that the people of Aspley involved in small business have a source for guidance.

We do have some road congestion, it is true, but the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing has promised me that that problem will be solved in the next financial year.

I turn to our families. If I had to say what was the one significant thing about the electorate of Aspley I would say families. That is what the electorate is all about, and I do not say sneeringly, as Germaine Greer said several years ago, “Mother duck, father duck and all the little baby ducks.” The National Party says that families are the basis of society.

Anyone who has a bent for history would know that the way to destroy a society is to destroy its family units. Some people in this nation, with their secular humanistic approach, would destroy our family unit. If they do that, they destroy our society. It is up to all honourable members of this House to make sure that the family unit, in Queensland at least, is always preserved; not only that, but that it is fortified to make sure that our society stays the way we all want it.

I have heard the term “metropolitan mafia” mentioned in relation to those of us who were returned for the National Party in metropolitan or near-metropolitan electorates. There is no metropolitan mafia. We are all members of the National Party. We are all members

of the National Party, whether we are from somewhere in your general direction, Mr Deputy Speaker, or from out near the border. As the Right Honourable Doug Anthony, I think, said, "From Quilpie to Queen Street, from Cairns to Chermside—"

Mr Hooper: "I have a dream."

Mr CAHILL: And it came true! The dream of the National Party came true—from Quilpie to Queen Street, from the Gulf to the Gold Coast. Why did it come true? Because the harder we work, the luckier we get.

I mention north Queensland. These are my friends from Cairns and from Mourilyan. I acknowledge that my friends sit right round the Chamber. Philosophically, perhaps that is not so; but personally, yes, it is so.

I now intend to be a little more serious than I have been. When one first enters this place—this most important place; more important than the law courts or the police stations, because here we make the laws—if one acknowledges a sense of history, it is a solemn moment. Most of us would not be here if some, if not all, of our forbears had not built this great State. I would like to put into the record an acknowledgement of some of the families—not those who are knighted or even those who are sent to the House of Lords or somewhere else—that have helped build this State. For instance, there was my paternal grandfather, a Cobb & Co. coach driver; the O'Briens; the Courtneys; the Noones; the McAvoy's; the Quinns; the Lewis family; the Redmonds; the Knust family; the Dorfield family; the Bone family; and the Pethericks. Families such as those—and all honourable members could say this, but I want to say it about the people from whom I am descended or to whom I am in some way related—made this State, so that we could all sit here and make the laws in 1983.

One can never be elected without (a) votes and (b) tremendous support. All honourable members, of whatever political persuasion, would agree that, in the case of the three lady members, their spouses and, in the case of the rest of us, our wives had to put up with the bad hours, the tensions and all the other things we had to bear. One therefore must give credit, as I do, to Denise, my wife, and our children, who were with us all the way.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr CAHILL: I had a campaign director who is a lady. I know she will consider it a compliment when I say that I have had gentler football coaches in my time. She made sure that I won the seat.

There has been in the past, and there will be in times to come, criticism of the media in this State, some of it justified and some of it totally uninformed. All honourable members know that the media, be it electronic, print or whatever, can be a severe pain, and even a bigger pain when we do not want it to know something. However, usually its members find out, anyway. It is also a severe pain when it publishes or broadcasts something that is not quite accurate.

I would like to put on record a statement that I wish I had thought of, but I have to acknowledge that it came from Thomas Jefferson of the United States. He said—

"Were it left for me to decide whether we should have a Government without newspapers or newspapers without a Government, I should not hesitate for a moment to prefer the latter."

If the media prints or broadcasts what we do not like, that is tough luck. The day the media is gagged, we have totalitarianism—we have Russia; we have nazi-Germany; we have Cuba; and so it goes on. The media must be untrammelled. It behoves the members of the press and the media to make sure that that freedom does not become a licence. However, be that as it may, the media must be protected from any interference by any Government, and I commend that to the Federal Government in terms of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

As I have mentioned American politicians, I should mention another of the same time, Benjamin Franklin, who once said, during a very heated argument in the early 1770s when the people intended to rebel against British taxes, that if they did not hang together they would all hang separately.

Therefore, I am grateful to the Leader of the Opposition for his speech of 22 November, three days ago. I hope he will forgive me if I quote him, because he said—

“Accountability must start with each of us. Maybe this is the time for new members to realise that they are accountable to their electorates not just once every three years but on every occasion that they sit in this Parliament.”

If the honourable member does not mind my saying so, he could have directed that to all members. Earlier in his speech he said—

“As individual, private members of Parliament we have a responsibility to raise the image and standing of this Assembly and I suggest we might do that if we start thinking of what we say in this Assembly and if, while we make use of its privilege, we do not abuse that privilege.”

I am sure that he has commended his words to all members of his party and that they were taken to heart by all members on this side of the Chamber, by the members of the Liberal Party and by the Independent member. I hope that I—in fact all members—can live up to the high ideals set by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (3.26 p.m.): It is indeed an honour to come to this place to represent the electors of Ipswich. May I say at the outset in this, my first speech in this place, that I thank them for their confidence and support as expressed at the recent election.

As I say this, I am also thankful that I can avail myself of a rare opportunity to raise matters of relevance to the people of Ipswich, because 1983 has not been a happy year for the Legislative Assembly of Queensland. Although the public may think that it is not one of the most hard-working Chambers in Australia, it is very difficult to argue otherwise when it meets as infrequently as it has met this year. In the months preceding this session the House met for only 14 days and 10 minutes. The infrequency of sitting has meant that members have not been undertaking the responsibilities for which they were elected, that is, to avail themselves of this forum to raise issues of relevance to their constituents. That is why I regard it as an honour to participate in this debate today.

Over recent weeks the people of Ipswich, along with the people of Queensland, were bombarded with election propaganda which contained an enormous amount of distortion and half-truths, particularly in relation to the economic data that was thrown around.

A Government Member: Hear, hear!

Mr HAMILL: The honourable member who just interjected will, I am sure, join me in complimenting the member for Sandgate for putting the record straight with his comprehensive analysis of the economic situation in which Queenslanders find themselves.

In the election campaign we all heard the claim that Queensland has a vibrant and expanding economy, an economy characterised by job creation fostered by the policies of this Government. But I want to remind Government members of the true situation concerning employment and job creation in this State. Some Government members seem to be a little slow in learning—perhaps they are hard of hearing—because they continue to mouth the sort of statements which we heard with wearying repetition during the election campaign.

As I said, I want to remind them of the true position. My source is not any party manual; it is the reports of the Australian Bureau of Statistics on the economic climate of Queensland. Let me outline the record. In 12 months Queensland's unemployment rate has risen dramatically. In September 1982, 6.9 per cent of the work-force was unemployed. In September 1983 the percentage had risen to 9.7. In October, which is supposed to be the best time of the year for the labour market before it peaks again during the Christmas/new year period, unemployment in this State was running at 8.6 per cent or 1.7 per cent higher than it was last year.

That is not the whole story. Work-force participation rates for Queensland have been falling, and the raw figures of the number of people employed in this State indicate, with the minor exception of September, that for every month in 1983 fewer people have been employed on a month by month basis than for the same periods in 1982. The differences have been dramatic.

In February this year, 24 300 fewer people were employed in Queensland than in February last year. In July, the labour force had diminished by 14 900. In October, the most recent figures available, 15 600 fewer people were employed in Queensland than in the same month in 1982. Those figures represent real job losses that members of the Government should not run away from.

At the same time, the labour force in the State has increased dramatically. From June 1982 to June 1983 the increase was over 37 000. From August to August, it increased by 35 200. From September to September the increase was 35 500. Why did not Government members tell the people of Queensland these facts when they campaigned in the recent State election? The people of Queensland are entitled to know the true economic climate in which the Government is operating.

I remind Government members that no-one in this State is immune to the threat of unemployment. Some years ago, it was convenient for members of the Liberal and National Parties to brand young school-leavers who were unable to find jobs as dole bludgers. Will they apply the same term of abuse to those who presently find themselves unable to obtain employment in this State? Will they abuse the middle-age wage and salary earners, and the family people who, through no fault of their own, are unable to obtain employment in this State? What is even more alarming is that the period during which people are remaining unemployed in Queensland is increasing. Therefore, the period during which unemployment benefits are paid is lengthening.

The threat of unemployment is very real in the community today. The Government has closed its eyes to the economic reality of the State. The Premier sits like King Canute whilst unemployment increases in Queensland. He tends to gloss over, for the purposes of his own party's political advantage, the true economic recession that is engulfing this State.

Unemployment is a major problem in the electorate I represent. It is by far the most important issue facing the people of Ipswich today. And why not? I am pleased that the member for Somerset is in the Chamber because he has a great interest in the unemployment figures released by the Commonwealth Employment Service for the Ipswich area.

Government Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I have reminded the Chamber twice this afternoon that an honourable member making his maiden speech will be heard in silence.

Mr HAMILL: I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I remind the honourable member for Somerset that his electorate falls within the area covered by the CES in the city of Ipswich. I remind him also that 5 504 people in Ipswich and the surrounding district are unemployed and registered at the CES office in the city of Ipswich. Almost half of them are under 25 years of age. What a prospect for the young school-leavers who will enter the labour force in a couple of months' time! Even more alarming is the fact that about 40 per cent of those registered are aged between 25 and 44 years. To indicate the nature of the local and regional economy in the Ipswich area, which is an industrial centre, I point out that 68 per cent of those registered with the CES in Ipswich are seeking jobs in the mining, processing and transport industries. Many of them are skilled tradesmen and many others are semi-skilled and unskilled.

The Government has been pursuing policies that are actively creating unemployment in the Ipswich and West Moreton regions. It is creating unemployment and a climate of uncertainty. It is sapping the business confidence needed to ensure that employment in this area increases in 1984.

I need look no further than this Government's appalling record in dealing with Ipswich's coal and power industries. Shortly before the election a dispute took place at the Southern Cross colliery. Miners spent their days and nights underground to protest to the Government about their livelihood in the mining industry and the welfare of their families. In December, because of the ending of a Government contract to the Southern Cross colliery, 192 jobs were to be placed on the line.

But it does not end there. The closure of the Southern Cross colliery is only one part of the Government's overall program to downgrade employment in the West Moreton area by downgrading the Swanbank Power Station. That means that additional jobs will be lost not only in the power industry but also in the mining industry and in other industries in Ipswich that depend on the mining and power industries for their livelihood.

