

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 1983

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

PAPERS

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

Report of the Golden Casket Art Union Office for the year ended 30 June 1983.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Order in Council under the Police Act 1937-1980

Report of the Queensland Coal Board for the year ended 30 June 1983.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Sir Edward Williams

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (11.3 a.m.), by leave: Accusations made yesterday by the member for Wolston undoubtedly reflect the Australian Labor Party's policy and thinking towards drug-taking and drug-trafficking. Its stated policy is to legalise the personal production and use of drugs.

Mr Bjelke-Petersen: That is their policy.

Mr HARPER: Yes, it is, and that is borne out by the attack mounted yesterday by the honourable member for Wolston.

The honourable member was being consistent with his party's attitudes in his effort to denigrate the valuable contribution made to our understanding of the present and potential drug problem by a judge of the Supreme Court, Sir Edward Williams. It was a premeditated attack on a man who, as a judge of the Supreme Court, cannot defend himself in this place. It is my information that Sir Edward Williams has not been to Japan as alleged and has, in fact, remained in Hong Kong where the conference is being held.

I should point out that His Honour is not in fact on leave. He returned a week early from a period of leave to allow him to attend the conference.

Honourable members will recall that Sir Edward conducted the Australian Royal Commission of Inquiry into Drugs from October 1977 to September 1980. His report has received wide acceptance in the community and has led to his being recognised throughout Australia as the national authority on drug problems.

The Honourable Sir Edward Williams, KCMG, KBE, judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland, was appointed a member of the International Narcotics Control Board for a term of five years from 2 March 1982. The International Narcotics Control Board is a United Nations body which controls legal, international trade in narcotic substances. Sir Edward, who was nominated by the Commonwealth Government, was elected as a member as a result of voting by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. His nomination was approved by the Queensland Government. His services are required for at least two mandatory sessions each calendar year consisting of an average total period of 30 days per year. All costs (except salary) are met by the United Nations.

On 8 November 1983, Sir Edward called on me to request permission to attend as a representative of the International Narcotics Control Board, an international meeting of drug authorities in Hong Kong to be held from 28 November 1983 to 3 December 1983. Having regard to all the circumstances—many of which are certainly not available to the member for Wolston—I submitted the matter for determination by Cabinet, with my personal recommendation that, in this instance, Sir Edward's attendance at the meeting of international drug authorities be approved.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Declaration of Cape Tribulation-Bloomfield Road Reserve as National Park

From Mr Tenni (1 639 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will revoke the gazetted road reserve between Cape Tribulation and Bloomfield and declare it as part of the national park.

Protection of State Sovereignty

From Mr McPhie (16 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take certain steps to defend the sovereignty of the State.

Petitions received.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice by members were answered as follows—

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?

(Originally asked on 25 November 1983.)

Answer—

Loans from the Commission's home-ownership schemes are at first provisional loan offers, then approved loans. There is a firm commitment to pay once a loan is approved. It is then advanced quickly in purchase cases or over a period, at times

up to 6 months, for construction cases. The amount advanced is paid against the approved loan commitment and has therefore no relationship to the loans approved for the same period. It is therefore appropriate to deal with number of approvals, their value and payments or advances made under the schemes for the periods requested. This brief explanation is necessary to avoid any misrepresentation of the following home-ownership finance statistics.

(1) Loans approved, value and amount advanced to 30 June 1983—

Schemes	Number of Approvals	Value	Advanced
(a) Previous scheme to 31-7-82 ..	182	\$m 5.8	\$m 10.2
(b) Interest subsidy from 1-8-82 ..	2 108	65.8	57.6
(c) Commercial	179	6.0	5.4
Totals	2 469	\$77.6 m	\$73.2 m

In addition, at 30 June 1983, 527 provisional loan offers had been made.

(2) (a) 8 per cent (increases to 9 per cent from 1.1.84); (b) 12 per cent; and (c) 13½ per cent loans to \$35,000; 14½ per cent loans from \$35,001 to \$40,000; 15 per cent loans from \$40,001 to \$50,000.

Movement of interest rates by banks and building societies is being watched and commission rates will be adjusted when rates stabilise.

(3) (a) 1 069 at 30 June, 1983; (b) \$357,032; and (c) because of the mixture of funds used for commission activities within the Queensland Housing Commission Fund, it is not possible to calculate the excess of interest received from borrowers over interest paid. It is also not possible to give an excess interest figure for the Home Purchase Assistance Account relevant only to the Interest Subsidy Home Ownership Scheme. However, total excess interest in this account for 1982-83 was \$4.5m.

(4 & 5) To 18 November 1983—

Schemes	Number of Approvals	Value	Advanced
Previous scheme	\$m ..	\$m .05
Interest subsidy	1,109	37.9	38.2
Commercial	30	1.2	1.2
TOTALS	1,139	\$39.1m	\$39.45m

In addition, at 18 November 1983, 648 provisional loan offers had been made.

(6) Metropolitan 2 685; Country 538.

1. Interstate Pensioner Travel Concessions

Mr Milliner asked the Premier and Treasurer—

With reference to a press statement during November 1980 by both him and the then Minister for Welfare Services (Mr Terry White) which stated, among other things, “that the Queensland Government was willing to provide in Queensland reciprocal travel for pensioners as is enjoyed by all other pensioners in Australia”—

What action has been taken by the Queensland Government and all other State Governments to achieve reciprocal pensioner travel concessions interstate?

Answer—

Arrangements for Queensland to participate in the scheme under which reciprocal concessions are offered to interstate pensioners on public transport have been completed. The transport Ministers in each of the other States and Territories have been advised that pensioner concessions will be available on urban public transport (including rail) in Queensland for residents in their States or Territories from 1 October 1983. Advice has been received from a number of other States and Territories that reciprocal concessional travel on urban public transport in their States and Territories will apply to Queensland pensioners on or about the same date.

2. Marine Breeding Grounds

Mr White asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

With reference to the growing concern being expressed by the QCFO, QCC and amateur fishing organisations about Moreton Bay becoming a fish desert as a result of marine breeding grounds being increasingly destroyed by development and pollution—

What plan of action does the Government propose to protect these finite resources for the future interests of both commercial and amateur fishermen?

Answer—

Although the greatly accelerated increase in angling activity in Moreton Bay inevitably means that each angler gets a smaller slice of the angling cake, there is no evidence to suggest that fish stocks have declined to the stage where the bay is becoming a fish desert.

Although the Government cannot restrain the growing numbers of anglers, it has frozen any further expansion of commercial fishing operations. Moreover, it has developed over a number of years a substantial network of fish habitat reserves. The extent of these reserves in Moreton Bay was considerably expanded as recently as last week.

3. Service Station Operators

Mr White asked the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs—

With reference to the difficulties being faced by service station operators because of the pricing practices of oil companies—

What action does the Government propose to achieve fair treatment consistent with private enterprise competition for operators and, in particular, the 1 800 lessee operators who are currently under intense pressure to stay in business?

Answer—

Although the plight of many small businesses in the petrol-retailing industry has been represented in discussions with the Government so far, little information has been available on the profitability or otherwise of service stations.

As I indicated in the House on Thursday, the Government has decided that, before it proceeds further with proposed legislation, an independent audit of the balance sheets of selected service stations should be conducted. The audit will be conducted by a senior officer of the Auditor-General's Department. The Queensland Motor Industry Association has indicated its willingness to participate in an audit.

The need for legislation will be considered in the light of the report of the Auditor-General and other factors.

4. Russell Stanley Camm

Mr Hooper asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

With reference to a report in "The Courier-Mail" of 28 October that a Russell Stanley Camm was charged in the Proserpine Magistrates Court with a number of serious offences, namely, five counts of possessing weapons to cause

fear, three counts of unlawfully assaulting police officers, and one count of possessing a firearm while under the influence of liquor on 15 October, on which charges he was placed on probation for three years—

(1) Was he charged under the Firearms Act and not under the provisions of the Criminal Code?

(2) As the sentence seems to be manifestly unjust and inadequate, will he consider lodging an appeal?

(3) Has Camm any previous convictions and, if so, what are they?

(4) Is Camm the nephew of the former member for Whitsunday and deputy National Party leader, Mr Ron Camm?

Answer—

I have now read the report in "The Courier-Mail" of 28 October 1983 indicating that a Russell Stanley Camm was charged in the Proserpine Magistrates Court with certain offences.

My answer to the honourable member's question is—

(1) The assault charges were made under section 335 of the Criminal Code and the remaining charges were made under the provisions of the Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act 1979.

(2 & 3) Other than from the newspaper report, I am not presently aware of the circumstances surrounding the commission of the offences or whether Camm has any previous convictions such that the sentence imposed on him may be considered to be manifestly unjust and inadequate.

The administration of the Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act does not fall within the area of my administration and the question of any appeal against punishment would be one for consideration, in the first instance, by the Commissioner of Police.

(4) I have no knowledge of family connections of the person involved, nor have I any interest in those connections.

5. Overhead Bridge, Yeerongpilly

Mr Lee asked the Minister for Transport—

With reference to my question prior to the election in which he informed the House that the construction of the overhead bridge at Fairfield Road, Yeerongpilly, would commence this financial year—

(1) What further works are to be commenced?

(2) What is the apportionment of costs being borne by various departments?

Answer—

(1 & 2) Preliminary survey and design work on this project has been completed at a cost of \$54,350. Work is now proceeding on the detailed design, which includes surveying, design, drafting and documentation, for which a further appropriation of \$96,000 has been obtained.

The Railway Department is the design and construction authority, and the costs are to be apportioned on the basis of State Government, 50 per cent, Queensland Railways, 35 per cent, and Brisbane City Council, 15 per cent.

The Fairfield rail level crossing has been listed as No. 1 on the list of priorities for attention by the Government, as the honourable member would know from the constant representations he has made over the last few years. I shall keep him informed on the progress.

6. Increased Electricity Charges

Mr Hartwig asked the Premier and Treasurer—

With reference to the annual increase in electricity tariffs—

Will he consider giving pensioners, who use and depend on electrical appliances to a great extent, a 10 per cent rebate off their electricity accounts?

Answer—

Although I am very sympathetic to pensioners, I am firmly of the opinion that the responsibility for ensuring that pensions are adequate to maintain a reasonable living standard rests with the Commonwealth Government.

I am sure the honourable member would be aware that the Queensland Government already provides considerable assistance to pensioners. One of the prime areas of assistance is through rate remissions where local authorities are encouraged by financial backing from the Queensland Government to assist pensioners to meet their rate bills. That assistance amounts to \$140 a year.

The Government also provides motor vehicle registration concessions for certain pensioners, rebated or subsidised rents for pensioners in State rental accommodation and concessions for travel on Queensland railways.

It is the intention of my Government to provide further assistance in certain areas to pensioners in the forthcoming State Budget.

7. **Compensation Paid to Meat Workers**

Mr Burns asked the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs—

(1) For how many cases of brucellosis, leptospirosis, Q fever and other meatworks fevers has compensation been paid during each of the last five years?

(2) In which areas of the State did the cases occur?

(3) How many claims were made for loss of work and decline in physical and mental fitness because of these meat industry fevers?

Answer—

(1) Statistical data on occupational diseases in Queensland are prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and information is available only up to 1980-81. The following schedule indicates the number of claims paid for conditions of brucellosis, Q fever and others and the number of claims rejected for the same years—

The number of claims paid for conditions of brucellosis, Q fever and others was—

1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81
381	373	351	230

The number of claims rejected for the same years was—

1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81
15	20	20	18

(2) The Australian Bureau of Statistics regards statistical data in respect of individual employers as confidential, and I regret that this information is not available.

(3) Where compensation is paid for one of the meat industry fevers, compensation benefits are continued whilst the affected worker is unfit for work as a result of that illness, irrespective of the particular medical nature, either physical or mental, of the continuing illness. These aspects are not subjected to statistical analysis.

I might add that the Workers Compensation Board has recently acquired its own computer facility, and when the board's activities are fully computerised, more detailed statistics will be available.

As announced previously, the board is funding a zoonosis research project being carried out by the University of Queensland, Department of Social and Preventative Medicine, and that project is expected to be finalised early in 1985.

8. **Kawana Estates Pty Ltd Lease**

Mr Burns asked the Premier and Treasurer—

(1) Did the Lands Department grant a 20-year extension of a lease to Kawana Estates Pty Ltd to continue major development on the Sunshine Coast without consultation with the Landsborough Shire Council and without even the knowledge of the member for Landsborough, Mr Ahern, as reported in an editorial in the "Sunshine Coast Daily" of 25 July?

(2) Why was this lease extension granted in such a secret manner?

(3) What new environmental and town-planning safeguards were negotiated at the time of this lease extension in the light of the problems experienced due to interference with the natural topography, particularly the coastal dunes, as well as local flooding?

(4) Why was the lease extended before the final report of the critically important Mooloolah River Flood Test Study?

(5) Was this lease extension discussed and ratified by Cabinet before the extension was granted?

(6) Which Minister was responsible for the decision?

Answer—

(1) Yes. Kawana Estates Pty Ltd was granted a 20-year extension of Development Lease No. 2 to allow it to complete development of the area. Such extension was in accordance with the provisions of section 214A of the Land Act 1962-1983 and certain amendments and variations in the conditions of lease were made in connection with such extension with the consent of the lessee. There was no need for the Landsborough Shire Council to be formally consulted, and I understand the Honourable M. J. Ahern, MLA, Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology, was not present at the meeting of the Executive Council when the extension was approved by the Governor in Council.

(2) It was not granted in a secret manner.

(3) Town-planning is a function of local government and is not within the scope of the jurisdiction of the Land Act or leases granted under that Act. Negotiations to exclude the undeveloped frontal dunes south of Koorin Drive from within the development lease were completed on 10 March 1976 and became effective from that time. The consequent amendment to the lease conditions, agreed to by the Landsborough Shire Council, were undertaken when the lease was extended. This amendment of lease accordingly protected and preserved the public interest. Problems of local flooding are considered to relate to engineering design, the approval of which is the function of the local authority.

(4 & 5) The final report "Flood and Tidal Hydraulic Model Studies of the Mooloolah River" was presented to the Mooloolah River Hydraulic Model Technical Committee on 10 March 1983, but a draft overview report had been presented to the committee on 8 December 1982.

As required by section 214A of the Land Act 1962-1983, the extension of the lease was approved by the Governor in Council.

(6) The Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police, the Honourable W. H. Glasson, MLA.

9. **Increased Electricity Charges**

Mr Comben asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

With reference to the recent increase in electricity charges from 1 July—

As it was reported that the average State-wide increase would be 9 per cent and up to 11.4 per cent in Brisbane and the south-east corner of the State, why was the domestic residential tariff (D52), which applies to boarding schools, aged persons' homes, nursing homes and other installations of a domestic residential nature, increased by from 15.5 per cent to 36 per cent?