As I have said, the Government's record in this regard has not been a good one. It has treated the West Moreton community with contempt. Successive statements on the Government's intentions for the industry have been characterised by duplicity, to such an extent that they have created great uncertainty in West Moreton. Might I illustrate

that by referring to a statement that Cabinet made three years ago today. It announced that a \$300m coal order would be granted to the West Moreton collieries for the supply of coal to the Swanbank, Bulimba and Tennyson Power Stations. Cabinet stated that that would guarantee the life of the mines on the West Moreton field for 15 years. It also indicated that power output at Swanbank would be maintained at a maximum level. The statement is significant because not only was it made three years ago but it was made at the last Cabinet meeting before the 1980 State election. It is unfortunate that statements such as that are often forgotten in the fall-out after elections.

More recently, when the issue of employment at West Moreton was raised by the miners at Southern Cross, Mr F. A. McKay, the general manager of the Queensland Electricity Generating Board, chose to display a notice on the notice-board at the Swanbank Power Station. He stated, inter alia, that the electricity industry forecast the continued operation of Swanbank Power Station up to its maximum capability until at least 1992. I must say that that is news to the miners. If that were so, I am sure that they would not be losing jobs at Southern Cross and other collieries in the West Moreton field.

That is typical of the confidence tricks that the Government has pulled on the coal producers of West Moreton and the employees in that industry. One has only to look at the State Electricity Commission's own reports to get an indication of how much truth lies behind some of the more extravagant statements that have emanated from the Government.

The Queensland coal industry consultative committee gives a vastly different picture. A report given by one of those committees on 19 September this year clearly set out the estimated coal consumption for the State's power stations. Although the figures for Swanbank and Brisbane are lumped together, they are quite instructive, indicating to us the real situation that is prevailing in the power and coal industry in my area.

The present level of consumption for 1983 is 1.554 million tonnes. The estimated consumption for those same three power stations in 1990 is 705 000 tonnes. It seems to me that there is a slight difference. I am sure that even Government members realise that that represents a drop of more than 50 per cent in the coal consumption at those power stations. Unless there is some magic process that the Government has not announced to us, I suggest that it also indicates a downgrading of the operations at those power stations. Mr Deputy Speaker, I will be happy to table that document at the conclusion of my address.

If we look no further, we can see that the cessation of the contract to the Southern Cross collieries for their 320 000 tonnes of coal is the thin edge of the wedge in the progressive downgrading of Swanbank. The crisis that existed on the West Moreton field was ignored by the Government. The Minister for Mines and Energy at the time said that the whole exercise of the miners was a stunt designed to gain political advantage at the expense of the Government. In the "Daily Sun" of 13 October this year he was reported as saying that there was no chance of the Government's changing its mind about closing the mine. However, I am pleased that the Premier took no notice of his Minister. That seems to be the way in which the Government works. The Premier demonstrated a lack of confidence in the judgment of the Minister.

After some cajoling, the Premier spoke to the miners. His intervention at the last minute, which was one of the last-minute statements by the Government before the election, brought about a remedy that can only be described as a bandaid job for the Southern Cross colliery. However, the colliery has been given a stay of execution.

The Premier indicated that the Government will assist the colliery to supply 150 000 tonnes to the power station and to export 50 000 tonnes of coal. This statement is one of the most incredible made by the Government, but it is typical of the Government's statements and actions. Some Government assistance that has been given to the producers of West Moreton!

This week the House heard of the exorbitant rail freight charges that are being levied on the coal-producers. I suggest that the producers of West Moreton suffer most from these freight charges. The sort of "assistance" that the Government has given to the West Moreton producers is evidenced by the 21c per tonne increase in the freight charges levied on them. It now costs \$5.68 a tonne to transport West Moreton coal from

Parkhead near Box Flat colliery to Fisherman Islands. Even if markets existed for that coal, the addition of port handling charges to freight charges would make it virtually impossible for West Moreton producers to export coal.

There is an old saying, "You can take the boys out of the country, but you cannot take the country out of the boys." Something similar may be said about the policies of the National Party, because when one compares the exorbitant freight charges that are levied on the coal industry at West Moreton with the preferential treatment that is meted out to the Darling Downs grain-producers, one finds that it is much cheaper to transport grain by rail from Dalby to the Maynegrain terminal than it is to transport coal 55km from the West Moreton field to Fisherman Islands. That is an indictment of the Government and its attitude to the producers of West Moreton.

A comparison with other freight charges levied on other coal-producers in Queensland shows that the producers of West Moreton are discriminated against also by the rail freight policies pursued by the National Party Government. West Moreton producers pay 10c per tonne per kilometre to transport their steaming coal the short journey from the colliery to Fisherman Islands. However, the most expensive freight charge that is levied upon coal-producers in other parts of Queensland is that paid by Capcoal in the central Queensland fields on coal transported from German Creek to Hay Point. That cost, for that much longer distance, is \$18 per tonne, or 7c per tonne per kilometre. Quite clearly, the Queensland Government is screwing the coal industry in West Moreton.

That can be seen in the employment figures for the coal industry at West Moreton, which have diminished by 10 per cent in only 14 months. The loss of 125 jobs has resulted in the loss of \$3,755,000 to the regional economy of West Moreton. As the impact of this situation flows on to other industries, more jobs will be lost and the number of failed businesses will rise. The metal fabrication industry and other industries that exist to supply the mining industry suffer particularly because of the downturn in the industry. The impact will spread further. I ask the retailers and other business people in the Ipswich and West Moreton community to believe what the Mining Industry Council said—that for every job underground in the mine there are four and a half jobs elsewhere in the community.

That job loss will not stop at the mining industry or the power industry but will flow throughout the whole community to the detriment of everyone.

It is a shame that the Minister for Mines and Energy is not in the House at present. I wish to suggest a few policy changes that might be made to benefit the coal and power industries in West Moreton.

The need for an orderly marketing system is overdue. How many National Party members would advocate the destruction of the orderly marketing systems that exist for a whole range of primary produce in this State? It is about time that a marketing system existed for the coal industry. A situation in which individual coal companies are trying to undercut each other and undercut coal producers in other States to sell their coal cannot be tolerated. It means that the price of coal is being lowered to the detriment of everyone.

Further, the Government ought to honour the undertakings that it gave in 1980 for long-term contracts for the West Moreton field. The West Moreton field is crying out for a policy decision that will guarantee power generation at present levels at Swanbank, with the potential to add additional generation units at that power station.

As the Joint Coal Board and State Electricity Commission report of 1975 noted, Ipswich has the infrastructure and the skilled labour that are required to make a viable mining and power industry. Although the coal in the West Moreton field is difficult to win, underground mining must be kept in balance with open-cut mining, because if the Queensland Government continues to downgrade the role of underground mining and falls behind in open-cut developments, the State's readily accessible coal will be worked out. Queensland would then be forced to rely wholly and solely upon expensive underground production.

The Government must also move to alter its policies in relation to rail freights. I have mentioned the way in which the Government's policies on rail freights have crippled the industry in West Moreton. Let us examine the Government's record. Since 1980, rail freights have risen by 55 per cent in this, the so-called low-tax State of Australia. It is time that the Queensland Government forgot about its political rhetoric and followed

the example of the New South Wales Government, which knows how to help its coal industry. The Queensland Government should reduce its freight charges, as the New South Wales Government has already done.

The Premier made other promises to the miners of Southern Cross. He undertook to initiate a feasibility study into the West Moreton coal-fields and into the Swanbank Power Station. Yet the Minister for Mines and Energy, whose attitude has already been overruled by the Premier, came forward at the coal industry conference on 11 November—one of those fateful days in Australia's political history—and said, referring to the Southern Cross mine—

“On the debit side operations at the Southern Cross mine in the West Moreton field are to be wound down in 1984. The Government recently approved delivery of 150 000 tonnes beyond the conclusion of the Queensland Electricity Generating Board's contract to enable re-deployment of the present work force to be concluded during 1984.”

It would appear that the Minister for Mines and Energy has not heard about the feasibility study that the Premier had promised. It would appear that the Minister for Mines and Energy has already signed the warrant of execution for the Southern Cross colliery. I suggest that the Premier ought to remind the Minister of his statements on Remembrance Day this year. If the necessity arises, perhaps the Premier should date that undated letter of resignation which we understand the Minister for Mines and Energy had deposited with the Premier when he acceded to the Ministry in this State. For too long the people of Queensland, particularly those in the mining and power industries, and more particularly those in the area of Ipswich, have suffered because of the secret reports that have characterised the manner in which the Queensland Government does its business.

We have only to remember the Tarong Power House fiasco and how the Premier overruled a former Minister for Mines and Energy who advocated a power station for Millmerran. The present member for Cunningham was actually a strong advocate of the Millmerran site. As the member for Cunningham realised, that site had a \$259m advantage over the Premier's own choice of Tarong. Nevertheless, a secret report prevailed and the Premier rode roughshod over his own Minister and over the State Electricity Commission.

What is needed is real public accountability so that secret reports of the sort that seem to dominate the business of government in this State are presented in this place and examined by members of Parliament. That need was highlighted by the Leader of the Opposition in his speech on Tuesday. Scrutiny of that type is long overdue in the coal and power industry.

The change of political allegiance by the members for Wavell and Merthyr evoked a very strong condemnation from the people of Ipswich whom I represent. It is strange, but these former Liberal Ministers have become some sort of political Burke and Hare. They have managed to perfect the art of body-snatching by selling their own bodies for a reasonable sum to the National Party. That is, perhaps, one of the most cynical political exercises in the history of our State.

The activities of the member for Merthyr go further than this art of body-snatching. He is pursuing policies that have grave consequences for employment in another of the major industries in my electorate, the railways. The Government's record in dealing with railwaymen of this State is shabby in the extreme. After agreeing to the reasonable claim for a 38-hour week, the Government welshed on its agreement with the blue-collar workers of this State.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: In rising to a point of order, I regret that I am forced to do so during the maiden speech of my colleague from Ipswich. However, if we in the Chamber behaved like those members out in the lobby, you would pull us up, Mr Deputy Speaker. Quieten them down.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I ask for order in the Chamber.

Mr HAMILL: My two colleagues in the Ipswich area, Mr Gibbs and Mr Underwood, know full well the type of policies the Government is pursuing in relation to railwaymen. I suggest that perhaps one of the reasons why the National Party and Liberal Party fell on their faces in the Ipswich area at the last election is that the people of Ipswich were not taken in by the distortions that emanated from the mouths of their candidates. The Ipswich people remember the record of this Government on the 38-hour dispute. It would appear

that the Minister not only is not content with welshing on an agreement his Government made with its own blue-collar employees but also is waging some sort of personal vendetta against the railway employees of the State of Queensland.

One needs look no further than the P A Consultants report. Although it suggests that more work could be given to the Ipswich railway workshops, that would require an about-face by the Government on its policy. We all know that work is being taken away from the Government railway workshops and farmed out to companies not always in the State of Queensland. What does the consultants' report mean for railway employment? It has been estimated that the railway work-force will be reduced by some 10 000 over the next 10 years, and certainly by 7 000 over the next five years. But all is well. As reported in the "Sunday Sun" of 12 June this year, the then Liberal Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) stated that no jobs would be lost in Queensland Rail. The Minister said also—

"I have given a cast-iron guarantee."

We all know what the Minister's cast-iron guarantees are worth. I wonder whether it is the same guarantee as he gave the honourable member for Redcliffe when he was trying to enlist the loyalty of the former Liberal Ministers in waging the last election campaign. With the honourable member for Merthyr giving that sort of guarantee, it is little wonder that the employees of the Railway Department in Ipswich are worried about their jobs while he remains the Minister for Transport.

The Railway Department employs some 25 000 people in this State and has an annual pay-roll of \$434m. The effect of the P A Consultants report will mean a diminution in railway employment. A loss of freight from the Queensland rail system will mean a lessened need for rolling-stock, less maintenance of rolling-stock and, therefore, fewer jobs in the railway workshops at both Ipswich and Redbank.

I remind the Government that it must tread carefully when it deals with large public enterprises such as the railways, which cannot be simply looked at as purely profit-making undertakings. The Railway Department is there to provide a service and I dare say we would hear plenty of bleating from National Party members if some of those uneconomic, small, rural railway stations were closed down in the search for profitability. There would be great wailing if the passenger services were curtailed, because the public expects that the Queensland Government will operate a railway system designed to service the needs of this community. Therein lies the dilemma for the rail system. Does it provide that social service; does it maintain that employment? Or does it go after profit and profit alone?

Might I say that the railways also provide a major social service in this State, because many trades people working in a whole range of industries in the community gained their first trade training in the Queensland Government Railways. Not only does it provide a service, it also provides educational training to the people of Queensland. So when there is an attack on the railways, the social implications need to be considered. Of course, any diminution in the importance of the railways, coupled with the already diminished condition of the mining industry in Ipswich, would be catastrophic for the West Moreton region.

Although I have spent much time in discussing the employment needs of Ipswich, other pressing needs exist in my electorate. My election means that Ipswich has been returned to the fold of the Australian Labor Party in this place. Nevertheless the seat was formerly held for the previous coalition Government by the then Deputy Premier and Treasurer. However, despite the Government's control over the purse-strings, real needs still exist in the electorate of Ipswich. A real need exists for a new high school, as the present high school that services the electorate is overcrowded and its accommodation is overtaxed. As a former student of that school, I remember the accommodation that a National Party-led Government provided there in the form of temporary and demountable class-rooms, which have now been there for almost 20 years. That is a shocking indictment of the building policies of this Government and its care for the high school students in the Ipswich electorate.

A wry humour attaches to the Government's declaration of 1984 as the Year of the Family. I thought that one of the basic responsibilities of a Government was to look after families in the community by maintaining law and order and protecting its citizens. However, in Ipswich the Queensland Government has grossly neglected this responsibility. The police force in the Ipswich area is grossly understaffed. In the early hours of the morning the Ipswich Police District can operate only one patrol car,

a fact that was probably not unknown to the arsonist whose activities resulted in the burning down of the Bundamba State School earlier this week. For a long time the business community of Ipswich together with house-holders have been complaining because of the prevalence of breaking and entering and other petty crimes as well as the lack of police surveillance in the Ipswich area. It is time that the Government seriously considered accepting its responsibility to the citizens in the area.

Other real needs exist in the welfare and housing areas, and I will save my comments on them for another time.

One other subject that I want to mention before I conclude is the Westminster system of which we hear so much in this place. It almost brings tears to my eyes when honourable members opposite talk about the Westminster system in this place. Almost the only similarities are the green carpet and the central aisle.

Only yesterday this House discussed the membership of parliamentary committees. The Queensland Parliament is very deficient in parliamentary committees. Other Parliaments have committees such as a public accounts committee and a public works committee to scrutinise the business of government, as well as legislative committees to examine legislation before it is pushed through the parliamentary sausage-machine. This place has a Refreshment Rooms Committee and a Printing Committee. They have little to do with the actual legislative business of this place. Because of that, the legislation churned out has often been found lacking by the community. Unfortunately, there is much rhetoric about the Westminster system in practice in Queensland but it seems to be only practice. The system has never been perfected. Although there has been much rhetoric, little has been put into effect. The ruthless use of parliamentary numbers and the unprincipled stacking of such committees as exist in this place indicates one thing only—that the people of Queensland have an unresponsive and non-accountable Government, which is to their detriment.

Unless this Government wakes up and takes notice and unless it allows this place to operate in the manner in which it was designed to operate, it will pay the price; it will lose political support at the next election.

Mr COOPER (Roma) (4.2 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise for the first time as the new member for the electoral district of Roma to support the motion so ably moved by the honourable member for Pine Rivers and seconded by the honourable member for Greenslopes. I compliment both members on their constructive addresses.

I take this opportunity to pledge my loyalty and that of my constituents in the electorate of Roma to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I also pay tribute to His Excellency Sir James Ramsay and Lady Ramsay for the manner in which they carry out their duties. His Excellency is a most worthy representative of Her Majesty the Queen and, on behalf of the people of Roma, I sincerely thank him for his untiring dedication to duty and the statesmanlike manner in which he opened this session of Parliament.

I congratulate Mr Speaker on his election to such an important and high office, and I also congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment as Chairman of Committees, knowing full well that you both will carry out your duties in an exemplary manner and will ensure that this Parliament is conducted in a dignified and responsible style, free of wastage of time through unnecessary disruption.

This is, of course, a historic occasion. For the first time the National Party governs in its own right and is thus presented with an opportunity to provide Queensland with a long period of enlightened and progressive government based on the free enterprise system. I am honoured to be part of a Government which places great emphasis on performance and results for the benefit of all of the people of Queensland. I extend my sincere thanks to the people of Roma for their vote of confidence. I pledge to work tirelessly in their interests and to provide them with effective representation.

It would be remiss of me not to pay tribute at this time to my predecessor, Mr Ken Tomkins, who was the National Party member for Roma from 1967 until just recently. He gave over 16 years of service to his electorate and his State. During that time he became a Minister of the Crown and served with distinction in a number of portfolios.

Ken Tomkins is a man of honesty, humility and integrity. He is always affable, considerate and fair in his dealings with people. Those attributes doubtless gained approval from both sides of the House. Of his many supportive achievements, the effort that stands

out most and has meant more to the people of Queensland on a continuing basis than any other single thing was his fight to have death duties abolished. His personal performance is recorded in "Hansard" dated 10 October 1972 and, as his successor, I pledge to fight with vigour and determination against the reintroduction of iniquitous and vicious taxes. On behalf of the people of Roma I extend both official and personal thanks to Ken Tomkins for a job well done and wish him well in his retirement.

I wish to place on record my awareness of the tremendous growth and development of this State since non-Labor forces took over Government in 1957, and which has accelerated dramatically in the last 15 years. Thanks to decentralised Government, all areas of Queensland are receiving the benefit of the State's resources and that is as it should be.

I turn now to matters of importance and relevance to the Roma electorate. As Roma is the principal town in the electorate, I must dwell on that town and district for a moment. It is interesting to note that in Ken Tomkins's maiden speech in 1967, he said in reference to his predecessor, the late Bill Ewen—

"Perhaps his toughest problem was the negotiations between the Roma Abattoir Co-operative Association Ltd, Roma Meatworks Ltd, and the State Government for the building of the abattoir at Roma. These negotiations resulted in killing being commenced at the works in 1959. The works have been of untold benefit to the district".

Today, Roma Meatworks Ltd facilities have been purchased by Roma Meatpackers Ltd, a company of approximately 50 shareholders, most of whom are resident in the Roma area. Kilcoy Holdings Ltd, which operates the processing and exporting abattoir at Kilcoy, is a substantial shareholder. Although the first prospectus was deemed to have failed, considerable financial interest was evident in the local community, and today a second prospectus has been issued, the likely upshot of which will be that Roma Meatpackers Ltd will become a wholly owned subsidiary of Kilcoy Holdings Ltd.

The overall proposal to have the Roma Meatworks re-opened and operating has attracted considerable support. Its job-creation potential in the Roma area is widely recognised. It is expected to create 200-250 badly needed jobs. A new and interesting concept has been forthcoming through a potential employee's initiative to be involved and one that influenced Kilcoy Holdings Ltd to proceed, in that some \$340,000 has been pledged as share capital by approximately 150 potential employees from future earnings. It is apparent to the directors that a total of \$500,000 could be available from this source.

It is my desire to have the Government endorse this concept of worker participation by way of financial investment in the operation, which should lead to better industrial relations, job satisfaction and profitability. The suggestion at this stage is that the Government may assist the acquisition of shares by the employees by way of a loan at an interest rate acceptable to all concerned. I intend to work in close concert with representatives of Kilcoy Holdings Ltd and the Government on this proposal, because to have the works operating again in Roma will be of untold benefit to the entire community.

While I am on the subject of industry, I point out that it is worthy of note that oil and gas operations in the Roma-Surat basin have made an enormous impact, particularly during the past 10 years. Drilling companies, and the technical and service companies that are necessary, have established themselves in Roma, employing up to 550 people. When seismic crews and drilling operations increase, this work-force can increase to at least 700.

The Queensland Government has at all times encouraged the development and expansion of the oil and gas industries. It is pleasing to note a significant increase in drilling activity. During the next 12 months, some 60 new wells, at a minimum, will be drilled in the Roma-Surat basin. In addition, I commend the Government, and the Premier in particular, for their efforts in securing the Jackson pipeline for Queensland when, for a time, it could well have gone to South Australia or elsewhere.