Answer—

The State-wide average increase at the last tariffs review was 9 per cent, with increases of up to about 11.4 per cent for domestic consumers in south-east Queensland. The higher increases occur in south-east Queensland because of the policy to achieve uniformity of tariffs throughout the State. In achieving uniformity, some special forms of tariff that exist in some boards' areas but not in others are gradually being merged with tariffs that are common to all boards.

The domestic residential tariff is one such special tariff. It exists in south-east Queensland, and plans are in hand to merge that with other tariffs. Most consumers on this tariff had increases of about 16 per cent to 20 per cent at the time of the general increase of 9 per cent in 1983 as part of the merging process. The increase of 36 per cent occurred at a consumption of only 100 kWh per month, and represented an increased of only \$3.12 per month.

10. Electricity Charges, Queensland Cultural Centre Trust

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

(1) What was the cost of electricity consumed by the Queensland Cultural Centre Trust in the 12-month period June 1982 to May 1983 inclusive?

(2) Is any consideration being given to reducing the cost of electricity supplied to the Queensland Cultural Centre Trust?

(3) If so, what action is being taken in this regard?

(4) If not, what is the reason?

Answer—

(1) The total cost was \$687,651.24, covering the Queensland Art Gallery the Queensland Cultural Centre Trust offices, the car-park, the auditorium, the plaza areas and the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Fountain.

(2 to 4) Obviously, as the Performing Arts Complex, the Museum and the State Library come on stream, the total cost of energy supplies for the Queensland Cultural Centre must increase. However, recent discussions by the trust with the SEQEB will result in a lower unit rate. This, of course, is a normal business procedure whereby it is cheaper for any organisation to purchase in bulk.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Abolition of Penalty Rates

Mr WRIGHT: In asking a question of the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, I direct his attention to statements made by him on penalty rates, in which he claimed that if an industry goes before the Industrial Commission to have penalty rates abolished it will be fully supported by the Government. In view of that statement, and as many Crown employees such as police officers, hospital employees and railwaymen are paid penalty rates for week-end work, I ask: Does his statement mean that all those Crown employees are now being threatened by the Government with the abolition of penalty rates, as the Government itself is their employer?

Mr LESTER: I simply want to say to the Leader of the Opposition that once again he is trying to play politics and he is throwing out of the door the opportunity to grapple with the problem of unemployment. On every occasion that someone takes the initiative to try to overcome a problem, he does that. I remind him that prior to the State election he stated that he would attack the Government on its employment record. However, he found that our record was so good that he had to give that campaign away. Queensland went on to become the second best State in Australia in the field of reducing unemployment.

I simply say to the Leader of the Opposition that every claim that is taken to the Industrial Commission will be assessed by the Government on its merits.

Public Accounts Committees; Claim by Deputy Leader of the Opposition

Mr NEAL: I direct a question to the Premier and Treasurer. In relation to statements made in the House on Thursday, 24 November, by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, wherein he claimed that officers of the Premier's departments had visited other States to study public accounts committees, has he now had an opportunity to investigate that claim and, if so, is it true?

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: I have had an opportunity to check the statement made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. As was to be expected, it is totally untrue.

In August this year Cabinet ordered an investigation into the administration of statutory authorities. That investigation is examining the possible insertion of sunset clauses, the possible use of joint accommodation, internal management techniques and annual reporting procedures.

As part of this investigation, officers visited New South Wales and Victoria. They went to those States to look at the administration of statutory authorities in those States, not to examine parliamentary public accounts committees.

As indicated in my policy speech, it is the intention of the National Party Government to scrutinise the role and operations of all statutory authorities and to require them to submit annual reports to Parliament. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition misled the House.

Mr Warburton: It was public accounts committees.

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: No. If the honourable member cannot understand the position, he is hopeless.

Establishment of Institute of Fresh-water Studies

Mr NEAL: I direct a question to the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services. In relation to the Commonwealth Government's call for submissions on the establishment of an institute of fresh-water studies to cover the management of the Darling River Basin, and as a large portion of that basin lies in Queensland, has the Queensland Government forwarded a submission to the Commonwealth Government? What effect is it expected that such an institute will have on the management of water resources in Queensland?

Mr GOLEBY: Yes, I am aware that the Commonwealth is seeking to institute fresh-water studies. I understand that all States have been asked to make submissions. I would like all honourable members to realise that the Government fears that this is an intrusion into State rights. I will certainly ensure that the rights of Queenslanders are protected.

As the honourable member has mentioned, the Condamine, the Darling and the Murray Rivers catchment areas are very important. The Condamine catchment area is particularly important to the fertile areas of the Darling Downs. Considerable sums of money are being spent to provide water for those fertile areas to enable the production of many crops that are essential not only to employment in the area but also to our export industries.

I assure all honourable members that the Queensland Government will resist any possible moves to take out of the State's hands the control of this water system.

Finalisation of Estates of Deceased Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders

Mr SCOTT: I ask the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs: Is he aware that it can take the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement up to three years to finalise the estate of an Aborigine or Torres Strait Islander who has died intestate, even in relatively uncomplicated cases? Will the Minister try to increase the efficiency of his department in that regard? Will Aborigines and Islanders have to wait until the introduction of the so-called services legislation before their testatory affairs are handled in the way in which they are handled for all other Queenslanders?

Mr KATTER: If the activities in that particular area are slow, I advise the honourable member to check his own figures for anything that he has put to the Federal Government, which seems to me to take for ever. Under the legislation that the honourable member has been pushing, that is what would occur. If delays are being experienced, they will most certainly be investigated.

Wet Canteen at Edward River

Mr SCOTT: I ask the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs: When were the normal hours of the wet canteen at Edward River suspended? Who made the decision to close the canteen? For how long was that facility closed? Was the decision taken as a disciplinary measure in the light of recent events in that community?

Does the Minister agree with the policy of the director of his department whereby control of canteen hours is used as a form of discipline instead of getting at the core of Aboriginal problems in the community?

Mr KATTER: I have been informed that the decision was made by the manager who was there at the time. I most certainly concurred with that decision. It was not a disciplinary decision. There was an extremely volatile situation in which lives and property were in extreme danger. That is the reason why the canteen was closed.

Friday will be the first available opportunity that I will have to visit the area. I will assess the situation and make decisions concerning the canteen.

If the honourable member is seriously suggesting that the canteen should have been left open in the period following the events that occurred two weeks ago, he would be extremely irresponsible. However, I do not think that he is seriously suggesting that.

Disruption of ABC News and Weather Reports

Mr ELLIOTT: I ask the Premier and Treasurer: Is he aware of the inconvenience and, in some cases, hardship, perpetrated upon the people of Queensland by the staff of the ABC who have been involved in an internal dispute for some years? Is he also aware that for some considerable time that dispute has led to the disruption of the news and, more recently, weather reports?

In regard to the lack of weather details, which so many primary producers use to plan farm programs, in particular hay-making, harvesting and shearing, will the Premier indicate the effect of that situation and what action he might take with the Federal Government, with whom one could not be blamed for assuming the responsibility rests?

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am aware of the problem. I regret very much that the staff, who relay the weather information and general reports on farm activities that are of vital importance to country people, have been on strike for a long period. It is regrettable that sections of the community can be treated in the way in which they have been treated. The broadcasts mean a great deal to country people who are isolated, particularly during times of flood and periods of heavy rain, as have recently been experienced.

Because of the lack of news, people have been unaware of the weather forecasts and have therefore had the harvesting of their crops severely affected. That also affects business people. I sympathise with the honourable member in his concern. We are all concerned. When members of a union act so irresponsibly, I doubt that anybody can do very much about it. Of course, the ABC comes under the control of the Federal Government, which could not care less about what happens to country people and whether actions of its employees cause much suffering. That is regrettable.

Compensation for Red Ru Pipeline Construction Co. Pty Ltd

Mr ELLIOTT: I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: With regard to the very considerable amount of preparatory work carried out by the Red Ru Pipeline Construction Co. Pty Ltd of Oakey, Queensland, and more particularly in relation to the preparation of right of way selection for the Jackson pipeline, is the Minister aware that the Red Ru Pipeline Co. has now lodged a claim with both the legal representatives of Santos and the Mines Department claiming an amount of \$3.2m as compensation for work carried out and expenses incurred? Will the Minister assure the House and the people of the Darling Downs and those other areas from which Red Ru would have drawn personnel and services that he will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the company's claim is dealt with justly?

Mr I. J. GIBBS: The honourable member privately gave me notice that he would ask this question, so I have a chronological listing of events. On 29 November 1982 Red Ru was invited to submit an application for a pipeline licence subject to evidence of satisfactory financing arrangements. On 15 February 1983 the previous decision was rescinded. On 21 February 1983 equity was offered to NBP, ICC and Moonie. On 7

April 1983 pipeline licence No. 6 was granted. On 26 May 1983 an option to take up 8½ per cent interest, which replaced the 25 per cent interest held by ICC, was given to each of Red Ru, Westfield and Bridge. On 1 November 1983 Red Ru's interest of 8½ per cent was offered to Westfield and Bridge.

Significant events occurred during the option period. The disagreement on the maximum agreed capital cost was resolved by a Cabinet decision of 8 August 1983, which increased it from \$110m to \$120m. There was also the recourse nature of the Westpac financing proposal.

Red Ru's failure to meet deadlines for putting finance in place was a commercial failure. Red Ru was given adequate opportunity to meet the Government's conditions regarding initial company structure and subsequent equity participation. On that basis no case for compensation exists.

The reimbursement of all of Red Ru's reasonable prior costs validly incurred to 21 February 1983 was a condition of grant of pipeline licence No. 6. Red Ru's contractors and advisers have been paid but its own claim, which is the one referred to by the honourable member, is a matter of dispute with Santos, which acts for JMP.

Proposed Road, Cape Tribulation National Park

Mr McLEAN: In asking a question of the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts I refer to the bulldozing of a road through to the Cape Tribulation National Park. Can he give an assurance that there are sufficient staff and resources to administer the park if the road is pushed through the rain forest?

Mr McKECHNIE: I thank the honourable member for the Dorothy Dixier. Staffing needs of that area will be considered from time to time along with those of other areas. It is important to make further comments about that road. First of all, Cabinet decided to totally back the idea of the Douglas Shire Council to put a road through in that area. There are several reasons for that. It will increase tourism, provide better communication, assist in drug surveillance, help the National Parks and Wildlife Service to cut down on smuggling and help discourage illegal immigration.

I note that the Department of Defence is concerned about lack of roads in the north, and this road will assist to alleviate its concern. It will make the park more accessible. Most importantly, it will improve the access of the people north of that area to the town of Mossman. I am informed that people in that area presently have to travel something like 300 miles to get to Mossman, so this road will substantially improve their access. The member for Cook should have been supporting the construction of the road, but to the best of my knowledge he has not done so. The Government totally supports the Douglas Shire Council. The road will greatly benefit the area.

Prison Reform

Mr SIMPSON: I ask the Minister for Welfare Services and Ethnic Affairs: Following calls by the ombudsman, the Prisoners Action Group, legal representatives and members of the public who have compared conditions in Queensland prisons with those in other States, will the Minister move to reform the prison system?

Mr MUNTZ: The Prisons Act is currently under review. I believe that any prison system has an obligation to the community to provide secure custody of convicted criminals. As I said yesterday, the Queensland prison system has the best record of any in Australia. I will repeat the figures. In New South Wales a prisoner escapes every second day compared with only one escape from a Queensland prison since July. That highlights the security that is maintained within Queensland prisons. In order to maintain secure custody, strict discipline and conformity are needed, and I intend to see that the discipline necessary to maintain Queensland's excellent record is retained. I ask those people who are first to criticise the Queensland prison system to look at the positive programs which provide opportunities for rehabilitation.

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Mr GOSS: I ask the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts: As he has no current plans to increase the staff of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in the Cape Tribulation area, how does he justify his answer to the member for Bulimba when the annual report of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which he presented to this Parliament yesterday, states on page 23—

“In the face of sharply declining resources of staff and maintenance ability, and a continuing acute shortage of vehicles, the energies of the region were consumed in what was basically a holding operation, with little room for new initiatives.

Numbers of staff on parks fell by 10 per cent following the decision there were to be no replacements for those who left.

...

An estimated 20 per cent of total man-hours available to staff within the region have been lost as a result. Three major park areas are now operating without vehicles, and only three parks have an adequate allocation.”?

Mr McKECHNIE: I thank the honourable member for another Dorothy Dixier. The simple reality is that the Premier will bring down the Budget this week, and the honourable member should be a little patient and wait and see what happens.

Riots at Brisbane Prison

Mr STEPHAN: I ask the Minister for Welfare Services and Ethnic Affairs: Has he received any support from the general public for his strong stand against the ultimatums delivered by prisoners last week? Will he explain his reasons for this stand?

Mr MUNTZ: I have received hundreds of telephone calls and letters supporting the Government's stand on this issue. As an indication I want to quote from a letter received from a former prisoner on Monday. It states—

“I spent two years in Boggo Road gaol in 1962 to 1964, and found the food was quite good and adequate. In fact, I put on 2½ stone in weight during my stay. That was when conditions were supposed to be primitive, with a drum in the cell for a toilet, no wash-basin or TV. I was told when I first went in that I was subject to prison rules and forfeited all rights to citizenship. This is how it should be. As I obeyed the rules I was treated like a gentleman by the administration and warders. Today's prisoners are demanding this and that, as if they were VIP guests at Lennons. Criminals will be demanding everything, phone calls, contact visits. What a lot of rot. If you give them all they ask for we might as well close the gaols and build high-rise units on the Gold Coast for convicted criminals.”

That is a quote from a genuine letter from a former prisoner.

As I said last week, I will not accept ultimatums from prisoners. They are in prison because of the crimes they commit against society. Certainly, as I have repeatedly said, I am willing to receive requests from prisoners if they are presented in the proper manner. No Government can afford to be blackmailed by criminals' threats of violence. That is the law of the jungle, to which Labor administrations in New South Wales and Victoria have submitted. The Queensland Government will not accept such laws. It will maintain law and order and provide responsible government for all Queenslanders.

Proposed Road, Cape Tribulation National Park

Mr UNDERWOOD: I ask the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts: With reference to proposed road-building in the Cape Tribulation National Park—

- (1) Did a well-known developer, Mr Pedersen, fly members of the Douglas Shire Council to Brisbane to discuss the current project with Ministers?
- (2) Is he aware that Mr Pedersen, together with a Mr Quaid, were responsible for illegally bulldozing a track through the rain forest in 1976?
- (3) Is he aware that the Forestry Department recommended taking legal action against Pedersen and Quaid but that this action was not proceeded with?

- (4) Is he further aware that the illegal track bulldozed by Pedersen and Quaid is the path of the currently gazetted road through the Cape Tribulation National Park?

Mr McKECHNIE: The honourable member knows that I am a new Minister. I am not aware of the accusations. I am not accepting them as facts. They are probably untrue. I am unaware of the accusations made by the honourable member for Ipswich West, and I stress that I treat his claims as accusations, not as facts. If he cares to put the question on notice I will have it investigated.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I do so accordingly.

Proposed Road, Cape Tribulation National Park

Mr UNDERWOOD: I ask the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts: Will he halt all roadworks in Cape Tribulation National Park until a complete management plan for the park has been developed and made available for public scrutiny? Will he act so that the Cape Tribulation National Park be not opened up until sufficient staff has been appointed to enable the proposed agreed management plan to be fully operational? Is he aware that the road will be bulldozed through this area without any regard to environmental and economic management or law enforcement impact, which is grossly irresponsible? Does he recognise that Cape Tribulation is the largest refuge of humid, tropical lowland rain forest remaining in Australia and that it must be protected for the benefit of this and future generations? Does he further recognise that, as an economic asset, if it is properly managed the area is invaluable because rain forests are a top priority for international and interstate tourists to Queensland?

Mr McKECHNIE: Quite obviously there is some division in the Australian Labor Party. I am told that the chairman of the Douglas Shire Council is a member of the ALP and that he wants the road very badly. One reason for his wanting it is that it will provide increased access to Mossman, the main business centre for all of the people up there. The simple reality of life is that the matter has been under consideration for some time. The road will be put through on the basis that the National Parks and Wildlife Service is to be consulted on its location. I see no problems in that. I have complete confidence in the National Parks and Wildlife people and the Forestry Department people ensuring that the road goes through the most appropriate area.

Age of Consent

Mr BOOTH: I ask the Minister for Welfare Services and Ethnic Affairs: Has he read of reports that Mr Justice Kirby of the Australian Law Reform Commission has advocated that the age of consent be reduced from its present level of 16 years to as low as 10 years? Has the Minister considered the matter?

Mr MUNTZ: The matter was canvassed in the family legislation White Papers, which were widely circulated throughout the State. The overwhelming response of the community is that the present age of consent should remain unchanged. We would be remiss in carrying out our duties as a responsible Government if we ignored those requests. I am shocked that Mr Justice Kirby could seriously propose the lowering of the age of consent. He obviously has not researched the matter very deeply.

Class Sizes; Employment of Graduate Teachers

Mr SMITH: I ask the Minister for Education: In view of his Government's 1982 commitment to a definite timetable to bring about a reduction in school class sizes and its claim of a substantial population increase from interstate, does his recently stated intention to employ only 890 additional teachers in 1984 really mean that the Government has reneged on its 1982 promise on maximum class sizes? Secondly, will all the students graduating as teachers from Queensland tertiary institutions this year be offered teaching positions by the commencement of the 1984 year? If not, why not? If the Government still claims that it is serious in its intention to honour its previously given commitment to reduce class sizes within the nominated period, will the Minister outline details of his teacher-training and recruitment program for 1985 and beyond?

Mr POWELL: I could answer that question very simply by saying, "Yes." The Treasurer of the day, the Honourable Llew Edwards, when he introduced the 1982-83 Budget, indicated that the Government would be embarking on a four-year program to reduce class sizes so that they approximated those recommended by the Select Committee on Education. We see in 1983, this year, the first year of implementation of that program.

Real advances have been made. For example, in the early childhood area, the average class size in Year 1 is now 25, which is on target. The average class size in Year 2 is 26, which is one above target. The average class sizes in upper secondary schools have also been brought close to target. The average class size throughout the other school areas are perhaps one or two over target. Consequently, in the first year, the Government's program has really reduced class sizes and had a most important impact on the school system.

The second part of the honourable member's question about teacher numbers does not recognise what else is being done within the school system. That is not unusual when such questions are asked by people who criticise the Government without knowing or recognising the facts.

The honourable member asked whether we will employ all graduates from colleges of advanced education. My answer to that is that we will employ those graduates we want and need. I will not give any undertaking, on behalf of the Government, that all graduating teachers will be employed. I repeat that we will employ those we want and need. New teachers will be put into class-rooms as they are needed, as class size numbers come in.

The projected figures for primary education are fairly clear. We expect a down-turn in numbers in primary education in Queensland until about 1986 or 1987. At that time, those children who represent an increase in the pre-school population of 1985 or 1986 will move into primary schools. Therefore, primary school numbers will increase once again as the result of a natural increase.

The Government's effort in this area has been commendable. The amount of resources that we are appropriating to education is as high as it has ever been. Queensland is the only State that is employing additional teachers. Fewer teachers are being employed in every other State, and that is the reason there is great industrial unrest in schools in those States, particularly Victoria and New South Wales.

Prison, Probation and Parole System

Mr McELLIGOTT: In the light of his replies to previous questions this morning I ask the Minister for Welfare Services and Ethnic Affairs: Will he give a firm commitment to the introduction of major reforms for the State prison, probation and parole system which were foreshadowed by his predecessor on 20 June 1978?

Mr MUNTZ: The Offenders Probation and Parole Act is subject to very detailed regulations. I hope that those regulations will be finalised in the near future and that action will be taken to implement them.

Work Skill Olympics

Mr RANDELL: With reference to the announcement by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs that Queensland might stage the 1988 Work Skill Olympics—

Will he give an assurance that apprentices from all parts of Queensland will have equal opportunities to take part in the preliminary competitions?

Mr LESTER: Every apprentice in Queensland will have the opportunity to compete with other apprentices from many different trades. Firstly, there will be regional championships; secondly, Australian championships under the title "Work Skill Australia" will be held and, thirdly, world championships called the "Skill Olympics" will be held.

The Australian championships will be held in 1985 and, with the help of business interests in Queensland, I will be trying to ensure that Queensland is the host State. These championships were last held in Melbourne and 40 000 people attended to watch the apprentices at work in competition situations.

Because the world championships will be held in 1988, which is the year for Expo, a feasibility study will be undertaken to see whether it is possible for Queensland to hold the championships to coincide with Expo.

These actions are needed to foster excellence in the work standards of our youth. Queensland youth will be able to compete on a world scale with other apprentices and this will benefit the State. The Queensland Government will give the proposal its full support.

Allegations against Queensland Police Force

Mr HENDERSON: I ask the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police—

- (1) Did he hear, or has he read, the allegations made recently by the honourable member for Wolston and the honourable member for Archerfield against members of the Queensland Police Force?
- (2) Would he agree that these allegations are of such a nature that they should be referred to the Queensland Police Complaints Tribunal for independent investigation?
- (3) Have the honourable members referred their allegations to the Police Complaints Tribunal?
- (4) If so, what action has been taken or is being taken?
- (5) If not, could he tell the House why the honourable members have not referred their allegations to the Police Complaints Tribunal?

Mr Davis: A Dorothy Dixier.

Mr GLASSON: I appreciate the sincerity behind the question.

Mr Davis: You asked him to ask it.

Mr GLASSON: The honourable member for Brisbane Central might be Dorothy but I am not Dix.

I am amazed and disgusted at the fact that Opposition members do not have the intestinal fortitude to back up claims made by them through the media and on some occasions in the House. I refer to the two honourable members mentioned by the honourable member for Mt Gravatt, namely, the honourable member for Archerfield (Mr Hooper) and the honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs).

The other night, during the Address in Reply debate, the honourable member for Archerfield indulged in the greatest bucket-tipping episode that I have ever witnessed. I invite him to go to the Police Complaints Tribunal with the evidence that he claims he has. I have the answer to the question that he raised, and I advise the House and the people of Queensland that the information provided by him is completely false.

As for the accusations made yesterday by the honourable member for Wolston—the case was placed before the Police Complaints Tribunal, it was considered by the tribunal, it was referred to me and I, in turn, referred it to the Attorney-General for advice on what action should be taken. Civil litigation was commenced, so the matter then became sub judice.

Mr Justice Derrington made certain comments, which were read out yesterday by the member for Wolston. Those comments are now before the Police Complaints Tribunal and are being considered by it at this very moment. Those two Opposition members did not care to check the accuracy of their allegations.

The Police Complaints Tribunal in Queensland has established a blueprint for the whole of the Commonwealth. Judge Pratt, who has just returned from Hong Kong, where he was speaking with his counterparts, has said that the Police Complaints Tribunal has established a blueprint for the rest of the Commonwealth of Australia. So I say "thank you" to Judge Carter (now Mr Justice Carter), who was the instigator and architect of the legislation under which the Police Complaints Tribunal was set up. The tribunal is now accepted by the community, by the Queensland Law Society and by the police themselves. It is constituted by a judge, as chairman, a magistrate and a member of the Queensland Police Union. Its chairmanship has now been taken over by Judge Pratt.

I invite anyone who has accusations to make to bring them to the notice of the Police Complaints Tribunal. I assure anyone who does so that he will be given a fair hearing and a fair decision by the tribunal, which is respected by all.

Delay in Granting Housing Commission Home Loans

Mr CAMPBELL: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: In view of the fact that, because funds are not available, applicants for Housing Commission home loans have to wait for over two months to become eligible for such loans, could pamphlets that are distributed at court houses and other establishments indicating that loan funds are available immediately be changed in order to reduce the confusion that is caused to applicants who are given the pamphlets?

Mr WHARTON: There is a wait-list of applicants for Housing Commission home loans. A large number of loans have been approved. I thought I had some figures with me, but apparently I have not. However, approximately 2 000 loans have been advanced since the end of June.

The money comes from funding from the Commonwealth and also from the Queensland Government's internal funds. The funds provided by the Commonwealth come to the Queensland Government on a monthly basis under a Commonwealth/State agreement. Usually they flow through at a steady rate, but on this occasion we simply have not received them. Admittedly, a delay has occurred. However, it is not a substantial delay. Eventually the commission will catch up with the backlog.

The pamphlets were issued some time ago. People understand that loans will be granted at the rate of approximately 40 per week. On that basis, the commission will catch up with the backlog in the very near future. However, at present, because its funds come from the Commonwealth on a monthly basis and a delay has occurred, it is experiencing a shortage of funds.

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Discrimination by Federal Government Against Sick Aged Persons

Mr SIMPSON (Cooroora) (12 noon): I rise to speak during the Matters of Public Interest debate because I am concerned about the discrimination against Queensland and Queenslanders by the Federal Government, particularly in its treatment of the sick aged. Queensland has an ideal climate. It is an ideal place to which people can retire. Increasing numbers of persons are coming to Queensland to take advantage of that. The Federal Government recently notified the operators of nursing homes in Queensland that they will receive a daily allowance increase of only \$2.65 per day, whereas New South Wales nursing homes will receive \$4.30 and Victoria will receive \$3.25.

As a result of that discrimination, the total subsidy for Queenslanders will be \$26.65 per day, whereas the total subsidy in New South Wales is \$32.35 and the total subsidy in Victoria is \$45.15. The cost of providing care for the aged in all States is similar. I can only assume that the Federal Government has no care and consideration for the aged people in Queensland. Even the lower costs in Queensland do not offset the extent of the Federal Government's discrimination.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SIMPSON: Opposition members can interject as much as they like, but the ALP Government in Canberra is discriminating against Queenslanders. The Opposition does not care about the health and welfare of aged people. Although it is a State rights issue, the Opposition is not concerned about people. The Opposition's ideology is one of greed and envy. It has no compassion. That has been clearly displayed in an economic way to the people of this State. That is a sad state of affairs.

A comparison between subsidies paid to similar aged homes caring for the sick in Queensland and New South Wales reveals a difference of \$6 per day. That will apply from now. Queenslanders have been treated in that fashion for a short time only, but it is just the beginning. That is the type of discrimination that can be expected from the

Federal socialist ALP. It does not care for the little people or the sick aged. It is bad enough that people must contemplate their old age—to be sick in old age is one of their great fears—but it is quite wrong for there to be such discrimination. I do not hear Opposition members saying that they will represent the people of Queensland and take up that matter with their Federal counterparts. The only alternative left is at the ballot-box. Those people who have no care and consideration for us should be kicked out of office.

It should be the Federal Government's role to be fair to all States. However, that is not happening. The Federal Government believes that it will influence the people to vote its way by discriminating against them. That is certainly not the way to go about it. I know that the good sense of the people of Queensland will prevail, as it did at the last State election, and that they will not put up with that sort of treatment.

Queensland should be given credit for its very efficient hospital system. Under a private enterprise system one would expect that. Under a socialist system, however, the efficient are not only penalised but also discriminated against. That is typical of socialism throughout the world. Everyone is aware of the deficits in the socialist States of Australia. The Federal Government continues to pander to those States by helping them with added and discriminatory allocations. In spite of that, because those other States are broke and inefficient, they are still reducing the number of beds in their hospitals. The Labor ethic seems to be that those who are mediocre will get a little more than those who are thrifty and efficient, as we are in Queensland. That is not the sort of spirit that should be engendered in Australians. Queensland sets an example that should be encouraged.

The unfairness of the new ilk of academic, left-wing, socialist Labor people in Canberra was very clearly demonstrated at the Adelaide Constitutional Convention.

Mr Davis: That is the one you people rigged.

Mr SIMPSON: The Opposition demonstrated such little care and consideration for this State that its members did not even bother to represent Queensland.

Mr Davis: We boycotted it.

Mr SIMPSON: If that is the word for being gutless and not representing the people of this State, that is exactly what the Opposition did. Its members did not go down there, because they knew that the policies being touted by their counterparts were of no benefit and discriminated against people with enterprise and endeavour. That is why the Opposition sulked and would not dare attend the convention.

Mr Muntz: They had nothing to contribute.

Mr SIMPSON: Yes, and having supported the sort of policies that were made mandatory for every Labor Party delegate at that conference, they would have been embarrassed. They were told by the Trades Hall, their hierarchy and Senator Gareth Evans that they had to toe the line. The Constitutional Convention was a real education. I found that anybody who agreed with Labor formed part of the consensus but anybody who stood firm on his principles and showed the Labor Party up for what it is was told he was being party political. It was a typical example of the gutless Labor socialists in Opposition in Queensland who would not represent this State at that convention. The Federal Government's treatment of the aged, sick and infirm is another example of that.

Mr Fouras: Why are you supporting equal numbers of Government and Opposition members at the next Constitutional Convention—because we stood up for a principle and we won out!

Mr SIMPSON: I am glad the honourable member has mentioned numbers at the convention. The Opposition criticised Tasmania for having an unequal representation of eight from the Government and four from the Opposition. Sadly, the media did not publish the facts for all of Australia to see. Two months before the convention, Tasmania's delegation comprised six members from the Government and six from the Opposition; but, when Senator Gareth Evans sent the spy plane to Tasmania—an appalling misuse of the Defence Forces by a Minister—two members of the Labor Party in that State, members of the delegation, had the good sense to leave the party and join the conservative side; hence the representation altered to eight members to four.

However, at the Constitutional Convention Labor members said that that delegation was stacked, too. That delegation was stacked in the same way as the Labor Party stacked the Queensland delegation. The Opposition simply sulked; it would not represent the people of this State, in which it has no interest. All it does is look after its buddies.

Mr Goss: The convention rebuked you.

Mr SIMPSON: The Labor Party's performance at the convention showed its hypocrisy. It showed that the Labor Party intends to take from the people of Australia their right to a democratic system of government under the Crown; that it intends taking from the Governor-General his powers as the custodian of the Constitution; and that it intends taking from the Senate—the House of review and control; the States' rights House—its ability to control the timing of elections and many other matters.