As these industries expand, it will become more and more evident that the area will require a stable and reliable source of electricity. It appears that the grid is to be extended from Chinchilla to Roma and eventually beyond, thus putting at risk the future of the Roma Power Station. Although I commend the Government's policy of equalisation

of power costs throughout Queensland by 1986, I suggest that the Roma Power Station be kept operational to act as a supplement to the grid, particularly in time of emergency. The consumers of the supply area have become accustomed to a reliable, constant power source and wish it to remain so. They also request that the grid extension line to Roma and beyond be of the highest quality and standard and that the line be accessible at all times to enable repair gangs to act quickly in time of break-down. Deployment of manpower and planned use of this resource is of the utmost importance. I thank the Premier and the Minister for Mines and Energy for their co-operation and understanding and for confirming that employment by the South-West Queensland Electricity Board in Roma will not decrease but could well increase.

Another future requirement for Roma will be a fresh-water supply. At present, the town obtains its water from 14 subartesian wells, and it is a known fact that the water-table is dropping. In our forward planning, further examination of a report by the then Irrigation and Water Supply Commission in 1975, at the request of the Roma Town Council, may well be necessary, and I will pursue the matter with my colleague the Minister for Water Resources.

Having already mentioned the Roma Town Council of another year, I commend the present council for its proposal to build a new multipurpose civic centre. The matter has been discussed with the Premier, on site, and has received his commendation. The civic centre will include a cultural centre and theatre, art gallery, senior citizens' centre, library, council administration offices and chambers, a community welfare office and an office for the Blue Nurses. The town has long since had a genuine need for such a centre, and I am sure that the Government will assist, wherever possible, to turn it into a reality.

Prior to the election, it was my pleasure to have a number of Ministers, including the Premier, visit various parts of the electorate's extensive area. Matters discussed, apart from those already mentioned, included the Roma Police Station. It was discussed with the Police Minister, who, following his inspection, has had the building of a new station placed on a five-year priority list. Discussion also took place on the railway administration building, which, on the advice of the then Minister for Transport (Mr Turner), is to be replaced in this, the 1983-84 year, subject to Treasury approval. I can only recommend this approval at the earliest moment. I thank the Minister for Works and Housing for his assistance with the funding of the Jubilee Hall, a project undertaken by the Roma High School Parents and Citizens Association, for which it is to be commended.

The town of Roma is ideally placed and suited to be the hub of the west, and the key to the west. Many small businesses are active and viable, as is the case in most other towns, and I commend the Government's move to have small business promoted to that of a Ministry. This will give small business an identity in its own right and put it in the same league as tourism, mining and primary industry. I congratulate the new Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern) on his elevation to this important portfolio.

Education is of prime importance, of course, and the electorate of Roma rates high on the ladder of priority. There are some 30 schools in the electorate. It is my aim, and the aim of the National Party, to give our youth access to the best possible education and to preserve freedom of choice. Pre-school construction has been evident in recent times, with centres in Bluff, Dingo, Duinga, Springsure, Wallumbilla, Yuleba, Rolleston, and Roma, which has three. I name these centres to emphasise the even-handed provision of these vital educational facilities by this Government. I will be encouraging the involvement of the educators and the community at large to further stimulate the growth of education in the Roma electorate. The town of Roma is ideally suited for a mini-technical and further education college, and high school students from a wide radius would be involved. Such facilities go a long way towards assisting isolated areas retain their youth in the area. Efforts to have the Roma Primary School resited must be given priority; the school has served its purpose on its present site and more space is now required.

It pleases me that the Minister for Education will visit the electorate in early 1984 to assess the educational requirements of all our schools, and I have informed school principals of this impending visit. Some years ago the Maranoa Graziers Association, based in Roma, initiated moves to have an agricultural-type college established in the region. It is time to look again at this proposal and, with the support of the association and town council, I will be pursuing the appropriate avenues in a positive sense.

Turning now to health and welfare—the electorate has benefited greatly from concerned and responsive government, and the improvements to all areas have been a credit to the National Party, particularly over the last 15 years. Great strides have been made during this time to bring to west and central Queensland facilities of which we can be proud. Knowing the National Party's philosophy to continue to improve and update, I have no doubt that the electorate will continue to benefit.

Sketch plans for redevelopment of the Roma hospital have been approved and there is a real need to follow through to early fruition. Hospitals at Injune, Wallumbilla and Springsure are being continually assessed to further increase the range of modern medical services they provide.

The Health Department has established a base within the Roma electorate for the Flying Surgeon, which is a much appreciated and invaluable service to the people of the region. A very active Community Health Service program is operating and an aerial ambulance service is provided to Springsure.

Other initiatives of this Government include additional paramedical services such as radiography, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, which are so vital when distance prohibits regular visits to major centres for medical treatment. A branch of the Children's Services Department was established in 1981 to provide assistance in family crisis situations. We in the Roma electorate welcome these initiatives.

I have already made representations through the Minister for Welfare Services and Ethnic Affairs for the establishment of a Youth Employment Support Scheme centre. Such a scheme demonstrates a willingness to come to grips in a realistic manner with the problem of our unemployed youth.

As the electorate of Roma is mainly rural, primary industry is of major significance. Grain and oil-seeds, beef cattle and wool-growing provide a large slice of the State's wealth. Government initiatives to establish a rural industry development corporation and an arid zone research institute, and to upgrade the Rockhampton Veterinary Laboratory to provide full diagnostic facilities for animal industries, are to be commended. Assistance to producers during the recent drought and subsequent flooding has been widely acknowledged and appreciated. A good wheat harvest has just been experienced and, if followed with favourable seasons and market, will help considerably the viability of many producers.

In the northern part of the electorate based on Springsure, development has been more than merely significant, particularly in agriculture. In order to facilitate grain-handling and movement, the light gauge rail link between Springsure and Emerald will need to be upgraded. Agricultural development already mentioned will necessitate such a move at some time in the future. Large areas have been brought into grain and oil-seed production in what can be regarded as some of the best soil in the State. This soil is a national asset and Government and producer co-operation is essential to preserve it. I commend the work of the previous Minister for Primary Industries, in relation to soil conservation and, through him, the Government's initiative in adopting the basic principles of the Eather report on soil conservation services. I know that water conservation and irrigation projects, both major and private on-farm schemes, will remain high on the list of Government priorities, and I intend to support continued initiatives in this area.

To further clarify my position with regard to the rural sector, I unashamedly pledge my support to rural industry and its people. From a seasonal and marketing viewpoint, rural industries have not fared well in recent times, and these burdens have been exacerbated by uncaring and even vicious policies and taxes imposed by the present Federal Government. Built-in taxes such as indexed fuel and oil excise charges, massive increases in meat inspection fees (which in other comparable and competitive countries are met by the Government), the renegeing in part on the provision of funds promised to the wool industry, and the continued high tariff policy without adequate balancing, have all contributed detrimentally to the viability of primary producers. In spite of this treatment, I cannot over-emphasise the importance of primary industry to the national economy.

While on this subject, I am aware that land usage will be a major issue for years to come. Major changes will be necessary to protect our agricultural and pastoral lands for future generations. What form these changes will take will also be of prime importance. I believe that the majority of producers will be prepared to recognise that problems exist and will be prepared to come to grips with them. They will also recognise that self-control, self-regulation and self-discipline, combined with improved management techniques, will be far more practical and palatable than having controls imposed from outside bodies.

There is little doubt that farmers have a very real affection and feeling for the land. This can be demonstrated by the fact that they are often prepared to forgo a vast amount of income to sustain a life-style. Return on investment is pathetic in comparison to alternative investments. Farmers are concerned about how land is used, why it is used and about the quality of land management employed. Of course, this can be said of some more than of others. My belief is that we are only trustees of the land heritage and that we should husband the land in such a way that it remains productive from generation to generation. To do this will require a process of education and example-setting by those more aware and more advanced so that others may follow. We will need to integrate existing research material from all sources, to present it in a more practical form and to make it more accessible to land-users. The education process will involve others apart from farmers and pastoralists. It must involve land administration officers, politicians, scientists, extension officers and the tax-payer in order to let us win the battle against land degradation.

Where conservation is concerned and although large areas of Queensland have been set aside as national parks, there is a limit to how much more should be declared. Management of these areas should now be of top priority and, for further conservation measures, I support the National Party policy under which the National Parks and Wildlife Service will undertake a program to encourage land-holders to preserve parts of their property in its natural state and, as part of this policy, to explore incentive, such as the provision of concessional levels of valuation on areas worthy of protection.

I place on record my commitment to the many small towns within the Roma electorate. As I have resided in the small town of Wallumbilla for the past 20 years and as I have another two small towns in my shire of Bendemere, I can claim an understanding of the problems and pressures that small towns face. Government services, such as police, railway, schools and hospitals, must not be permitted to be downgraded, as they mean so much to the communities that they serve. Small towns have a lot to offer and have a right to exist, particularly where community involvement and pride are evident.

Placed in the northern half of the electorate is the Aboriginal reserve at Woorabinda. It comprises a township of some 600 to 700 people and a 52 000-acre cattle property. I have been most impressed with the management and operation of the community. The community council is to be commended and further encouraged to continue to develop, and I will lend my support to it through the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs and the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement.

As far as local government is concerned, the Roma electorate has four shire councils and a town council. My experience as a shire councillor for the past seven years has provided me with an understanding of local government and its associated problems. The mayor of Roma, shire chairmen, shire clerks, overseers and councillors are known personally to me, and I intend to be a strong advocate for and on behalf of local government.

Roads in rural electorates have always been a cause for concern and a great deal of money has been expended in this area. Rapid advancement in road construction and funding is evident. I will seek to maintain the level of expenditure and to work closely with councils to press the case for increased funding. Particular concerns in need of Government attention will be a grain roads submission at present being finalised and involving the two shires of Bauhinia and Duinga in my electorate. Other roadworks of prime importance will be the completion of the Carnarvon Development Road from Injune to Rolleston, which will establish an important link between north and south; the Duinga-Bauhinia road and the completion of the sealing of the Dawson Highway over the Expedition Range. Attention will also need to be given to the reconstruction and widening of the Warrego Highway through Bendemere and Bungil shires, a task which I realise will require assessment and planning.

Previous Government spending by the Minister for Main Roads, Local Government and Racing is acknowledged, particularly in the shires of Duinga and Bauhinia, where roads have required extensive funding. In his capacity as Minister for Racing, centres including Roma, Springsure, Dingo, Bluff and Duinga have all benefited substantially from improvements to racecourse facilities. These improvements are greatly appreciated and go a long way towards improving the quality of life in country areas.

While speaking of standards in another area, I would point out that air services to inland Queensland are of vital importance and must be maintained. The Government is acutely aware of maintaining inland air services to isolated and less populous regions. I will work closely to ensure that satisfactory services are maintained.