Opposition members are not interested in democracy. They want only to rig the system so that Canberra can be the repository of ultimate power. Opposition members know that that is why they were told to stay home. Gareth Evans and Bob Hawke want all the power in Canberra so that Bob Hawke can set up a republic in that remote area, and the people of Queensland will be ripped off. That is a typical example of Labor's discrimination against the people of Tasmania and Queensland who had the good sense to vote conservative. I challenge Opposition members to go to the Federal Minister for Health, Dr Blewett, and get a better deal for the aged and sick of Queensland.

(Time expired.)

Increase in Size of Federal Parliament; "Courier-Mail" Article

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (12.11 p.m.): I join in this debate to deal with two matters. I had intended to refer first to the proposed enlargement of the Federal Parliament. Unfortunately, the relevant Bill passed through the Senate last night, so the size of the Federal Parliament will now be increased greatly.

It is regrettable that the Senate will be enlarged to a degree that will create new problems for this nation. The socialists believe that the Senate should be abolished. They would obviously have difficulty in abolishing the Senate, even though that is their policy, because its existence is enshrined in the Constitution and it is part of the Parliament of Australia. However, the socialists will not have any hesitation in moving along those lines.

Because of the nexus that exists between the House of Representatives and the Senate, the socialists have cleverly expanded the Senate in such a way that, in the future, Australia will face the prospect of virtually continuously hung Senates. This will become most evident next year, when, in order to phase in the new Senate arrangements, it will be necessary for each State to elect seven senators instead of the normal five or, as some people had supposed, six. Now that Senate numbers have been expanded from 10 to 12 senators from each State, it will be necessary in the first election, in order to effect the phasing-in process without chopping it off in mid-stream, to elect seven senators, which, of course, reduces the quota for a senator to an infinitesimal level, particularly in the less populated States such as Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia.

Under the system of proportional representation, it is inevitable that the smaller parties that normally would not be represented in the House of Representatives will have a reasonable chance of being recognised in the Senate because of the size of their vote, and could well hold the balance of power in the Senate forever. Of course, if that occurs, situations will arise that will make the Parliament, which is the House of Representatives and the Senate, unworkable. I have no doubt that, when it does become unworkable, the socialists will bring that fact to the attention of the public by saying, "The Senate is now unworkable; therefore it should be abolished." That is the ploy.

I regret very much that our National Party colleagues in the House of Representatives and the Senate voted with the socialists on this occasion, because I do not think they have thought out sufficiently what is in store for this country with unstable Senate voting.

I have every respect for minorities. They have to be and should be recognised in this country.

When a deliberate ploy is used, through the use of this device, to debase the Senate in the eyes of the public we should look very closely at what is being done and why it is being done, and bring it to public attention. It is regrettable that the legislation has passed through both Houses and will receive Royal Assent.

The other matter that I wish to raise in this debate which gives us an opportunity to air grievances, concerns a report in this morning's issue of "The Courier-Mail" It purported to say that the Liberal Party had met on a ruling made by Mr Speaker, that a decision had been made by the Liberal Party and that Mr Speaker had been threatened by some future action. That report is completely false. There was no meeting of the Liberal Party on the Standing Orders of this House or on a ruling given by Mr Speaker. No instruction was given to Mr Speaker by me or anyone else in the Liberal Party on what our views would be. There has been no intrusion whatsoever into Mr Speaker's authority. We would not dream of approaching him with that sort of threat in mind.

I do not know where the report came from but it is completely inaccurate. I have taken immediate steps to refute it. However, there is a problem concerning Standing Order 115 and this is the time to air it. It reads—

"A Member may rise to speak to Order, or upon a matter of Privilege suddenly arising."

It refers to both matters of privilege and matters of order. It has to be done in a responsible way. That Standing Order has been exercised by members on many occasions.

It was evident yesterday that some members in this House were trying to provoke Mr Speaker in regard to the abuse of that Standing Order. It is a fundamental right, Mr Deputy Speaker, as you well know, of every member of this House, regardless of his status or position in this Parliament, to raise a matter of order at any time and for it to be properly ruled upon by the Chair. That was done on many occasions, and correctly so, as I pointed out in an earlier debate, by my colleague the honourable member for Ithaca. His rulings have become precedents in this House.

That fundamental right should not be used by honourable members to create discord in the House. Unfortunately our Standing Orders do not provide specifically for fraudulent points of order, but there is plenty of precedent in the House of Commons that could be used by this House.

Mr Davis interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Yes we do. Obviously the honourable member for Brisbane Central does not even understand the fundamental rules.

This Parliament has recognised these precedents. I suggest that it might well be a matter for the Standing Orders Committee to consider the rights of members when taking points of order and to consider whether fraudulent points of order should be ruled as disorderly and whether the member who repeatedly takes such action should be automatically treated as a vexatious member of the House.

Fraudulent points of order have been raised on many occasions on both sides of the House to hinder the progress of this Parliament and to prevent the proper business of the House being discussed. I suggest very respectfully that this matter be further examined.

It is highly disorderly to abuse any of the Standing Orders of this House, particularly a fundamental one which extends to every member the privilege of being heard at a moment's notice.

I say now, publicly, that it is a pity that the Speaker made that observation about points of order. I think he was mistaken and should have used the word "fraudulent" as an adjective before "points of order". I am sure that he will have the support of every member in the House if fraudulent points of order are taken in this House merely as debating points or are taken to hinder the progress of debate in this Parliament.

Reduced Working Hours in Sugar Industry

Mr MENZEL (Mulgrave) (12.21 p.m.): Last week I asked the Premier a question without notice about an offer of reduced working hours which was made to sugar industry employees by the Australian Sugar Producers Association. I am very concerned about that

offer. It is most unusual for employers to be offering improved conditions to employees, particularly when the sugar industry is in a bad state. To say that it is down on its knees would probably be the understatement of the week.

As everyone knows, the sugar industry is in a bad state and, if anything, the position is getting worse. I understand that the sugar industry unions were not pressing for reduced working hours. A couple of years ago when things in the industry looked brighter, the unions did make a demand for improved conditions but, in recent times, the combined sugar industry unions have adopted a rather responsible approach and have not made any undue demands on the sugar industry for improved conditions. No doubt they have said that their ultimate aim is to achieve reduced working hours, and I guess that that aim is being achieved in many other areas.

Following the question that I asked in this Assembly, union representatives from various mills have contacted me and said that they were not pushing for reduced working hours and that at this stage there was no ground swell of support by the members of the various unions for reduced working hours. I am not prepared to name the individuals because I do not think that that should be done in this House. I understand that, at meetings that were held, employees at some mills said, "No, we don't want the offer made by the Australian Sugar Producers Association."

Mr Davis: It is a pity that you can't name where that was.

Mr MENZEL: I think I can. I understand that the members of the various unions in the Burdekin mills and the Babinda Mill met and rejected the offer of reduced working hours. I said that I will not name any individuals, but I do not think there is any secret about the mills at which those meetings were held. One can probably read about that in the local press. I commend the union leaders and employees in those mills for taking such a positive stand.

I did call upon the members of the ASPA executive to resign if they did not heed the warning of the Premier. He said that they should reconsider and withdraw the offer because it is a most foolish and foolhardy one. Many arguments have surrounded this matter. I understand that on at least two occasions in north Queensland the ASPA executive met representatives of the mills and discussed this issue. There was a lot of disagreement. After one Sunday meeting an officer of the association in Brisbane contacted the chairman of directors of one of the mills in north Queensland. He spoke for about an hour or so, so it must have cost a lot of money. He demanded that that mill representative back down and agree to the ASPA executive's demand for shorter working hours. That is a most unusual thing.

There is no doubt that the sugar industry needs Government assistance in the form of an underwriting or stabilisation scheme. Such assistance is required right throughout the State. Even the growers and mills in the higher c.c.s. areas are feeling the pinch.

On the one hand, the ASPA offers reduced working hours, which I find hard to understand. On the other hand, the sugar industry is pushing the State and Federal Governments to provide assistance. If it is not pushing, it certainly should be.

Before the Federal election cane-growers were promised many things. Mr Kerin, Mr Hawke and others said that they would provide a catch-up of \$40 a tonne of home consumption sugar over and above the indexed figure if they were elected on 5 March. Of course, despite the election of the ALP, that promise has not been honoured.

Mr Randell: What about the underwriting scheme they promised?

Mr MENZEL: We are still waiting for that.

The Federal Government talked about adding the catch-up figure to the receipt for the 1982 crop, but 1982 has passed and the 1983 crop is almost finished and no action has been taken.

The average person working in the sugar industry would welcome the extra money for the 1983 crop because it is needed desperately. Many cane-growers have come to me seeking my support in making representations to the Rural Reconstruction Board for carry-on finance.

No-one wants to buy a cane farm. Cane farms virtually cannot be given away. So the cane-growers cannot get out of their predicament in that way. Even the banks cannot sell the farms.

Mr Randell: The Federal Government stands condemned for its attitude.

Mr MENZEL: It certainly does stand condemned. No-one knows whether the Federal Government supports the Ord River sugar scheme or not and Lionel Bowen said that Australia should import sugar and a number of other primary products.

Mr De Lacy: What did Braithwaite say?

Mr MENZEL: He did not comment on the misrepresentations made in the press by Mr Gayler, that is for sure. I do not know what Mr Gayler can say about help for the sugar industry because his Government has let him down. He is very silent. The Federal Government's attitude is a serious embarrassment to Mr Gayler because some of the cane-farmers who perhaps voted in desperation for Mr Gayler this time might not vote for him again. The cane-growers were promised many things by the Hawke Labor Government and they have been let down. I doubt that they will make the mistake of voting for the Labor Party again.

I call upon the sugar-producers to stop pressing for reduced working hours. What amazes me is that the sugar industry unions do not want them. I do not know how long the Australian Sugar Producers Association will continue to operate if it persists in this foolhardy attitude that will destroy the sugar industry. That is what will happen.

Because it has a 120-hour crushing week, the sugar industry cannot sustain reduced working hours. Extra costs would be incurred because of the shorter hours. It is very well to say that employees can work a 40-hour week in the crushing season and a 36-hour week in the slack season. What about the seasonal workers? They would have to be paid more because they are not employed during the slack season. The reduced hours would flow on to the field workers. The wages bill would increase and there would be extra harvesting costs and on-farm costs.

The sugar-producers stand condemned for wanting to introduce reduced working hours. I do not believe that the rank and file in the sugar industry know what is happening. If they did, they would not agree with it. I have received many calls from employees in sugar mills and from cane-growers wanting to know what is going on. They want to keep fighting until the sugar industry leaders show some sense. I do not know that they can be called leaders because they are not worth two bob if they are going to carry on like this.

I have been involved with the sugar industry for a number of years and I know what is going on. It is time someone woke up and fought for the growers. He would be fighting for the employees as well because if the Federal Government honours its election promises the growers and others will be able to employ people right throughout the year. They cannot do that now because they do not have the funds.

Mr Randell: It means the loss of jobs.

Mr MENZEL: It does mean the loss of jobs. Already, because of the depressed economy, jobs have been lost in the sugar industry. Certain things that should be done are not being done. At the present time the sugar industry is engaged in a holding action only; it is waiting and wondering whether the price of sugar will rise to a viable level.

Accountability of Ministers

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate) (12.31 p.m.): For a quarter of a century, at some stage each year there has appeared on the Business Paper of the Queensland Parliament a Government-sponsored notice of motion asking that there be laid upon the table of the House a return, in the usual form, of expenses of Ministers showing each separately and in detail.

In the August 1983 parliamentary session, the usual notice of motion was given by a Government member, no doubt at the instigation of his Government. Subsequently, two days later, the Parliament unanimously supported that motion.

Despite that, the Ministers, some of whom have been severely and publicly criticised on past occasions for incurring extraordinary expenses for such matters as entertainment and incidentals, decided that it was in their interests, and naturally in the interests of what was the National-Liberal Government of the time, that they no longer should be as

accountable for their extravagances as they had been in previous years. It was a case of Cabinet and the Government not only being opposed to more accountability but also, and conversely, being intent on becoming less accountable.

What in fact occurred showed the hypocrisy of those Liberals who were Ministers of the Government at that time, who campaigned in the recent State election under the banner of more accountability by Government, but who were willing and ready participants in a Cabinet decision to change the rules so that no longer were reports on their yearly ministerial expenses to be tabled in this Parliament in detail for public scrutiny. From then on, that change of rules conveniently stopped the tabling of the expense reports in the customary form. In July this year, by way of instruction from the then Treasurer, Dr Llew Edwards, instruction No. 330, which refers to ministerial expenses, was very effectively amended. In fact, it was completely replaced. I table both the amendment and the original instruction.

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

Forms 12, 13 and 14 of the schedule to the instructions were deleted. Those were the forms that were previously required to be completed by the accountable officer of each department, showing in detail, firstly, the expenses incurred by Government Ministers when in Brisbane; secondly, the expenses incurred whilst travelling within Australia and overseas; and, thirdly, the expenses incurred by the private secretary and other officers or employees accompanying the Minister within Australia or overseas. In the past, what we as members received for scrutiny were, to a large degree, replicas of the three forms. No longer do separate statements in respect of each Minister have to be prepared on Forms 12 and 14 by the accountable officer, usually the under secretary, in each Minister's department.

Because of the changed rules introduced by the Ministers themselves, all that happens now is that each department's accountable officer records in a register or in a separate ledger particulars of Ministers' expenses in the nature of travelling or entertainment allowances, and those allowances recorded each year are now to be indicated as a note to the departmental appropriation accounts, just as they appeared in the recently tabled Auditor-General's report. In other words, the report on the accounts of each department will show, in the briefest of terms, the total expense allowance for the relevant Minister when in Brisbane and the total travelling and expense allowances, excluding fares, of the Minister when travelling in Australia and overseas. No longer will the accountable officer complete Form 13, which is concerned with the travelling expenses of the private secretary and other officers and employees accompanying the Minister. Evidently those costs are to be submerged somewhere in each department's head office expenditure account.

Earlier I referred to the fact that in August of this year Parliament resolved that the Government should table in this Parliament, in the usual form, the expense reports as per Forms 12, 13 and 14 in the schedule to the Treasurer's Instructions. Despite that decision by Parliament, Cabinet proceeded to order through the previous Treasurer (Dr Llew Edwards) an amendment to the Treasurer's Instructions that ensures that any report on Ministers' expenses will not be tabled in the usual detailed form.

What the Ministers did in Cabinet last July was not only a flagrant misuse of power to avert accountability for their expenditure of public funds but also a complete and utter contradiction of a resolution of this Parliament. Until the day Parliament was dissolved, the Government was required to adhere to the previously mentioned resolution, in spite of the behind-the-scenes July 1983 amendment to the Treasurer's Instructions.

I suppose we will be told that changes have been made because of new financial administration procedures. Dr Edwards recently commented, I understand, that it was simply so that Queensland could fall in with other States. It suits the Government to fall in with other States when it means lack of accountability. Nothing will convince the public that what the Ministers have done is nothing but yet another prime example of unfettered feathering of their own nests. I suppose we will be told that to have the total amounts of certain ministerial expenses appearing in the Auditor-General's report is adequate. It is not adequate for proper accountability. I for one want to know if some of the ministerial spendthrifts are still doing what they did in previous years.

For example, honourable members may recall that in 1981-82 one Minister, who is not now in the Queensland Parliament, had expenses of \$22,731 in Brisbane alone. Because of the break-down of expenses in the report made available to politicians, we saw that \$22,008 had been spent on functions, liquor and other beverages. Needless to say, that former Minister was brought to task in the House for his extravagance.

It is not true to say, as has been reported in some sections of the media, that Cabinet Ministers have reduced their expense accounts. Total Brisbane expenses rose from \$187,067 in 1981-82 to \$232,483 in 1982-83, whilst total expenses incurred within Australia and overseas rose from \$214,958 in 1981-82 to \$232,097 in 1982-83.

The Form 12 report prior to 1981-82 gave separate fare costs for each Minister. In 1981-82, only the total figure amounting to \$289,804 was given in the form of a notation. In 1982-83 we will receive no information whatsoever about the details of fare expenses; nor is it the Government's intention to give that information in the future.

The Government came under heavy fire in 1980 when it admitted Opposition claims that it had failed to table in Parliament reports on Ministers expenses incurred in Brisbane. It was the Premier who finally agreed to the tabling of all three detailed statements. We see now that he has reneged on that commitment to Parliament.

The previous Treasurer's Instruction 330 required that vouchers for a Minister's expenses shall be signed or initialled by the Minister. Now, in the new provision pushed through by the Ministers of this Parliament, it seems that not only is the Minister free from that commitment; the accountable officer is not allowed to offer comment on the level or nature of the Minister's expenses or allowances but can allow the Minister opportunity to include any comments that he considers appropriate.

I repeat that this Government not only is not prepared to be more accountable for its expenditure of public moneys, it has also moved to ensure less accountability by the very people—the Cabinet Ministers—who should be prepared to set the example. The actions by those men in Cabinet reflect upon the integrity and honesty of all Queensland parliamentarians.

Australian Coast Guard; Air Sea Rescue Organisation

Mr CAHILL (Aspley) (12.40 p.m.): I rise to correct a few inaccuracies that were placed on the record yesterday by the member for Rockhampton North in speaking about rescue services off the coast of Queensland. I do not know where he got his information, but people in this Chamber and outside could have been misled on what does happen and how efficiently the services operate.

I do not suggest for one moment that the honourable member for Rockhampton North set out to mislead the Chamber. That is not his reputation, and it has never been my experience that the honourable member has acted other than honourably.

From my notes of what he said—I hope they are accurate—he is of the belief that when people at sea call for assistance the supportive services do not have the necessary equipment and personnel to enable them to render assistance. I point out that Queensland has two very fine volunteer services, which, in fact, operate all over Australia—the Australian Coast Guard, and the Air Sea Rescue Organisation. On behalf of the hundreds of men and women who make up these volunteer services, I emphasise that it is not accurate to say that they do not have the necessary equipment and personnel. I speak on their behalf because I have the honour to be a member of the Australian Coast Guard, although, sadly, these days I am not as active as I would like to be. It is not true to say that those organisations cannot go out and do a job.

The honourable member's information was that no medically trained personnel were ever sent out. He did not specify exactly whether he meant a qualified medical practitioner or a paramedic. Every Australian Coast Guard flotilla and every Air Sea Rescue Organisation flotilla has trained first-aid and paramedic personnel. Of the four men in the crew that goes out on a job in a Shark Cat or a Hydrofield—the boats that are customarily used—at least two, and sometimes all four, are trained in first aid, trained to use oxy-viva equipment and trained to assist people with hypothermia. So those who are rescued are provided with a great deal of care. If a doctor is available, the crew will take him so that he can be on the spot.

The honourable member mentioned also that the New South Wales services have competent divers available. Again, both the Air Sea Rescue Organisation and the Australian Coast Guard have trained divers among their volunteer members. In addition to those two services, the Water Police, with their beautifully equipped Shark Cats and big monohulls, also have a trained squad of divers.

The SES has a helicopter, and, even though it is not Government-funded, the Wales helicopter is available.

Mr Simpson: The Government provides a 75c in the \$1 subsidy to what is now called the Westpac helicopter.

Mr CAHILL: I am grateful to the honourable member for Cooroora for putting the record straight.

The navy and the air force also help, and the Westpac helicopter can carry trained divers who can be dropped into the water. When it is known that someone has a specific illness, a doctor is taken to the scene by boat or helicopter.

No matter how good his intentions, the honourable member for Rockhampton North is not as well informed as he ought to be. The Australian Coast Guard and the Air Sea Rescue Organisation operate literally from the southern border to north of Cairns.

Both organisations should be better supported by everybody, and I include the insurance companies. The insurance companies would be startled if they worked out what their losses would be if it were not for the work of those organisations in saving boats and lives. In fact, they would no doubt be extraordinarily happy at the amount they must save in pay-outs. It would be extremely interesting to know just how much the Coast Guard and the Air Sea Rescue Organisation save the insurance companies of this nation every year particularly when, to my knowledge, those companies do not even contribute one litre of fuel to help them. The Government does contribute by way of subsidy.

The Government needs to ensure that boating right along the coast is made as safe as possible. We have some of the most dangerous waters in the world, and I can assure members that it is not terribly pleasant to have to put out to sea in some conditions. But nobody twists one's arm. I take the point of the honourable member for Rockhampton North that irresponsible people sometimes do put to sea. I wish that laws could be introduced to prevent their doing so, but unfortunately they cannot.

All Queenslanders should be thankful for the work done by the Coast Guard, the Water Police, the Air Sea Rescue Organisation, the Westpac and SES helicopters and, whilst I am on the subject, the helicopters from the various television stations. They all do a superb job. As I said, my only regret is that I do not have the time to be as active a member of the Coast Guard as I would like. An attempt should be made to improve those services, but it should always be remembered that they do a superb job.

Expo '88

Mr FOURAS (South Brisbane) (12.48 p.m.): I preface my comments about Expo '88 by saying that the Opposition supports the holding of an exposition as part of the bicentennial celebrations. But I am very concerned because the site chosen is in my electorate.

The process of choosing a site began in 1978 when the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce sought and obtained Government support and approval for a feasibility study. It did not take place because the chamber was given no indication that the Government would commit itself to the project. The concept was again raised in 1981. At that time the consultants, Cameron, McNamara and Partners, were commissioned to undertake a detailed study. They looked at sites at Kuraby, Beenleigh and South Brisbane. They were asked whether any of these sites could be used to provide an exposition at a cost of under \$200m. The study concluded that the facilities at Kuraby and Beenleigh would cost less than that amount but that facilities at the South Brisbane site would cost \$255m.

Then in 1982, following representations by certain people, the suitability of the South Brisbane site was again to be looked at, taking into account the greater potential for post-Expo use of the site and the possible recovery of capital costs owing to the enhanced value of the land.

It is an amazing turnaround. A year later we are told that the Expo can be funded for \$128m and that it will be self-financing on the basis of admission fees, rentals and the sale of assets. It was estimated in 1981 that the cost of staging Expo on the other two sites would be less than \$200m and that the cost of staging it on

the South Brisbane site would be \$225m. A year later, after something new has been put into the pot, or into the equation, it is claimed that Expo can be staged for half the original estimate and that it will be self-financing.

I will now examine some of the assumptions made about financing Expo. It has been said that about 7.2 million people will visit Expo '88. That estimate was made by expert consultants with a high record of success in predicting Expo attendances.

The suggestion that 40 000 people every day for six months will stream into the South Brisbane Expo site is pie in the sky. The assumption was based on the fact that 65 000 people attended the opening of the Commonwealth Games. It was therefore assumed that 40 000 people would attend Expo every day for six months. That is absolute nonsense. If 3 million people rather than 7.2 million people attend the Expo, the result will be a drop of about \$40m in the returns from Expo.

I am concerned about one of the reasons given in the report presented by the former Treasurer for choosing South Brisbane, which was in these terms—

“ its potential for development from a rundown, unattractive area into one of the most attractive and valuable precincts in Brisbane.”

It is absolute nonsense to suggest that. The area was developing slowly but surely. It is no more unattractive than parts of Fortitude Valley and other areas in Brisbane that need further development. It is very important to keep that in mind.

The major reason for choosing the South Brisbane site, as contained in the document sent by the former Treasurer to the Leader of the Opposition, is in these words—

“On completion of the Exposition, virtually all land, except for one block for Government office development and that already dedicated as or for other public purposes and parkland would be disposed of at greatly enhanced market values.”

That is the real reason for acquiring this land.

I have a number of reasons to advance about why that land should not be used. It is totally immoral to acquire land, not for road or other public use, and make a large profit on it. On the cash-flow figures given by the former Treasurer, \$73m will be paid for the land and \$115.2m will be recovered from it, which means a profit, in 1983 terms, of about \$42m. That is the major reason for using that land for the Expo.

Many people have been writing to me about the proposed acquisition of land for the purposes of the Expo. In a letter from a man who owns premises in this area, he said that he had received an offer of \$325,000 for his 60-bedroom private hotel. He believes that that amount is less than half what the property is worth to him. The Government will be able to make \$42m on the resale by screwing such people. This man sums up very well my views on the Expo in these words—

“I believe that Expo may well benefit Brisbane; but not our district. Certainly not us and the people that we care for.”

That is a very pertinent point.

The Expo will create major traffic problems in the area. The traffic flow in Brisbane is planned radially. It is ludicrous that the Government should first decide on the south bank of the river as the Expo site and only now undertake a traffic study. It put the cart before the horse. It is now saying, “We will do this traffic study.” We have been told that possibly 10 million people will visit Expo. If it is staged at South Brisbane, there is no way in the world that there will not be traffic chaos.

I am concerned about the development of a large site like that. Expert planners and senior architects have expressed serious concern that wholesale urban renewal, such as will eventuate after this 40-ha site is developed, simply will not work. A major reason is that there will be a development but there will be no community. It will become a ghetto. That is the experience wherever massive wholesale urban renewal has taken place. I am concerned because what happens in that area will affect the integrity of the electorate of South Brisbane.

Furthermore, I am concerned that the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing is using his reserve powers to take over control of the planning of the Expo site. In the development control plan, the Co-ordinator-General is being given the right to veto any decision. The development control plan is very vague about what will happen after the Expo. Surely, in any democracy, the elected local authority members, and not a public servant, should make such decisions.

The whole idea behind Expo '88 is to get as much money as possible from the resale of the site. There is no way in the world that 7.2 million people will pay to see Expo. It is suggested that 2 million interstate visitors and 5.2 million Queenslanders will visit it. That means that every man and woman in Queensland will have to visit Expo more than twice.

There is the danger of some alienation of the parkland along the Brisbane River. Also, the staging of Expo could have provided an ideal opportunity to further develop the infrastructure for growth by establishing an industrial growth centre on the site chosen. On that basis, Kuraby and Beenleigh would have provided better sites. The Government could have funded a rapid transit system between the city and the site. The infrastructure would have been there, and some of these sunset industries could have been established. That would have provided long-term employment.

I believe that Expo will have an effect on the little people in my electorate. As a result of Expo, rates and rents will rise. More than 50 per cent of the people in South Brisbane and West End live in rented accommodation. They will be pushed out. What will be left there? There will be very expensive, high-rise development. In many ways, I think it will become a ghetto. It will be a concrete jungle with barricaded doors. People will have to speak into a microphone before they will be able to enter the high-rise apartments.

The whole character of my electorate has been threatened by the decision to hold Expo there. I believe that, on planning and many other considerations, it is the wrong decision. I support the idea of Queensland staging Expo, but I do not want it in South Brisbane. If honourable members understood the issues involved, they would not want it staged in South Brisbane either.

(Time expired.)

Upgrading of Widening Program for Moonie Highway

Mr NEAL (Balonne) (12.58 p.m.): In the last minute or two remaining in the Matters of Public Interest debate, I wish to refer to the upgrading and the widening of the Moonie Highway, which is an important highway that leads to the south west of Queensland. Indeed, it is the main highway through to Cunnamulla and out to Thargomindah.

Originally, the Moonie Highway through to St George was a 12-ft bitumen road. From St George west it is now an 18-ft bitumen road, and it is very good. West of Dalby at the barrier fence, through to Moonie and west of Moonie into the brigalow country, the road is still only narrow bitumen. During wet weather, because of the nature of the soil at the side of the road, driving becomes very dangerous. The heavy transports carrying stock, wool and so on force cars off the narrow bitumen and, after 25 points of rain, they slide into the gutters.

Of course, apart from inconvenience, local residents and people who are used to driving in that area experience no problems, but it can be very dangerous for people who are not used to those driving conditions. I call upon the Government to upgrade the widening program for that road.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! Under the provisions of Standing Order 36A, the time allotted for the debate on matters of public interest has now expired.

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 29 November (see p. 281) on Mrs Chapman's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr JENNINGS (Southport) (2.15 p.m.): I express my loyalty and that of the people in my electorate to Her Majesty the Queen, to His Excellency the Governor and to the institution of the monarchy. It is a most important part of Australia's heritage, and discussions about republicanism and calls for a new flag have no truck with the community.

I congratulate Mr Speaker on his election to that high office and I congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment as Chairman of Committees.

I congratulate all new members on being elected to this Assembly. I am sure, after listening to their speeches, that Parliament will gain considerably from the contributions of all new members. The new members in the National Party possess a broad cross-section of views, opinions and experience. I know that the National Party and the general public will benefit.

I congratulate the new Ministers. It was just a few months ago that members, some of whom had very little parliamentary experience, were appointed to Cabinet out of the blue. I congratulate every one of them. They are doing an excellent job for the National Party and for Queensland. They have encountered some very difficult problems and have handled them very well.

The broad cross-section of talent among members of the National Party is one of the Government's greatest advantages. The results of the election demonstrated that the people of Queensland wanted the security and stability offered by the National Party to continue, not for another year or so, but for another 25 years. The National Party has members who have the potential to be Ministers, and members of the Opposition know that. An analysis of voter response at the recent State election indicates that, before much longer, this Government will become the longest serving in Australia's history.

It was Sir Robert Menzies who, in 1949, instituted the tradition of coalition government. The basic principles of coalition government are that there should be joint Senate tickets, that Cabinet Ministers should not vote against the Government and that Government members should be completely—

Mr Borbidge: There should be no three-cornered contests against Ministers.

Mr JENNINGS: That is right.

Mr Davis: People should not vote against their own party, as you did in Victoria.