Tourism is of significance in the electorate, particularly in such areas as Carnarvon Gorge. Foresight and imagination are required in developing the potential of such beauty spots while ensuring that the natural environment is not placed in jeopardy. I have visited there with the previous Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts and I will maintain close contact with the new Minister to ensure that a sensible and reasonable balance is kept.

On the subject of sport, I place on record my desire to see Rugby League football matches returned to our television sets. The majority of our population receive only one television channel, so the choice is limited. I realise the difficulties in arranging and negotiating programs of this nature from one television company to another, but I seek the support of members in attempting to provide people in isolated areas with a wider range of sporting programs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I look forward to serving the people of my electorate of Roma and the people of this State, particularly through the Government. I regard it as an honour and a privilege, and I am aware of the deep responsibility entailed. The people have chosen a Government and a party which obviously have their interests and the interests of this vast State firmly in mind. That has been proved by the tremendous growth and development and the improved standard of living evidenced since 1957.

Prior to 1957 Queensland was regarded as the Cinderella State; it is now the envy of the Commonwealth. Balanced development and advancement have been brought about in large part by balanced political representation. Some political parties would have the bulk of representation centred in the more populous areas, to the absolute detriment of far-northern, western and country regions. Those vast areas restrict the availability of, and access to, parliamentary members, thus impairing the quality of representation when compared with that in the more closely settled electorates in which distance is not as great and communication is not nearly as difficult. The people of the more isolated regions are entitled to fair and balanced political representation and I support them fully. My support is even greater when that representation is through stable, responsible and reliable government such as this Government provides.

I pay special tribute to the National Party organisation in Brisbane and round the State. Dedicated staff and branch members have ensured a depth of strength and commitment to the high ideals that the party adheres to.

During my term in office, I will always be conscious of the need to represent all electors and not just sectional interests. I will endeavour at all times to ensure that representations on behalf of electors are above party politics.

I sincerely thank my wife and family who have assisted me so much by understanding the problems and pressures that abound during an election campaign.

I thank members opposite for having the courtesy to hear me in silence.

Mr COMBEN (Windsor) (4.28 p.m.): It is with a deep and genuine sense of pride, privilege and respect that I rise to speak in this place for the first time and to express the allegiance of the electors of Windsor. I feel proud and privileged to have been chosen by them as their representative in this Legislative Assembly Chamber. I am the first Labor member for Windsor in 27 years, the first since Tom Rasey changed his party and was roundly beaten by the Opposition at the following election. It is a lesson of political history that was learned by my immediate predecessor who, I am informed by the member for Archerfield, was known as the "Minister for Lurks and Perks" in this place. I am also reminded that it is a lesson of political history which will be learned by at least one Minister sitting opposite when the electors of Merthyr and Wavell next cast their vote.

During the luncheon recess I was speaking to one of my constituents, who reminded me of an occurrence in the Indian province of Andhra Pradesh in 1978, when Mrs Gandhi was making her political comeback. At the election, 180 people were elected to the Government side and 60 to the Opposition. Two days later, at the declaration of the poll, 40 people had crossed to the Government side, because on the Government side a person always got an extra perk—another job—because members were not well paid. That is probably what influenced at least two members on the Government side.

I feel great respect at being a member of this 123-year-old institution, this Legislature which, for so long, steered a leading and reforming course for Queensland. The milestones for so long were clear: the first Labor Government in the world; the Adult Franchise Act of 1905; a one vote, one value Electoral Districts Act in 1910, which is now totally forgotten by the other side; Australia's first compulsory voting legislation in 1915; the Sugar Acquisition Act of 1915, which took Queensland's sugar growers from a pauper's existence to that of a self-reliant primary producer (members opposite who owe their self-respect and bank balances to sugar should remember who gave them that status); full adult suffrage for local authority elections in 1920; the abolition of a useless Upper House in 1921; and in 1922 the first Australian State to abolish capital punishment.

A new member in this place today can but wonder about the lagging, reactionary policies of the past 27 years. However, because of the neglect of those years, I, as a new member in this place, can look forward to being part of the legislatively active Labor Government that will be elected in 1986 and that will introduce wide-ranging reforms, meaningful heritage legislation, one vote, one value electoral reform and a State Bill of Rights. I will be part of a Government that will restore public accountability and public respect, once again making this Chamber the centre of government in place of government by decree and government from Spring Hill.

I take this opportunity to thank the electors of Windsor for expressing their confidence in me on 22 October. The 1983 winning campaign in Windsor was built on extensive grass-roots support from private individuals and the individuals who comprised every local organisation. We have a healthy co-operative community spirit in most areas of the Windsor electorate and it is proper that I should record, not only on my behalf but also on behalf of all Windsor electors, appreciation to the people who create our community spirit. I refer to the members and executives of every Windsor community organisation, the churches, the Grange Progress Association, both senior citizens' clubs, each of the five major sporting clubs and every p. and c. association. These organisations are served by members and office-holders who work diligently and untiringly for a cause. As some here will be remembered, for both good and bad reasons, they will not be remembered in the annals of history; they will not be given a large superannuation payout when they resign; they will rarely be properly thanked for their years of service; yet they still serve a variety of needs uncomplainingly. Without such people, our community structure would disintegrate. To each such person, both I and the Windsor constituents say, "Thank you."

I also take this opportunity to record my sincere appreciation to the many people who assisted me during my election campaign. As all honourable members know, none of us would be here without the voluntary support of our local branch organisations and the hard work of our individual branch members, supporters and friends. It is to these people, working untiringly in the same way as the people to whom I referred previously, that the greatest thanks are due.

Special appreciation is due also to my wife, without whom none of the success of the Australian Labor Party in Windsor could have been possible. My campaign directors (Cliff Bratby and Alderman Ian Brusasco), my campaign secretary (Billie Watts), and toilers such as Eric Watson, Gerry Bree and many others all worked tirelessly for the campaign and the Labor cause, and I am pleased that they are in the gallery today to hear me express my thanks. We are all part of the Labor movement, which has a long and fine history—far longer and far finer than that of the other parties in this place.

The 1981 census showed that the Windsor electorate had 3 554 pension-aged people, with an unusually high percentage of aged females living alone. There were just over 5 000 school-aged children, and more recent figures from the Commonwealth Employment Service show that the level of unemployment amongst the youth of the area is unusually high. Each of these three groups has special urgent needs that I tried to highlight and promote during the election campaign. These urgent needs could be met by a caring, compassionate Government; but they are being totally ignored by honourable members opposite. The pension-aged people in Windsor, for whom, because of their age, I would have thought the Premier would have had special regard, want the security offered by fully staffed police stations open at all times in place of the "office hours only" service presently provided by the understaffed Stafford, Windsor and Newmarket Police Stations. These stations are understaffed because this so-called low-tax Government will not even spend enough money to maintain public safety.

The school-aged children need and deserve an education system that supplies, as of right, all the basic educational aids, not a system that relies on overburdened p. and c.s to supply even paper and pens by holding endless cake stalls and fetes. It is time that the cash grants and allowances given to schools to provide the basic necessities, which have not increased since 1979, were raised to a realistic level. These grants are not raised because this so-called low-tax Government will not spend enough money to maintain even minimal education levels. During the next three years, one of the themes of the Opposition will be that the cost of saying that Queensland has a low-tax Government is that the people of Queensland will lose out on major services throughout the State.

The youth of Windsor who have recently left school deserve employment, and the Hawke Labor Government in Canberra is doing all it can to provide "jobs, jobs and more jobs", but it is being frustrated by the cosy, contented conservatives opposite. Even if the Federal job creation moneys were to be totally taken up, the task ahead in this State would be only just beginning. The 27 years of neglect are now catching up with the Government.

I hope that in this Chamber in the years to come I will be able to properly represent the people of Windsor. Although I have, to this point, expressed my thanks to the Windsor electors and highlighted the problems facing some of my constituents, I cannot forget some words of Edmund Burke. The honourable member for Ipswich, who is behind me, would know, but I am sure that honourable members opposite would not know, the difference between Edmund Burke and Burke and Hare. Edmund Burke said—

"Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests, which interests each must maintain as an agent and advocate against other agents and advocates, but Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one State, with one interest: that of the whole where the general goodwill prevails—not local purposes, not local prejudices. A Member chosen from a constituency becomes a Member of the Parliament working for the interest of the whole State."

With those words in mind I, as a new member of this Parliament, would like to turn my attention to an issue that concerns me greatly and should certainly concern the whole State. Unfortunately, some 43 members on the Government side do not seem to be very interested in it.

The land mass that we know as Queensland has been shared by Homo sapiens and the birds and the bees for almost 40 000 years. For all but 200 of those years the balance has been reasonably equal. The hunter gatherers learned to live off the land and, by primitive methods, largely conserved the fauna. Then members of the Caucasian race of Homo sapiens appeared in this State. They were unable to live up to the translation of their Latin name—Man the Wise—and should in fact have been termed Homo insipitus—Man the Fool. It is a good term for the honourable member for Archerfield to remember when talking about Government members.

A delicate balance which had existed for 40 000 years was disrupted. Our native flora and fauna were plundered at an ever-increasing rate.

Today, the depletion of plant and animal species in Queensland and the world is proceeding so rapidly that, by the end of the century, humankind may well have witnessed the elimination of one million of our planet's 5-10 million species of organisms. Our concern at this horrific situation and the depletion of the planet's organisms should be based on a wide range of reasons. Because, once again, the Government does not seem to be interested in conservation and does not know why we should conserve, I will run through some of the reasons. Human welfare is directly affected by the marked depletion of species numbers because plants and animals provide sizeable contributions to agriculture, medicine and industry.

The economic reasons for conservation are compelling. In the United States alone, the economic worth of regular genetic infusions for modern crops is estimated at some \$700m a year. Yet Government members, gaining their hip-pocket bulk from having improved pasture strains and food-grain strains, seem to be uninterested in conserving anything, whether it be from our rain forests or pastoral areas. Across-the-counter sale of drugs derived from plants and animals now surpasses \$40 billion a year world-wide. In addition, some of these drugs have provided the basis for the world's miracle drugs which have provided spectacular cures, probably the most obvious in recent years being the treatment of leukaemia in children. Nowadays four out of five children recover, whereas 10 years ago it was only one in five. That drug was derived from a plant from the

Amazon rain forest; yet the Government still seems to be intent on wiping out rain forests. After all, a cow cannot be grazed in a rain forest. Many wild plant oils offer potential for the production of hydrocarbons—the petroleum plantations of the future.