Mr JENNINGS: I did not vote against my party. The Federal Minister in charge of Aboriginal Affairs is the man who was Leader of the Labor Opposition in Victoria when I was a member of Parliament in that State. That is why I am worried about what is happening with Aboriginal issues in Australia at present. The Federal Minister has much to answer for. When he was Leader of the Opposition in Victoria that Minister could have exposed the biggest, most corrupt land deals in Australia's history when "The Age" published them in June 1974. That man did nothing, and he now controls Aboriginal issues.

Above all else, one thing that the people of Australia must be concerned about is the security of the nation. The one thing that more than anything else will undermine that security is the Aboriginal issue. In a recent speech the honourable member for Maryborough referred to that issue. International alliances are vital to the security of the nation. However, how can the Australian people hope to have proper international alliances when they find themselves in a situation in which Governments set up States within States? Last year, Neville Bonner said that he wanted a separate race and a separate entity for the Aborigines.

A Government Member: That is what the Labor Party wants.

Mr JENNINGS: I know it is. I will have more to say about Mr Holding in a moment; so Opposition members should hold their horses.

It is absolutely vital that investment in Australia be encouraged. It is important to note the many different initiatives that the Government will take to encourage overseas investment. His Excellency referred to them in his Opening Speech.

The people of Queensland voted in the way they did because each morning they are able to wake up knowing which way the leadership will go, which way the country will go and which way the National Party operates. In Australia there is a written law and there is also an unwritten law. Nowhere is that more paramount than out in the bush. A very fine line exists between tolerance and insistence. Everyone knows where that line is drawn by the National Party.

Having been in another Parliament, I am very impressed by the facilities that Queensland members of Parliament have. When I first came to Queensland, I was amazed at the magnificent Parliamentary Annexe. Now I am equally amazed at this magnificent old building, which has been refurbished. I pay a tribute to the many people who, years ago, were responsible for planning this magnificent work. Bob Moore and the Premier were only two of them. No facilities like these exist anywhere else in Australia. Members of Parliament in Queensland are very fortunate indeed to have these facilities, and, because they allow members to do a better job, the public, too, are fortunate.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr JENNINGS: Everyone knows that Mr Wran has problems.

My philosophy and that of the National Party is simple. It is that, firstly the security of the nation is paramount; secondly, international alliances, which are the only security that this nation has, are vital; thirdly, Australia must have a strong private-enterprise economy; and, finally with a strong private-enterprise economy the nation should have a social welfare system that is better than any other in the world.

One thing that Australia must have more than anything else is the right type of economic climate for people who are prepared to invest. The obstacles must be cleared away to enable people who are prepared to work hard to make a profit. We simply cannot have the goodies unless we encourage people to work hard and make a profit.

One of the points that the Leader of the Opposition made during his election campaign was that he would freeze titles to land controlled by foreign owners. I shall have more to say about that later.

Meanwhile, I turn to what has happened over the past three years in my electorate of Southport. A great deal has been achieved. I have had very good co-operation from the Ministers.

Mr Borbidge: What was the swing to the National Party in Southport?

Mr JENNINGS: I would be too embarrassed to state that. Actually, I just got there.

However, some very fine schools are to be found in the Southport electorate. The Minister for Education referred this morning to class sizes. I compliment him for the excellent job that he is doing.

Other Ministers, too, such as the Minister for Works and Housing (Mr Wharton), have provided great assistance. A new court house has been constructed and roadworks have been proceeding for three years in my electorate as well as in the Surfers Paradise electorate, which is represented by my colleague Mr Borbidge. Generally speaking, things are proceeding very well.

Recently, I and other people from the Gold Coast had a meeting with officers of various Government departments concerning The Spit. It has been agreed by all concerned that there shall be no development north or east of Sea World and that all the development south of Sea World will be limited to three-storey development. A good deal of work has to be done in order to stabilise the Southport bar.

Some large projects are going ahead. Recently my colleague the member for Surfers Paradise referred to the casino, the Surfers Paradise Hotel and other major projects. The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing has dreamed up a scheme to move the showgrounds and trotting complex to a new location. It is an excellent scheme. I had discussions with the p. and c. association at the Southport State School, and 95 per cent of that association's members are in agreement with the proposal to move the school to the trotting complex, which, in turn, will be relocated in an area near where the freeway comes in from the Gaven Way. The trotting complex will be a beauty; it will rank among the best in the world. The show, too, will benefit, as will the community,

Throughout the history of this nation, one of the keys to its development has been property ownership. The right to freehold ownership is absolutely paramount in the philosophy of the National Party. A person must always be able to sell his property to the highest bidder. He must be assured that his property will not be devalued by any independent, bureaucratic action. He must be free to do what he likes on his own property provided that that freedom does not impinge upon the freedom of others. That is most important.

The Gold Coast has a planning scheme. I do not criticise the council specifically, but it has a wide discretionary power under which it can vary the planning of an area and make alterations to zonings. Unfortunately, that can affect property values. Of course, people have the right to object. The people of Queensland have a right that does not exist in some other States. If a person's property is devalued following a rezoning, he has the right to sue for damages.

In January the Leader of the Opposition predicted that the buying of property by Asians could influence and control the market. He was totally opposed to the purchase by Asians of property in this country. He made that quite clear. For the Leader of the Opposition to point to a particular race and to say, "I don't like you buying property"—

A Government Member: Or a nationality.

Mr JENNINGS: A nationality, yes. When the Leader of the Opposition says, "I don't like you buying property, but others can.", what sort of situation do we have?

There is all this talk about Aboriginal land rights, and here he is saying quite clearly, "I do not want Asians buying our property." The Leader of the Opposition said it; I didn't. It is an embarrassment to the member for Surfers Paradise and me. Of course, it was an embarrassment to many persons.

During the last week of the election campaign at the Press Club the Leader of the Opposition said, "As far as the Opposition is concerned, it will freeze titles controlled or owned by people who live in foreign countries."

The foreign ownership register is the greatest lot of hoo-ha that I have heard. Could honourable members imagine going to Babinda and such places and asking different people, "Where do you come from? Why do you want this property?" That is the most racist thing that I have heard. Not one person has been able to say what would be done with the proposed foreign land register.

An Honourable Member: Would he nationalise it if it was owned by a foreign interest?

Mr JENNINGS: No. He said that he would confiscate it. He said that he would freeze the land title.

Karl Marx said that one way to destroy our whole system is to destroy the property ownership system. The Leader of the Opposition was right on the ball, following up Karl Marx.

During the reign of the Whitlam Government, Mr Justice Else Mitchell reported on property ownership. He said that there was a growing body of opinion that no person should be able to buy land outright and that there should be tenants only.

Mr Milliner: What are you quoting from?

Mr JENNINGS: My well-written notes. The honourable member might like to have a look at them.

I do not know how long the members of the Labor Party will allow such a racist to lead them. It is wrong that he should be referring to Aborigines when he has shown that he is a racist.

As to foreign investment—every person who is prepared to invest money in this country under our laws and regulations and pay our rates and taxes should be given encouragement. Americans have invested millions of dollars in the Gulf country.

Mr Tenni: They didn't take the stuff away with them, did they?

Mr JENNINGS: That is right.

The Americans risked their money, built new homesteads, and spent money on water, fences and bores. I know that some of them fell on bad times and went broke. They went away, but all the facilities that were provided are still being used today. Not very long ago the Federal Labor Treasurer banned Asian people from building a high-rise unit on the Gold Coast.

Mr Borbidge: Costing jobs!

Mr JENNINGS: That is right. That was done by the Federal Treasurer. How crazy it was!

The Queensland Government is trying to create jobs. The Opposition has also referred to uranium.

The Queensland Government has done an excellent job for tourism, yet not so long ago the honourable member for Woodridge said that the Government had not done anything for tourism in this State. I notice that the honourable member has just entered the Chamber. If he wants to know the exact date, it was on 24 November 1981. The Tourist and Travel Corporation has done a magnificent job, but during the election campaign the Labor Party said that it intended to do away with it. The Labor Party policy on fuel pricing was pinpointed recently by Peter Walsh, who said that he would completely repudiate the procedure by which petrol prices were adjusted according to fluctuations in the exchange rate.

Mr Tenni: They said when they came to power they would remove the extra tax on petrol.

Mr JENNINGS: Labor Party members always say what they are going to do when they get into power, but they never do it.

It is absolutely important that the Government encourage input and investment in the mining industry in Australia. The Federal Government is now considering an excess profit tax and a resource rental tax. At a conference held last year the Japanese made it quite clear that they will continue to buy coal from Australia, even though they can still get it at competitive prices from South Africa, the United States and Canada, as long as we can guarantee delivery and not be subjected to the strikes such as those that occurred in 1981. Some honourable members might remember that in 1981 the ACTU banned the rail shipment of yellowcake from the north. I give the Queensland unionists a pat on the back because they refused to invoke that ban. As a result of the action of the unionists in the Electrical Trades Union and the railways, that yellowcake was exported from Queensland.

In July 1982, Japan was producing steel and selling it to Australian customers at \$80 a tonne higher than the price it was charging on other markets, yet it was still competitive on the Australian market. That is one of the reasons BHP is in difficulties and suffered a loss of \$117m. The chairman of Repco Corporation Limited said that a tool-maker in Australia earns \$US7.70 per hour compared with \$US3.10 an hour in the United States, \$US2.80 an hour in South Korea and \$US1.60 in Brazil. The average worker in Australia could not be expected to know, and would be unlikely to learn from the daily press, that a major reason for Australia's low expenditure on research and development is that company profits have been seriously eroded in recent years by excessive wage increases and the effects of inflation.

It is worth mentioning that until November last year, which is only 12 months ago, this country recorded its driest period in the last 50 years. Even Opposition members would agree that it was certainly great to see that drought break and the country given a boost.

Mr Davis: Some of you cow-cookies are still whinging.

Mr JENNINGS: For the benefit of the honourable member I should mention the resources boom, which was often spoken about in 1981. What did the unions do? They produced a log of claims for a 28-hour week, 25 weeks annual leave and quadruple overtime. That is one of the reasons why customers are looking elsewhere. That was the greatest way possible to frighten them off.

There has been much talk about what Queensland does not do for Aborigines. The 1981 census reveals that New South Wales has 35 000 Aborigines and Queensland has 44 000. In the year 1982-83, the New South Wales Government spent \$6.9m on Aborigines and

Queensland spent \$52.3m, which is a great difference. Queensland's stand on the Aboriginal issue will go down in history, as it is so important for the future. Thank God our great grandfathers, grandfathers and fathers had the foresight to set up the Federation.

We have a major responsibility, not only to today's Aborigines but to their children and their children's children. That is why the concept of a deed of grant in trust is spot on as far as the future of the race is concerned. Aborigines can go anywhere they like, take a job or buy a house on the open market just like the rest of us.

I want to return to the way in which Canberra controls Aboriginal affairs. I do not think anyone would be other than shocked by the Labor Government's handling over Ayers Rock. Back in June 1974, an article in the Melbourne "Age" disclosed a number of corrupt land deals. The allegations were subsequently proven correct and a number of people were gaoled. I became involved, and, as a result, a royal commission was instituted. It found negligence, dishonesty, the payment of excessive prices, deliberate deceit, conspiracy, a failure of the valuation system, the deliberate giving of false information, and that files were missing. Fourteen people were charged and some of them were gaoled.

These deals were first exposed in the Victorian Parliament in June 1974. Because there had been specific allegations, it was expected that questions would be asked in the September session of Parliament. I had done some research and found that the allegations were correct. Although the publicity continued, the Leader of the Opposition (Clyde Holding) did not ask one question about the matter. He has never explained why he did not ask any questions, but I know that it was because he was involved in a conspiracy. He was part of the biggest cover-up ever seen in this country.

Mr Borbidge: Mr Holding took legal action against you, didn't he?

Mr JENNINGS: Yes, he took out a writ. He went to court and his writ was thrown out.

Mr Vaughan: It sounds like Heckle and Jeckle.

Mr JENNINGS: It might; but that scandal destroyed a lot of people, including the Victorian Liberal Party.

I have mentioned that scandal because many Opposition members have referred to the need for a parliamentary public accounts committee. When I presented factual information that exposed those crooked land deals, the Victorian Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee did not ask one question about them. I became a member of the Victorian Parliament in 1976, and that scandal blew up in its face in 1977. The point is that the Public Accounts Committee did not do anything.

The worst of the deals to be exposed involved the development of Albury-Wodonga. The reporter who originally broke the story in "The Age" estimated that \$20m was misspent at Albury-Wodonga. I was asked to go there. When I arrived, I was given a lot of information, including many files. To cut a long story short, those files provided a prima facie case for the setting up of a royal commission. Those involved included members of the Victorian Parliament and their relatives and some members of the New South Wales Parliament. I received files that had been taken from the office of the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation.

When I exposed that scandal, I said that I had a suitcase full of material about the crooked deals. I was told to put up or shut up, so I promptly called a press conference at the Windsor Hotel in Melbourne. About 20 journalists turned up. I gave them all folders containing information that proved that the deals were crooked. Then a journalist from the Melbourne "Herald" rang me and said, "We have been told to go quiet on it because Australian Newsprint Mills are getting a special deal at Albury-Wodonga." But then the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation called in the Commonwealth Police to investigate the way in which I had obtained the files, but they did not ask me one question because they had been told not to approach me. Somebody was frightened that there might be one honest Commonwealth policeman who would say that there was a prima facie case for the setting up of a royal commission. There were five Governments involved, and they all feared a royal commission——

Mr Borbidge: Did they have public accounts committees?

Mr JENNINGS: Yes, they all had public accounts committees. The Whitlam Labor Government, the Fraser Liberal Government, the Wran Labor Government, the Askin Liberal Government and the Hamer Liberal Government had all set up public accounts committees, and not one of them asked any questions. That shows how good parliamentary public accounts committees are.

Mr FitzGerald: Another quango.

Mr JENNINGS: Yes.

Queensland has an Auditor-General who is doing a good job. The Victorian Auditor-General found widespread cases of waste and avoidance of spending controls by the State Government. It should be noted that Victoria has a parliamentary Public Accounts Committee. The Victorian Auditor-General found that some bushfire relief payments were unauthorised and that controls on the State's \$2.3m in grants were inadequate. He found that cheque duty worth \$989,000 was refunded without ensuring that the cheques even existed, that more than half of the State's 1708 primary schools provided no audited accounts, that there was no regular follow-up by the Education Department to collect \$7.4m owed by former students who had breached studentship agreements with the State Government and that potential interest of \$600,000 a year was lost through Education Department banking methods. I again emphasise that Victoria has a Public Accounts Committee.

One of the worst rorts was associated with the Loy Yang Power Station. In one hand the men were receiving a payment subject to tax deduction, and in the other they were receiving a lot of black money. Apparently \$1,000m was set aside to finance the racket. Those who should have known about it were the State Labor Government, the Liberal Opposition, the SEC, the Builders Labourers Federation, the Federal Government and the Taxation Department. But not one question was asked by the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee.

Mr Vaughan: Why?

Mr JENNINGS: Because they were told to shut up; it was a political thing.

Mr Vaughan: When was that?

Mr JENNINGS: It happened recently. It is still going on. The honourable member knows that Gallagher and his crew were associated with the Loy Yang Power Station.

The Minister for Justice foreshadowed legislation relative to building units and group titles. Much discussion and controversy about this legislation has been published in the press. In my view, the legislation will validate deals entered into some years ago. In late 1981, I looked into an estate agent's window and saw photographs of houses, land and so on. On one the price of \$95,000 had a big black cross on it, with \$100,000 above it; on another there was \$100,000 with a big black cross through it and \$110,000 above. That demonstrates how cheeky the real estate agents and others were in those days. The legislation to be introduced is important because it will validate deals with which the buyer and the seller were both happy. It is important to ensure that people can invest in this State in confidence knowing that deals between buyers and sellers will be upheld by the Parliament. Deals were done in accordance with the law at the time, but there is a slight fault in its wording.

Like my colleague from Surfers Paradise, I look forward to the Budget. We hope that it will contain some reductions in land tax, because large increases in land value have occurred.

Mr Borbidge: It will be the best Budget brought down in Australia this year.

Mr JENNINGS: In 1981 many real estate brochures carried slogans such as, "Real estate: don't miss the boat in '81." and, "Top real estate opportunities." They went on and on.

This year, I have been worried about the Combe-Ivanov Royal Commission in Canberra and the release of tapes of conversations. Irrespective of what we may think of Mr Combe, the release of those transcripts and tapes to the public was shocking.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: At last you are talking a bit of common sense.

Mr JENNINGS: It was absolutely terrible that that should happen. No-one in this country should be expected to take that. I cannot understand Gareth Evans and the others who talk about a bill of rights allowing it to happen. We should be absolutely disgusted, and horrified by it. In no circumstances should anything like that ever be tolerated in a democracy.

The north of Queensland is very important to all of us. My seven years up there was very thrilling. I look forward to serving on the committee of the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs and looking into some of the matters that he intends to deal with. The northern area contains some of the most productive cattle land in Australia. Australia has some of the best cattle-producing country in the world. This is where there can be advantages and disadvantages with leasehold and freehold land. If a person invests the right amount of money in purchasing the right number of cows and bulls, he can double his capital investment at the end of the third year, triple it in five years and quadruple it in six years. I know because I have done it. The right sort of management is needed. The property has to be managed 365 days a year. As the member for Mourilyan (Mr Eaton) would know, the area around Mt Surprise is very good cattle country.

Back in the '60s, Frank Nicklin, as he then was, said that the increase in population in Queensland over the last seven years had not been enough. The growth rate in Queensland at that time was only 7.53 per cent, which was the lowest in Australia. What a great credit it is to this Government that Queensland now has the highest growth rate.

The beef road went through the Etheridge shire years ago. One of Queensland's great natural resources is its vast inland grazing and grain lands. Anything that we can do to assist the development of those areas advantages the whole State. One can see what happened after the recent rain. When the rain came, rural industries began to pick up, the economy began to pick up, jobs began to be created, and the fellows out in the scrub wanted more tractors and other machinery. That was great. We can never get away from the fact that this country was built on the rural industries, and that is the way in which it will continue to be built.

Australia certainly is a lucky country. There are only about five people per square mile in Australia. The figure is 55 in the United States of America and 735 in Japan.

This Government encourages people to invest, and that is why it achieved the result that it did at the last election. We must do everything possible to remove any restriction on investment. We must encourage people to come here with pioneer industries. When Malaysia achieved independence back in the late '50s, it provided tax-free holidays for five years for people who invested in that country. Of course, Malaysia has been one of the most stable areas in South East Asia.

This country has not been built by governments, bureaucrats, socialists or pessimists. It has been built by people who were prepared to go out, face up to a challenge, work hard and achieve a result. That is what has made this country.

I am pleased that there are so many good newly elected members in the National Party. They have already contributed a great deal to this Parliament. They will provide a broad brush of experience over a great many areas.

It is rather interesting to compare the position of the National Party in Queensland with the position of the party down south. Although the National Party in Queensland has increased its numbers, it still has no legal man within its ranks. That is quite interesting, too. When I say that, I am not being derogatory to my legal friends.

We look forward to three years of productivity. It is certainly great to be in a Government that is controlled by one party. We are all heading in the one direction, and I am sure that Queensland will head in the same direction.

Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (2.49 p.m.): Before I refer to the Governor's Opening Speech, I thank the electors of Nudgee for returning me as their State member. I also take the opportunity to record my sincere appreciation to all the people who assisted me during the election campaign. I assure all the electors of Nudgee that I will continue to represent them in the best possible way and to the best of my ability.

I congratulate all members who were successful at the last election and, in particular, the newly elected members. I hope that their stay in this Parliament will be as fruitful as mine has been since 1977. We never cease to learn. Unfortunately, we learn many bad habits, but we also learn some good habits and make some good friends.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment as Chairman of Committees, and I also congratulate Mr Speaker. The new Speaker has a difficult job ahead of him. However, it will be only a matter of time before he settles in. All honourable members hope that this Chamber will be all the better for Mr Speaker's appointment to that position. I hope that in the next three years members in this Chamber will achieve an acceptable standard and that the Government will get down to the business of really governing this State.

I now turn to the results of the recent State election. The National Party won 41 seats, the Liberal Party won 8 seats, the Labor Party won 32 seats and one seat was won by an independent member—a total of 82 seats. After the election result was announced, two former Liberal Ministers of the coalition Government changed over to the National Party. I expected that, and I issued a statement to the local press suggesting that it might happen. I suggested to the voters in the electorates of the former Ministers that before election day they should approach those Ministers and obtain from them an assurance that they would not desert the Liberal Party. History now shows that two members of the Liberal Party did defect to the National Party. That action gave the National Party 43 seats in this House.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: They are branded for ever.

Mr VAUGHAN: They have much to live down, but I make no other comment about them. They will have to live with their actions for many years to come.

As to the Liberal Party in the election—I believe that its members woke up too late. Opposition members saw what was happening to the Liberal Party. Over the years, Liberal Party members were prepared to be the subordinates of the National Party. Finally, when the Liberal Party's stocks reached an all-time low in the community, the party decided that something had to be done. There was only one way that the party could go, and that was up. But they left it too late.

The secretary and the president of the Liberal Party gave the member for Redcliffe the job of restoring the Liberal Party's fortunes. The honourable member had to try to save the Liberal Party from complete annihilation. After the election, it was in a bargaining position with the eight seats that it had won; but it was robbed of that bargaining position when the two members changed sides. In other words, it was left without a feather to fly with.

Comments were made during the election about the decision of the Labor Party to give its preferences to the National Party candidates in certain electorates. From my point of view, members of the Liberal Party had performed no differently from members of the National Party, so the biggest advantage to the Labor Party would be to eliminate the Liberal Party.

That would give the people of Queensland a straight choice between the National Party and the Australian Labor Party.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Do you think Brian Cahill was more deserving of our preferences than Beryce Nelson in Aspley?

Mr VAUGHAN: I will not enter into that argument. However, it is significant that the former member for Aspley, a member of the Liberal Party, was critical of the Labor Party for giving its preferences to the National Party. Labor preferences were not counted in that electorate, but it was the preferences of the former member that installed the National Party member in the seat of Aspley.

Liberal Party members have to do some soul-searching. They cannot expect to denigrate the Labor Party in public and say that they will not support it in any way, and then expect Labor Party preferences. They are not entitled to them; the Liberal Party must earn those preferences. If the Liberal Party wants to re-establish itself in Queensland politics, it must take a hard look at its membership and the direction in which it is heading.

As to the election campaign—I have collected some clippings from Queensland newspapers over the past few months, and they indicate quite clearly that the media make it very difficult for the Australian Labor Party to get its message across.

A Government Member: Everyone complains.

Mr VAUGHAN: I know that all honourable members complain. However, to illustrate my point, I shall quote from the editorials that appeared in "The Sunday Mail" of 16 October and "The Courier-Mail" of 3 October. The former said that, despite the excellent campaign conducted by the Australian Labor Party, it was not ready for government.

I do not know what a political party has to do to be ready for government. The Australian Labor Party has been in opposition for 26 years. In the day-to-day activities of this House, the Australian Labor Party has more than shadowed the Government. The first thought that ran through my mind when I saw the line-up for Cabinet was that Cabinet would be nothing more than a wood-heap of logs. However, later I thought that I should not be as unkind as that and I revised my opinion.

The fact is, however, that the primary newspapers in Queensland, "The Courier-Mail" and "The Sunday Mail", carry a lot of weight, and they know it. Their editorials do make the task of the ALP very difficult.

The editorial in "The Sunday Mail" of 16 October stated—

"Apart from Mr Wright, its front bench is hardly impressive, and the organisation is still faction-ridden."

The editorial in "The Courier-Mail" of 3 October made similar comments. It read—

"The doubts about Labor in this election are not so much of promises or policy, but of performance should they win office. Much has been made of Mr Wright's leadership, but what of the rest of Labor's front bench? So far, they have hardly been conspicuous in this campaign."

During the election campaign the Labor Party held 18 or 19 policy launches. At virtually every one, the appropriate shadow Minister delivered his policy in the presence of press reporters, including "The Courier-Mail" reporters. In spite of that, the editorial that I have quoted appeared in "The Courier-Mail"

My attention was attracted to an article that appeared in "The Courier-Mail" on Wednesday, 16 November, wherein the vice-mayor, Alderman Ardill, criticised the press, claiming that it cannot print a straightforward news item. He said, "They always have to go to the Opposition and ask for puerile comments." I am pleased to see that in the Brisbane City Council the press does go to the Opposition for comments. In contrast, in Parliament no such thing happens.

I am the Opposition spokesman on Mines and Energy. On any occasion when my opposite number in the Government, the Minister for Mines and Energy, comments on a particular matter, I would be pleased to have the press come to me in order to obtain my point of view. However, that does not happen; press reporters do not come to me for the other side of the story. They simply grab hold of what the Minister says, and that is it.

When I issue a statement, however, the press reporters say, "That is very good. It is controversial and it will sell a lot of newspapers. We will go and see what the Minister's comments are." It should be a two-way street; whenever the Minister makes a statement the press reporters should be objective enough to ascertain what the Opposition's point of view is. However, they do not do that. I would suggest that in future, to enable the people of Queensland to have a better appreciation of both sides of the story, the media should obtain the Opposition's story more often than they do at present.

I now comment on some statements concerning my electorate that were made by His Excellency in his Opening Speech. He said that the \$137m Gateway Bridge across the Brisbane River was due for completion in 1986. Originally it was to have been completed in 1985. However, because of hold-ups on the project, it will not be completed until the year after.

Since Parliament passed the necessary legislation in March 1980 to allow the bridge to be constructed, I have been trying to ascertain from the Government the extent to which roadworks on the north side, including my electorate of Nudgee, would be upgraded to cater for the traffic that will be generated by the Gateway Bridge.

Back on 20 March 1980 I directed a question to the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads. I asked him—

“(1) What existing arterial roads are to be upgraded to link the bridge with Highway 1?

(2) When is work scheduled to start on the upgrading of such arterial roads?

(3) Is it still planned to construct a main road linking the new bridge with Sandgate via Banyo, Nudgee, Nudgee Beach through to Shorncliffe?”

I received the following answer—

“Following completion of stage 1 works from Kingsford Smith Drive to Nudgee Road, the existing network of roads connecting Nudgee Road to the Bruce Highway is available to traffic.”

The Minister said that the Gateway Bridge would be constructed across the Brisbane River. He said that, as part of Stage 1 of the plan, roadworks from Kingsford Smith Road to Nudgee Road would be constructed, and the existing network of roads connecting Nudgee Road to the Bruce Highway would carry the traffic from the Gateway Bridge. The Minister further stated—

“These include Gerler Road-Junction Road, Toombul Road-Sandgate Road and various connections between Sandgate Road and Gympie Road. Possible upgrades to several of these links were included in the proposal but final works to be undertaken will be in accordance with resulting traffic generated.”

In March 1980 the Main Roads Department planned to construct the bridge and upgrade the road from Kingsford Smith Drive through to Nudgee Road. After that, the traffic from the Gateway Bridge would have to find its way through the other inter-connecting roads across to Highway 1.

Mr Kaus: It all depends on their destination, doesn't it?

Mr VAUGHAN: It all depends on their destination.

The fact of the matter is that the Gateway Bridge will provide the bypass round the centre of Brisbane. At present, traffic travels from north to south, either through Fortitude Valley and across the Story Bridge or through the city, across Captain Cook Bridge and along the freeway. When the Gateway Bridge is opened in 1986, all of the traffic that does not want to travel through the centre of the city—the huge tankers and transports—will use the Gateway Bridge even though the toll is predicted to be fairly high. Once they cross the bridge, I do not know what will happen.

Mr Kaus: I've got a similar problem.

Mr VAUGHAN: The honourable member is right in the middle of it. I sympathise with him. His electorate is probably experiencing similar problems to mine. Once the traffic travels across the Gateway Bridge, it will have to find its way through existing streets.

In March 1982 I directed a further question to the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police to find out what would happen. The people in my electorate and others on the north side of Brisbane wanted to know what was to happen.

Last Thursday I asked a further lengthy question to try to pin down the Minister on the Main Roads Department plans for roadworks on the north side of Brisbane. As the question was rather lengthy, the Minister indicated, through the Minister acting for him, that I would receive a reply in writing. Recently I contacted the Minister's office and was told that the answer would be provided today. Unfortunately, it has not arrived. I have been trying to find out what is happening.

I must give the Minister credit. Some time ago, when I wrote to him to try to pin him down on positive plans for traffic on the north side, he invited me to speak to the engineer in charge of the project at the Main Roads Department, which I did. Unfortunately, we were able to deal only with the positive plans that were available at that time.

I am referring to this matter in my speech because there are many people, not only in my electorate but also in the electorates of Nundah and Wavell and in surrounding electorates, who are interested in what will happen. Flyovers are in the process of being constructed over Kingsford Smith Drive. The flyover over Lamington Avenue and the railway line has been built. When the Gateway Bridge is opened, traffic will be delivered to the intersection of Serpentine Road and the new road leading to the new airport.

I am told that a roundabout will be constructed at that point. According to a model that was on display not so long ago at Toombul Shoppingtown, at some time in the future—no date of completion was given—a road will be constructed parallel with Schultz Canal from that roundabout to Sandgate Road near the Toombul Shoppingtown. The original plan was to construct a road from that point through Kalinga Park, up to Rose Street and through to the Bruce Highway.

During the election campaign an article appeared in the local press to the effect that, at the invitation of the members for Merthyr, Nundah and Wavell, a public meeting of irate residents in that area was held. After that meeting, the Minister for Main Roads cancelled forthwith all plans to continue that road from the intersection of Sandgate Road along Rose Street and across to Highway 1. That will create a problem with the traffic from the Gateway Bridge. It will either turn left and come back into the city—and a great deal of traffic from the new airport to be completed in 1986 will do that—or turn right and proceed out through the Nundah shopping centre and along various roads leading to the Bruce Highway.