The sales turnover of genetically engineered products may reach \$10 billion a year by the end of the decade, yet these benefits are currently derived from humankind's knowledge of only about 10 per cent of the plant kingdom's 250 000 flowering species. The animal kingdom has even more species, and we know even less about them.

Additional to these economic reasons for conservation is the fact that no species on this earth exists in isolation and the removal of a component from a system of interrelated parts must inevitably weaken the stability of the system as a whole. The problems that can affect the world's food sources when a delicate balance of nature is disturbed are well known. Queensland's prickly pear infestation and rabbit plagues earlier this century are good examples of the disruption of the natural environment and the natural process, and the economic cost to the State was enormous.

Conservation of natural areas is also required so that a human being's need for an aesthetically pleasing environment, and wilderness-type areas for the inner soul's emotional and physical well-being, can be met. We need a place to go so that when we leave this Chamber we can return to our sanity and our normal state.

On a purely emotional level, few Queenslanders would argue with the desirability of conservation. Fundamental to a majority view is the belief that our grandchildren should be entitled to the same diversity of environment and wildlife to which we are. I for one do not wish, when I am old, grey and past it—that is, aged about 73—to be asked by my grandchildren whether I ever saw the now endangered yellow-footed wallaby or a bridled nail-tailed wallaby. The platypus frog, the Queensland squirting cucumber and the paradise parrot have almost certainly disappeared forever from Queensland and the world. Although honourable members may smile at the loss of the Queensland squirting cucumber, nevertheless we do not know what it could have given to us and the world in the way of drugs. How many other species in this State have joined them, or are about to join them, in extinction? We cannot be certain; but, in the same way as hanging, extinction is irreversible and should be avoided—probably at the cost of one's life.

Now that I have dealt with the reasons for and rationale of conservation, I turn briefly to the Government's record of conservation in this State. The first legislative action in Queensland was on 10 August 1887, when Royal Assent was given to an Act to provide for the protection of native birds. From October to March each year, most native birds were protected. The first protection was given to native animals in Queensland in 1906, when, from November to April each year, native bears and possums were protected. All-year protection was conferred upon the tree kangaroo, wombat, platypus, echidna and pygmy glider.

The 1877 Act provided for the declaration of reserves. The first national park in Queensland was Witches Falls on Tamborine Mountain. It was proclaimed over an area of 131 ha. The action was taken following representations by the Tamborine Shire Council, and the park was declared on 24 March 1908. Early in the century, various field and naturalist clubs came into being, and the Queensland National Parks Association was founded in 1930.

Despite these promising early beginnings, the present situation is bleak because the State has suffered 27 years of neglect—27 years of development across the State. We have had 27 years of scrub being pulled, and 27 years of improved pastures being laid across the State. National parks cover only 1.94 per cent of the State. Outside of the parks, Queensland's soil, her natural ground cover, trees, birds and animals, are disappearing at an ever-increasing rate.

Many Government members will shortly not have seats. They will have been eroded to nothing by the wind and rain—not simply a gerrymandered erosion—which will put a boundary around their homesteads.

At least one in every 10 of the State's 547 indigenous birds, 331 reptiles, 88 amphibians and 149 mammals are rare, threatened or vulnerable. A total of almost 300 native species could well not see out the decade, and certainly not the end of the century, unless remedial measures are taken immediately.

The Queensland Fauna Protection Act, which the Government always holds up as wonderful legislation ensuring that Queensland's fauna is protected, has no teeth. It is totally useless, in that only individual specimens are protected and nothing is done for species overall. It is absurd that we protect the dugong and, at the same time, remove the sea-grass plains so that the dugong starve to death, while Government members say, "We did not harm them." The trouble in Queensland is the lack of protection, which means that trees and plants may be destroyed and the animals that depend on them for food and cover left with nowhere to go. Lack of protection is the real problem in the field of conservation in Queensland today.

Noah was the first great conservationist. He took the animals into the Ark two by two to avoid the great flood. I am sure that the Premier and the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts know the story and try to ape it. However, in the same way as Noah forgot the plants, so does the Queensland Government today. Of 158 major plant communities in Queensland now, only 91 have any sort of regional protection in the national parks scheme in Queensland. That leaves without protection more than 60 plant communities that are found nowhere else in the world. Probably the Premier's bulldozer could wipe out a unique species overnight.

We destroy plant communities—the only habitat of wild animals—in astonishingly diverse ways. Across the State, expanding towns, housing, industries, harbours, mines, cropland, grazing land and new plantations of trees or fruit can obliterate vital habitats. In New South Wales, one type of wallum in a small area in which only 30 specimens were known was destroyed when a new, large shopping centre was established and the car-park was built on top of the wallum. No-one had any seeds and the plant is lost forever. At Raby Bay, the dugong grass-beds are being destroyed. Then there is the brigalow in Central Queensland. I can understand that some of it needs to be destroyed, yet the poor old bridled nail-tailed wallaby—of which there are fewer than 200—likes the shade of the brigalow.

It seems that everywhere the mangrove is not any good; yet our fisheries are destroyed when the mangroves are destroyed. With the development of the coastal lowlands in the southern part of the State and further north, the wallum country is being destroyed. The many birds and small animals in those areas will be destroyed as those areas are destroyed. My colleague the member for Cairns spoke earlier of protecting the cane industry. He said that he would fight for it. I must remind all honourable members that all the lowlands that the sugar industry now covers were once lowland rain forest. That has largely gone for ever from Queensland.

The catalogue of degradation is almost endless, but the end result, either in other parts of the world or in Queensland, is the same: the habitat is destroyed, followed by the depletion of species after species, with their eventual disappearance for ever. We cannot wave a magic wand.

It follows from what I have said that the greatest need in conservation in this State today is to preserve as much of our native vegetation as possible. That is the underlying need. We have to conserve. If we do not conserve our vegetation, we can forget about our animals. We can forget about a vital part of our tourist industry and of our heritage for our young people and for our descendants.

This conservation of native vegetation can be undertaken by a range of methods, many of which have been undertaken in other States, but which the present Government refuses to address. It will not even consider them individually, let alone implement a concerted program so that people know that this State has been conserved.

Firstly, as far as possible, national parks should be declared over representative samples of all 158 Queensland plant communities. Since the creation of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1974, Queensland has had a great improvement in national park acquisitions. But the task ahead is still enormous.

Queensland, along with the Northern Territory, has the poorest representation—and thus, of course, conservation—of its major plant alliances of any Australian State or Territory. As I mentioned previously, less than 2 per cent of the State's area is covered by national parks, and only 91 of those major plant alliances are represented. We do not need to take over half the State, but we need to take over some hundreds of hectares from each of those representative samples, so that we know that we are conserving part of our heritage for the future.

The need for the protection of these plant communities is right across the State. Few people—certainly none in this Chamber—would be unaware of the campaign to save rain forest areas across the State or to preserve the great sand islands from the ravages and avarice of the miners; but few people are aware of the very great and pressing needs in the western inland areas. We city-based people hop in our motor cars, drive to those areas and think that they are nice flat country and a bit monotonous. In actual fact, they have their own breeds of mammals and small animals that we need to conserve, as much as we need to conserve anything in the rain forests.

In a recent article in a Queensland Conservation Council newsletter, Dr Greg Gordon of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service examined endangered Queensland mammals and concluded—

“The inland pastoral zones and the ground mammal fauna are still the areas of most concern so far as mammals are concerned. The ground mammal fauna in Queensland is still diminishing in the face of continuing development of grazing properties. Any development that leads to higher stocking rates—and these include such things as provision of extra watering points, introduction of better grasses or legumes and fencing of rangeland, as well as clearing of timber—will all lead to a deterioration of mammal habitat and further reduction of the mammal fauna. There is a great need for provision of secure habitat reservations in these inland areas. This is an issue that seems to be generally unrecognised by conservationists.”

I heartily concur with what he said. So often, conservationists hop on a bandwagon—I hope that I am numbered amongst them, although I do not know about the bandwagon bit—but they do not see where the real need is. Approximately 30 species of small marsupials are threatened at present. The need that Dr Gordon highlights must be met immediately. If it is not, the native grasses, herbage and mammals will be only dimly remembered names.

A measure complementary to the declaration of all national parks is needed to secure viable areas of plant communities and natural habitats outside of the parks, usually on land that is privately owned. Such areas of native vegetation are needed to provide wider habitats than can be preserved in the national parks alone.

The preservation of those additional areas can be achieved in a variety of ways. Voluntary co-operation from private land-owners would be most important. Some land-owners are prepared to assist in conservation measures and not just respond to their hip-pocket nerve.

An intensive education program should be begun aimed at showing land-holders that thoughtful clearing of native vegetation that leaves some virgin areas can be financially and aesthetically rewarding. If natural vegetation is left on either side of a creek for approximately a chain, shade areas are available to stock, less erosion is likely to take place from the watercourse, and it can be a useful, although limited, reserve for timber and fuel. Native vegetation can assist in natural control of salinity problems, which are becoming more common in the west of the State. The most important aspect of this proposal is the preservation of habitats for the native animals.

Other natural corridors and islands of bush or grassland can effectively be left on ridge-tops and valley bottoms. Native fauna can move within those areas as the seasons require.

I should add that during my seven years of labouring in western Queensland I formed the firm opinion that many land-holders realised as consciously as any city-based conservationist that our land and life forms were held in trust for future generations. Therefore many land-owners would readily support the simple but necessary measures that I have outlined.

Land-holders should be supported with financial incentives, because the measures should be implemented at the cost of the State. Conservationists are asking the land-owners to give up tracts of land that could later bring them a financial return, so I suggest that there should be a number of financial incentives to encourage land-owners to preserve natural habitats.

Thankfully I note that no longer are large Federal tax concessions given for clearing the bush. I remember working for one land-holder who cleared massive areas, not so that he could grow anything, but just so that he could get the tax concession taken off from the top of his wheat-crop return. The tax concession meant that the farmers

and graziers were paid to destroy Australia's heritage. Today people are searching for that heritage. In some areas of South Australia only 2 per cent of the native bushland is left. Queenslanders must ensure that that does not happen in this State.

Financial incentives to land-owners could take the form of having preserved land zoned "conservation" in town plans, with rate relief as a consequence. If fencing of fragile areas is necessary to prevent interference by domestic stock, it should be at the cost of the authority administering the scheme, not the land-holder. Similarly, the cost of the removal of feral animals and plants to preserve the integrity of the native vegetation should be borne by the State, just as it should meet some of the cost involved when it asks people in the city to surrender buildings that are part of our heritage.

Should the combined approach of an educational program and a voluntary preservation program be seen to be not working effectively, stronger measures could be needed. Unfortunately, I believe that there is a need for a heavier stick.

In the late 1970s, South Australia experimented with a vegetation retention scheme under its Heritage Act in which voluntary heritage covenants could be entered into. That scheme was not successful. All that happened was that the people concerned with the preservation of native flora and fauna entered into covenants but those who were destroying the natural habitat and who needed to be regulated took no notice.

So it is necessary that Queenslanders look at implementing vegetation clearance control regulations, similar to those implemented in South Australia under the Planning Act. Those regulations require a land-holder to obtain a permit before native vegetation is cleared or substantially interfered with. A permit will be given if the land in question is not of a unique type and provided that corridors and islands are being left for native fauna and flora.

I suggest that that method be used only as a last resort. It has been introduced into South Australia because that State has only 2 per cent of the native bushland remaining. The community cannot afford to have someone say that they are going to make a quick buck and have them wipe out what remains of the native bush.

Under the Heritage Acts of other States, land can be declared to be of agricultural, historical or environmental importance and so protected from destruction. Some areas can include natural land forms and ecosystems.

As every honourable member would know, Queensland has no such legislation. In fact Queensland is the only State that has no such legislation. As a result, a potentially useful tool in the fight to allow our wildlife to live is not available. Government members are able to conserve a species of political party that is virtually extinct elsewhere, but they do little to preserve our natural life forms. I hope that history remembers them in those terms. They belong to a political party that, like the party sitting behind me, will become extinct in 1986.

I referred earlier to the need for there to be assistance from local authorities. This applies also to the Brisbane City Council, which has been in the vanguard of concerned authorities. A conservation committee is already at work examining conservation needs in the city. I hope that that will lead to the permanent preservation of many of the local watercourses, such as Bulimba and Enoggera Creeks and Kedron Brook, as natural corridors in their original state. This south-eastern corner of the State is the most populated by human beings and the richest in fauna, as the recent wildlife survey conducted by the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland noted. The recommendations in that report on the employment of an urban wildlife ranger for the Brisbane Statistical Division, the creation of the position of environmental and conservation officer by the Brisbane City Council to aid conservation within the city, the formation at the University of Queensland veterinary school of a centre for research into problems of urban wildlife and assistance to community groups in the restoration of urban wildlife habitats, should be given careful study and should certainly, in my view, be implemented.

At present, the University of Queensland veterinary school is called upon regularly to doctor wild animals hurt in road accidents or caught when scrub is pulled. Each member of that school must contribute a certain amount of money each week to pay for the necessary medical supplies and to pay for the necessary surgeon. A non-commercial place to which hurt animals can be taken does not exist in Queensland.

Conservation would progress if the suggestions that I have put forward as a package were to be implemented throughout the State. The final result would be living collections for flora and fauna that would be well-preserved and maintained in perpetuity for the enjoyment and benefit of our descendants. Last year the National Parks and Wildlife Service spent approximately \$9m and if the Government is to allocate the very substantial sums of money needed to promote and achieve the goals outlined above, something tangible must be provided for the people of Queensland.

I suggest that this return could be in the form of a network of living education centres developed on the outskirts of representative large national parks. Those centres could incorporate all of the finer points of public animal observation and scientific research needs, such as those already being experimented with in the Arizona-Sonara Desert Museum, and the Dubbo Zoo and the Taronga Park Zoo to a lesser extent. Those educational centres would go far beyond the customary zoo which caters only for fact-cramming, sign-reading, throwing a few peanuts to the monkeys and having a lingering look at the bears.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, it is like coming into this Chamber. Instead of such a zoo, we should have a genuine educational and scientific centre with highly sophisticated means of observing our native flora and fauna in their natural habitats. The Arizona-Sonara Desert Museum has a very sophisticated method. It blends with the environment on the edge of the Sonara Desert. It is possible to view the underground sleeping quarters of a whole range of animals. The night animals can be observed by entering darkened chambers in which day and night are reversed. Visitors can see things at first hand. Young people can take an active interest and handle the desert reptiles and animals. Young people should be able to see and handle our fauna and learn to respect it. There is a great need for that. Today, our wildlife is abused by too many people who own a .22 rifle or an air rifle.

Living museums built in the natural environment would show Queensland's unique assets in the proper way. The cost would not be small, but the advantages would be enormous. Our full range of natural life could be displayed to visitors from round the world. They would know that the Queensland conservation and display methods were the best in the world. Queensland has the sun and the scenery. Let us be serious about conservation and tourism and let us strive for success. The Government says so much about tourism. This great State has the potential to become a world leader in yet another area.

Mr HENDERSON (Mt Gravatt) (5 p.m.): I commence by expressing my loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I make no apology for doing so. I am an unmitigated royalist of the highest order. Her Majesty does an extremely fine job indeed, so it is with great pleasure that, on behalf of my electorate of Mt Gravatt and myself, I express loyalty to our sovereign Majesty.

I express my loyalty also to the Australian flag, the Australian oath of allegiance, the Queen's Medal and the Imperial honours which remind us of the enormous role that the sovereign plays in our lives. I do so because I see in Australia today a deliberate and concerted attack upon those fine traditions. As long as I stand in this Parliament, I shall resist those attacks with great strength.

I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your elevation to your high and honoured office. I am certain that in your time as Speaker you will serve with great dignity, great wisdom and great insight. I look forward enormously to working with you. I extend my congratulations also to your deputy, the Chairman of Committees. I wish him well in his task.

Above all else, I congratulate the Premier of this State on a resounding and historic election win. The next three years will be enormously exciting and challenging for this State. Now that the National Party is able to implement its policies, the State will go from strength to strength. I eagerly look forward to working with the very distinguished and capable Premier of this State. I congratulate each of the Ministers elevated to that high office and say with great honesty that I look forward to working with them. I am certain that they will preside over the transformation of this State, its economy and its progress. I look forward with great excitement to being part of that transformation. I congratulate all members who have been elected to represent the people of Queensland. I look forward to working with each and every one of them.

My speech would not be complete if I did not congratulate the National Party of Australia, commencing with the State president (Sir Robert Sparkes) and moving down through the various officials of the organisation. They have done an enormous job, with great dignity, and have done it very well. Most importantly, they have done it for the benefit of Queensland. On behalf of my electorate and myself, I congratulate them.

My final congratulations are extended to the people of Queensland for having the wisdom and insight not to be duped by one of the greatest political confidence tricks attempted in the history of this State. I refer, of course, to the socialist attempt. Indeed, the socialists were so confident of victory that they openly paraded the idea that they would march up to the Premier's office on the Monday, take possession of the keys and boot out half of the senior public servants of our State. I thank the Premier for not allowing that to happen and congratulate the people of Queensland for not being conned.

I thank the electors of Mt Gravatt for having confidence in me and my party. I thank all those who helped me and supported me, the members of my family who stood behind me and the members of my church who gave me so much support.

Finally, I wish to clear up a misconception in the minds of many people who know me and have worked with me in Mt Gravatt. I say with profound sadness that my political opponents have not been at all slow in trying to exploit the confusion. For that reason, I read into "Hansard" the real position so that the confusion can be laid to rest here and now.

In recent years in the Mt Gravatt electorate there have in fact existed three Ian Hendersons. I shall deal with each of them in turn so that everybody will know who is who. The first Ian Henderson is a prominent member of the Australian Labor Party. He lived in Pine Mountain Road, Mt Gravatt, and formerly was a teaching fellow at the Griffith University. Among his many activities he was chairman of the Campaign Against Nuclear Power and very prominent in protest demonstrations. I believe that now he is on the personal staff of the Commonwealth Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Hayden). Deliberate attempts have been made to claim that I am that Ian Henderson. I am not; I am quite a different individual.

The very church to which I give some of my time and in which I worship has a pastor by the name of Ian Henderson. Pastor Ian W. Henderson is frequently confused with me. In fact, I am often called "Pastor Henderson". I am not Ian W. Henderson.

Finally there is myself, quite a distinctive individual and I think quite a talented one. As well as that, there has been an Australian snooker champion called Ian Henderson, who has given many demonstrations at the Garden City shopping complex at Mt Gravatt.

According to my critics, I am a member of both the ALP and the National Party, a leader of protest demonstrations against nuclear power, a great supporter of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, a great supporter of the Premier, an Australian snooker champion, a pastor of a church with a congregation of 2 500, deputy principal of a high school and so on. In short, there are many people who now believe I am Superman—either that, or Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. I assure this House that I am myself and I sincerely hope that in the future those misconceptions do not continue.

Like the honourable member for Aspley, I am very sad to note attempts by sections of the community to split the National Party into two groups, that is, the urban National Party and the rest. I stand here today to say that I am a member of the National Party of Australia, Queensland Division. I am not an urban Nat; I am not an urban mafia or anything like that; I am not a member of the National Party ginger group, as at least one television program tried to fantasise. I am very proud to be a member of the National Party.

The thing about the National Party that appeals to me is that it is a party of loyalty, unity and strength. Above all else, it is a party to which we believe we can subscribe without prejudicing any of our principles. That is what attracted me to the National Party and that is what will keep me in it.

I am very much a supporter of certain National Party policies that really represent the aspirations of the people of Queensland. I am a great disciple of free enterprise. I strongly believe that the National Party has an education policy of which we can be proud. Unlike the honourable member for Archerfield, I am a very, very strong supporter of the Queensland Police Force. I am proud of this State's employment record, its health

record and of the way it cares for people in all walks of life. Never under any circumstances will I be a party to any redistribution that is supposed to be based on the mis-named one vote, one value principle. People in rural areas deserve consideration in electoral matters and I shall stand in this Parliament and defend that right with every ounce of strength that I have.

I shall now look to the future and examine what I see happening in Queensland during the next three years. I see three years of very good, very sound and very stable government. I see the New South Wales Labor Government being defeated in the coming 12 months under an avalanche of protests. That will be the beginning of the fight back of the free-enterprise system in Australia. I believe, with great sincerity, that the days of the Hawke Government are numbered.

Mr Burns: He reads teacups.

Mr HENDERSON: No, I read minds; and the honourable member's mind is incapable of being read.

I am very proud that 1984 has been declared the Year of the Family, and I look forward to participating in the activities associated with it. That declaration is very important in view of the assault being made on family life in Australia today, particularly some attempts by the Commonwealth Government to destroy the family.

I want to read into the record of this Parliament my admiration for a Minister, the Honourable Vince Lester. For over 10 years my family has had the honour and duty—I do not call it a misfortune as many would—of nursing a total invalid who recently died. It was with profound sadness that I noticed the assaults that occurred in the media upon Vince Lester in relation to two simple issues—non-slip baths and toilet doors that open outwards.

I will remember till the day I die the program "Today Tonight" on Channel 9. In the afternoon before that program went to air I had taken a member of our family who was a total invalid for a drive. Unfortunately, that individual found it necessary to go to the toilet. Because there was no suitable toilet at K mart at Sunnybank, that individual suffered the indignity of having to defecate in public. That night I saw a program which was nothing more or less than an attempt to belittle Vince Lester on that very point. I rang up the producer of that program and challenged him to come out and look at the position my mother was in. He did not take up the challenge. I want to thank Vince Lester, as does every invalid in this State, for standing up on a simple principle like that.

Another member of my family broke a hip as a result of slipping in the bath, and subsequently died. I thank Vince Lester for the way he fought for the introduction of non-slip bath tubs. Vince has my undying praise because, in the face of belittling personal attacks, he stuck to his guns.

Let me now tell members a little about the electorate of Mt Gravatt. It is a very fine area of Brisbane, and among its many benefits are the large areas of forest, including the Toohey Forest Park, of which we are very proud. Mt Gravatt electorate contains some of the finest residential areas in Brisbane. Those members who have driven through Robertson, MacGregor and even parts of Sunnybank and Holland Park West would know the type of areas I represent. Residents are very proud of the open spaces which are of such great benefit to the electorate. The QEII complex is situated in the electorate. Some of the finest shopping centres in Queensland are located in the electorate. I live in a rather unique electorate, in which in any one week I can go to four major shopping centres and meet virtually everyone in the electorate, or a representative of every family. The electorate possesses one of the best transport systems in Brisbane in the form of the freeway. It also has a rapid bus system.

Within the electorate are some of the finest education institutions in Queensland, including the Griffith University, the Mt Gravatt campus of the Brisbane College of Advanced Education, numerous Catholic high schools and primary schools, and a number of State schools and State high schools. There are 18 educational institutions within the electorate.

However, the electorate is not without its problems, and I want to place on the record of this Parliament the types of improvements in the Mt Gravatt electorate that I will be arguing for.

First of all, I am mindful of the needs of senior citizens. I will be supporting and championing as much as possible the rights, the dignity and the hopes of senior citizens in my electorate. I am concerned that real estate values in the immediate vicinity of QEII are being

threatened by attempts to hold rock concerts, motocross racing, open air theatre, circuses and so on at that complex. I have written to the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing stating my opposition to such activities.

The electorate is not without its traffic problems. The South East Freeway passes through the electorate, as do the Pacific Highway, Kessels Road, Mains Road, and McCullough Street. All are major traffic arteries in Queensland and they are all within my electorate.

I am also mindful of the problems at Sunnybank and MacGregor State High Schools, the problem at Mimosa Creek, the threatened assault on Toohy Forest and the problems with the old Mt Gravatt Showground. I am also aware that, in some parts of the electorate, a few of the young folk seem to have nothing more to do with their time than make a nuisance of themselves.

In my time in this Parliament I want to involve myself in a number of areas. I look forward enormously to working with the Minister for Education and serving on his committee. His committee will consist of a group of very capable, experienced people. Their experience totals something over 100 years in education in this State. That will be to the advantage of Queensland students and this Parliament.

As I said earlier, I look forward to serving on the police committee with the member for Somerset. Much of what is said about the police today consists of muck-raking scandal. In the belief that the police are doing a fine job, I support them. I look forward to standing here and supporting them.

I will also be serving in the parliamentary committee of the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs. I am very interested in employment and the problems related to it. At my last school I was involved actively in programs designed to overcome the problems of transition from school to work. I look forward to bringing forward some of those ideas in this Parliament.

I am also on the committee of the Minister for Health. I do not know exactly how that happened, but I look forward to serving on it. I think a mistake must have been made; nonetheless, I look forward to serving on that committee. My experience with hospitals stems from practical experience with serious and profound illness that has occurred in our family.

In summing up my personal philosophy, I should say firstly that I am a great believer in the Westminster tradition of Parliament. Much is said, much is written and much is abused under the Westminster tradition; nonetheless, I believe in it.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr HENDERSON: With interest I heard an Opposition member say that only the National Party is involved. One of the great traditions of the Westminster system is that members listen to a maiden speech in silence. That member on the Opposition bench shows so little respect that he cannot observe a simple rule like that.

I believe that yesterday has passed. Perhaps there are lessons to be learned from yesterday, but yesterday is not really important. Today is here and now, and it is our job to live it. Tomorrow is filled with challenges and possibilities. I want to be a part of it.

I guess it is true to say that there are only three kinds of people in the world today. No doubt many members have heard this truism: there are those who do not know what is going on. The Government of Queensland obviously knows what is going on. That is why it is in the Government benches. The second group of people comprises those who watch what is going on. One of the tragedies of being in the Opposition is that its members can simply watch what is going on and have no real input. The third group comprises people who make things happen. I am pleased to be part of a Government that, in the history of Queensland, is certainly going to make things happen.

I look forward in the next three years to being part of a challenging, very exciting and very growth-oriented period in this State.

I listened with considerable interest to what was said by the member for Ipswich. His litany of pessimism about this State obviously resides in the realm of fantasy. I can give him one bit of advice, namely, that if he thinks things are crook here, he should get into his car and drive over the border to look at what is going on in New South Wales.

Debate, on motion of Mr Wharton, adjourned.

STOCK ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Stock Act 1915-1981 and the Poultry Industry Act 1946-1979 each in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) (5.21 p.m.): I move—

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

Honourable members would be aware that on 4 August 1983, my predecessor as Minister for Primary Industries, the Honourable Mike Ahern, introduced a Bill to amend the Stock Act 1915-1981 and the Poultry Industry Act 1946-1979. This Bill is the same Bill as was previously introduced. I will, therefore, only highlight some of the major points and refer honourable members to page 195 of “Hansard” of 4 August 1983, where the original second-reading speech can be found.

The major amendment proposed in this Bill relates to the introduction of long-term concessional stock permits. These permits will allow stock-owners to obtain permits which will be valid for up to five years and for an unlimited number of journeys.

If a stock-owner's property is classified as disease free, he will be able to move his sheep or cattle regularly to particular saleyards or abattoirs, or his horses to particular destinations. This will remove the present onerous requirement to obtain a permit from an inspector for each and every movement.

Honourable members can be assured that, where disease restrictions apply or where stock movements are from tick-infested to tick-free areas, the present requirement for a separate permit for each movement will be retained.

It is anticipated that this measure will bring a degree of self-control to the industry and, at the same time, reduce the work-load of both producers and inspectors. Instead of requiring the person in charge of travelling stock to carry a concessional permit and a way-bill on every movement, he will, in future, only need to be in possession of a document known as a travelling stock declaration. This declaration will contain essential details from the concessional permit as well as incorporate the present way-bill schedule in which the stock being travelled must be fully described.

To assist in the trace-back of diseases, it is proposed to increase the period for which way-bill documentation must be retained by the purchaser of stock. The present requirement for six months retention will be increased to 12 months. The present six month period has been found insufficient for disease trace-back purposes.

Provision has also been made for a system of automatic cancellation of stock permits when an outbreak of an exotic disease is notified under the provisions of the Exotic Diseases in Animals Act. This will ensure that, in the case of an outbreak in an area where a large number of permits have been issued, all movements of a particular class of stock can be prohibited immediately. Under such circumstances, cancellation of individual permits by inspectors would be quite impracticable.

On the advice of the Auditor-General, provision has been made to ensure that accounting procedures associated with the payment of compensation for stock destroyed are more streamlined.

The amendment proposed to the Poultry Industry Act is of an administrative nature only and has already been adequately dealt with previously.

The proposed amendments, particularly those dealing with the extension of the concessional permit provisions, have received the general support of industry.

The high standard of disease control that has been established in Queensland will in no way be compromised by these changes. The method of identifying travelling stock is maintained and disease and ownership trace-back will be enhanced.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Kruger, adjourned.

FISHING INDUSTRY ORGANIZATION AND MARKETING ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act 1982-1983 and the Fisheries Act 1976-1982 each in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) (5.27 p.m.): I move—

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

The Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act and Another Act Amendment Bill 1983 originally was introduced into the House on 4 August 1983 by my colleague the then Minister for Primary Industries the Honourable Mike Ahern. Honourable members may wish to refer to page 197 of “Hansard” of 4 August 1983 where the initial second reading speech can be found.

This Bill is the same Bill as previously presented and as that is the case, I do not propose to repeat the detail contained in that speech. Rather I simply wish to highlight the main aspects of the Bill.

The Bill introduces the final steps in a planned series of changes to place the management of the Queensland fishing industry in the hands of an industry-based organisation, namely the Queensland Fish Management Authority.

Honourable members will recall that the original legislation, the Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act 1982, provided for the constitution of the authority as the major regulatory body for the industry. It also provided for the reconstitution of the Queensland Fish Board, and the constitution of a fish promotion advisory committee.

The major functions of the authority, which is now operative, are the management of the harvesting and marketing of fish and the issuing of licences for the catching and marketing sectors within the fishing industry.

The proposed amendments will effect the transfer of a number of related powers to the authority from the Department of Primary Industries and the Queensland Fish Board. These related powers are concerned primarily with the catching sector and include the power to declare closed seasons, closed waters, allowable apparatus and the protection of specific species of fish. This will ensure that all necessary powers relating to licensing and management activities within the fishing industry are contained in the one Act, namely the Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act.

The powers and functions referred to are not new. They are simply being transferred to provide for a more economical and more practical administrative structure within the industry.

It is also proposed that the organisational structure of the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation be changed so that membership of the organisation is more clearly defined. This amendment will allow fishermen to continue to organise themselves for their benefit and for the benefit of the industry.

Honourable members will be aware that by a series of moves over the last two and a half years we have been able to improve the position in most aspects of the fishing industry. The intention of this Bill is to complete the basic changes necessary in the legislative and organisational structure of the industry. It is my intention to continue to monitor future changes in the industry and to make whatever adjustments are necessary to ensure a continuing and viable fishing industry for the future.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Kruger, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 5.30 p.m.