Sir William Knox: It goes north through Deagon.

Mr VAUGHAN: I am speaking about the road that intersects with Sandgate Road, the one that the honourable member had the Minister cancel forthwith. The traffic cannot go straight ahead; it has to turn right or left. If it wants to go north it will turn right, proceed along Sandgate Road and down through the Nundah shopping centre, which cannot handle its current traffic volume. The traffic will then continue along Sandgate Road and out through Deagon.

Sir William Knox: It can't even go that way.

Mr VAUGHAN: We do not know. I hope that when I finally get my answer from the Minister I will have something positive to tell the people on the north side of Brisbane.

Mr Lee: Sir William would know.

Mr VAUGHAN: I do not know. He is not on the inner now; he is on the outer.

At some time in the future a road is to be constructed through to Toombul Road, from that roundabout at the intersection with the road from the new airport, but no date has been set for that construction. If that road is not built the traffic will have to proceed to Toombul Road along the two-lane Nudgee Road, that is, one lane in each direction. I have been told that the Main Roads Department is in the process of conducting a feasibility study into the widening of Toombul Road. Houses have been resumed at the Virginia intersection to make way for a roundabout. Construction will commence in July next year. Although no definite decision has been made, subject to the feasibility study, the plan is to widen Toombul Road to six lanes back as far as Melton Road and to construct a flyover over the railway line to do away with the railway crossing on Toombul Road. Toombul Road will then have six lanes as far as Melton Road but from Melton Road to Nudgee Road it will have four lanes.

My latest information in respect of the flyover for the Sandgate railway line is that negotiations have not commenced with the Railway Department for the resumption of railway land, which was the original site for the Northgate railway workshops. So all the matters I have mentioned are only plans. I hope that everything will be clarified in the Minister's reply to the question I asked last Thursday. However, I am concerned that we are running out of time. It is now nearly December 1983 and these roads have to be ready for the opening of the Gateway Bridge in 1986. I am afraid that, when the Gateway Bridge is opened, traffic will pour across it subject, of course, to the size of the toll, and clutter up the north side of Brisbane.

I have proposed that, in conjunction with the construction of the Gateway Bridge, a major limited access arterial road should be constructed from the roundabout at the intersection of the new airport road, round the back of Northgate, Banyo and Nudgee, through to Boondall and across to the Bruce Highway. That is the logical way to get the traffic straight out of the built-up area.

I understand that there are plans to upgrade Toombul Road. I asked the Minister whether it is intended to widen Toombul Road to six lanes. I have been told that that is to happen irrespective of the Gateway Bridge, because Toombul Road now carries about 30 000 cars a day. The Minister told me that there are no plans to widen Sandgate

Road. It seems logical to me that if traffic is to be increased by virtue of the road from Nudgee Road to Sandgate Road, and if the two outbound lanes from Nundah and the three outbound lanes from Toombul Road are to merge into the two lanes of Sandgate Road, it just will not fit.

Sir William Knox: You don't know what you are talking about. That traffic is only replacement traffic for Junction Road.

Mr VAUGHAN: We will wait and see. Now that the member for Nundah is no longer a Minister he might have more time to apply to the problems on the north side. In the meantime I will wait for a reply from the Minister.

My intention has been to get something specific on paper so that people on the north side know exactly what is to happen. I was encouraged by an article in a newspaper the other day stating that the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing intended to streamline building approvals because of a backlog caused by the indecision of local authorities. I said to myself, "Here is a good opportunity for me to try to do something to show Mr Hinze how he can streamline activities in his department."

People on the north side are entitled to know what will happen. A number of people have contacted me expressing fears about what will happen, particularly after reading an article which appeared in "The Courier-Mail". It showed a dotted line representing a proposed road linking Nudgee Road and Sandgate Road and pointed out that there would be large scale resumptions of land in the Nudgee area. People have told me that if they are to be displaced they want to know what is going on. Other people have told me that they are planning to settle on the north side and want to know what areas will be affected by traffic from the Gateway Bridge. People have the right to know exactly what the Government has planned.

As the Minister for Works and Housing is in the Chamber I will deal with another matter that the Governor referred to in his Speech. He said that the Housing Commission expected to provide a record number of welfare and pensioner houses in 1983-84. That is certainly welcome information. I assume that other members have shared my experience of being inundated by requests for accommodation. I suppose that the economic situation confronting Queensland has been aggravated by the 1000 people a week whom the Premier claims are flocking north over the border, high interest rates and rising unemployment. But the fact remains that the Minister knows that a large number of people are waiting for State rental accommodation. Not so long ago the waiting time was about nine months. It became 12 months, 15 months, 18 months and it is now two years.

I welcome the Governor's announcement. I hope that the Government gets on with the job and not only constructs new houses but also purchases existing houses in order to overcome the problem.

The Governor's Opening Speech referred to crisis homes. I am concerned about people who have done the right thing in applying to the Housing Commission to be put on the waiting-list and waiting patiently for their names to come to the top of the list. One family living in a house at Nudgee Beach without a reticulated water supply has been waiting for two years. In my opinion that house should be condemned, but if it were they would not have a roof over their heads. Recently, after I made further representations on their behalf, they were told that they would have to wait a little longer.

People faced with eviction, and others in equally serious situations, should be looked after. The best way to do that would be to provide more half-way homes. I do not like the idea of people jumping the list. When a person gets onto a list, that should be the end of it. However, people often get TV stations or other forms of the media to publicise that their home is to be destroyed and that helps them to get an on-the-spot allocation. That means that the poor people who have been waiting patiently and putting up with all the misery are pushed further down the list. Jumping the queue has become an art.

Mr Wharton interjected.

Mr VAUGHAN: So far I have accepted what the Minister has told me, but the number of people jumping the queue and getting preference has caused me concern. I ask the Minister to consider providing half-way homes for families in crisis situations so that their plight will not affect the people who have been waiting patiently for their names to come to the top of the list.

I turn now to problems at the Virginia, Sunshine and Northgate Railway Stations. For a number of years, following complaints I received from railway passengers, I have been trying to get those stations upgraded. Since the Virginia Railway Station was burnt down by vandals about two or three years ago, I have been trying to get shelter provided there for train travellers. Unfortunately, the reply is couched in these terms, "Owing to lack of funds the job cannot be done." On almost every occasion on which I have made representations to the Government for work to be done I have received a similar reply with monotonous regularity.

The overhead bridge at Zillmere Station was to be upgraded but again, unfortunately, I was told that the job could not be done because of the limited funds available. I was told that, because of inadequate funds, it was not possible to relocate the Northgate Railway Workshops. I requested an overhead bridge and widening of the platform at Sunshine Railway Station following electrification and I was again told that insufficient funds were available.

When I made representations to have the roof gutters at one of the schools in my area cleaned out to prevent their rusting, I was told that, because of lack of funds, the job could not be done. Fortunately, my further representations prevailed and the job was done.

The Government's propaganda machine tells stories about how rich Queensland is and how well off its people are. After reading those stories I become irate when I am told that insufficient funds are available for virtually every request I make.

Mr Scott: Sir William Knox is nodding in agreement, too.

Mr VAUGHAN: He will be experiencing the same problems.

During the election campaign, an irate person came into my office complaining about the Virginia Railway Station. I suppose that all is fair in love and war and during election campaigns. This person said that he had contacted the office of the member for Nundah about the condition of the Virginia Railway Station and had been told, "Well, you live in a Labor electorate. If you change the way you vote you might get something done about it." The irony is that just as many people in the electorate of Nundah as in the electorate of Nudgee use the Virginia Railway Station.

Sir William Knox: But they live on the better side of the track.

Mr VAUGHAN: They still have to cross over to catch the train. That was a rather amusing incident.

I noticed in the local press recently that the replaced Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) announced that overhead bridges would be constructed at Sunshine Railway Station and the Virginia Railway Station. I was pleased to see that funds had finally become available for that work.

When I noticed that announcement, I contacted the Minister and appealed to him to install ramps, not steps, on the overhead bridges. Ramps are far better for elderly people, people with babies in strollers and people with shopping trolleys. I have seen the problem that is caused by the large number of steps on the overhead bridge at Toombul Railway Station. People in my electorate who use that station repeatedly come to me and ask, "When will something be done about the huge number of steps at the Toombul Railway Station?" Of course, it is not in my electorate. Perhaps the member for Nundah might take some action in that regard.

The Governor referred in his Speech to the electricity industry, and I take the opportunity in the time left to me to make a few comments about electricity tariffs. As honourable members are aware, I am the Opposition spokesman on Mines and Energy. During the election campaign and each time when electricity tariffs have been increased, I have tried to indicate to the people of Queensland just what is happening with electricity development.

The Governor referred to expansion in the electricity industry and to the investment of approximately \$3.7 billion. Where is the money coming from? The annual report of the State Electricity Commission for 1982-83, which we received only last week, shows that expenditure on capital works in that year was \$848m. One of the criticisms that I have levelled at the Government following increases in electricity tariffs from time to time is that the Government is doing virtually nothing to encourage people to conserve electricity. What it is doing with the electricity tariff structures is encouraging people to burn up more

electricity because the more power they use, the cheaper it gets. A domestic consumer who consumes 2 000 units of power per quarter pays a lot less per unit for his electricity than is paid, for example, by a pensioner couple who have very modest means and live in a very small dwelling. Because of the existing tariff structures, the more electricity people use, the cheaper it becomes.

During the last election campaign I advocated, as part of Labor's policy, the adoption of the inverted tariff principle that applies in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, parts of the United States and Japan. The whole idea is to encourage people to conserve power so that we do not have to continue on the merry-go-around of constructing huge power stations to meet an ever-increasing demand for electricity. If something could be done to curb demand, along with other measures, maybe the Government would not have to continue to find huge amounts of money for capital works. As I say, \$848m was provided in 1982-83. The little booklet "Queensland Achievement" put out by the Government says that the amount provided over the next few years will be \$1,666m.

In speaking about capital works, I am concerned about the way in which new power stations are being built. I know that the projects create many new jobs and that that is one of the factors which motivate the Government. At the moment, construction is under way at the Tarong, Stanwell and Callide B power stations. One more is to be built. It is marvellous that these projects create jobs.

However, problems exist at the existing power stations and on the West Moreton coal-field, where the mining operations are being phased out. The Premier was prevailed upon to speak to the miners at West Moreton after his wife had gone there. He has given an undertaking that an investigation will be carried out to work out ways and means of keeping the West Moreton coal-field operating.

The economics of building such huge power stations must be considered. Tarong Power Station has cost \$1,200m, and the Stanwell Power Station is to cost \$1,400m. When these are operating, power stations such as Swanbank will be closed. I am not aware whether the Government has considered the economics of these measures; but when I made some inquiries I was told that the State Electricity Commission does not consider the capital cost of building a power station. It is time that it did.

I am concerned about the planned closure of Swanbank Power Station, which has many years of operating life left. It is capable of generating 900 Mw, which is almost three-quarters of the capacity planned for Tarong Power Station. I know that, because of the price of coal supplied by the West Moreton coal-field, the cost of generating power at Swanbank Power Station is higher. However, the amount of money that must be paid out in interest on the huge capital borrowing involved in building new power stations would more than offset any savings effected by cheaper coal supplies. Somewhere along the line the costs should balance. Conservation must be practised.

Electricity tariffs for domestic consumers have increased over recent years. Most consumers do not realise that approximately 25 per cent of their electricity account is creamed off the top by the Government for capital works. When the power industry was reorganised in 1977, that percentage was 9.17 per cent. The Government now takes for capital works 25 per cent of the gross retail sales of the electricity distribution boards. Since 1977, accounts for Brisbane domestic consumers have increased by 134 per cent. I am informed that next year the cost of electricity to the domestic consumer will increase by 17 per cent.

(Time expired.)

Mr BAILEY (Toowong) (3.29 p.m.): It is indeed a privilege to be able to rise in this House and endorse His Excellency's expressions of loyalty to our Sovereign.

Queenslanders are very aware that the Crown represents an important protection for citizens against the abuse of governmental power, a power that certain persons are determined to put into the hands of a centralist Government with absolute authority unrestrained by convention, tradition or constitutional safeguards provided by State Governments. The destruction of the flag is a symbolic but important step towards this goal, and I commend to the House the work of the Australian National Flag Association whose president, Dr Rupert Goodman, is one of my constituents.

Already, tradition has been cast aside with the loss of the Queen's Medal, and the suggestion has been made to do away with the Victoria Cross. Imperial honours they may be, but this country is not yet a republic and the members on this side of the House will fight hard to prevent one being imposed.

I rise in this House as a member of a political party that has already done an immense amount for Queensland and will, during the lifetime of this Parliament, do a great deal more. I am proud to rise as the elected representative of the people of the Toowong electorate, an electorate which consists of the suburbs of Toowong, St Lucia, Taringa and the bulk of Indooroopilly and Auchenflower. In all of these suburbs there are a significant number of retired persons who are extremely concerned about the threat that socialism poses to their hard-earned security. The assets test is aimed at the frugal and the thrifty who were sensible enough to make provision for their old age. These are the people to whom this country owes a debt of gratitude. And what is their reward? It is intrusion into their privacy and a very real fear that their standard of living will become a matter of genteel poverty rather than dignified independence. These people strongly supported me and my party during the recent election, and I promise that their welfare will always be a matter of great importance to me.

The people of Toowong have a wide cross-section of occupations, backgrounds and political and religious beliefs, and I reassure all of them that, no matter how they voted, I will work hard for them and, hopefully, convince even more of them to vote for continuing prosperity and free enterprise at the next election.

Toowong is an area that is ideally suited for commercial development, not in the heavy-industrial sense, but in technology and service industries. Already numerous computer companies are based in the electorate, and they epitomise the future of this country—increasing technology combined with the utilisation of its natural resources.

However, a need exists to protect many small businesses from the unacceptable practices of some landlords. In one group of shops in St Lucia, a substantial amount of key money is demanded at the end of every lease period. As well, the rent is increased by a substantial amount. I promised that this situation would be remedied and I am pleased that the proposed small business legislation will prevent avaricious vultures from preying on the small businessmen and women of Queensland.

Many of the small business people in the electorate are inhibited in expanding their operations and employing more staff by the iniquitous system of penalty rates. I pledge my support to the Honourable Vince Lester, Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, in his battle to have them removed. This, surely, is a commonsense way of reducing unemployment. One can only wonder whether the union movement is really serious about alleviating the plight of the unemployed or is more interested in just increasing at their expense the wages of those already employed.

I am determined that the people of Toowong, particularly the young, will have the maximum local employment opportunities.

To me, education is the No. 1 priority, and I assure parents, teachers and students alike that I will be taking an active interest in the well-being of the nine schools in the electorate. Even at this early stage, I am aware of the problems that exist and the facilities that are needed. Early in the new year, I will be visiting all of the schools and meeting with the parent and citizens associations to see what can be done.

I am delighted that one of the southern hemisphere's most respected institutions for higher learning, the University of Queensland, is situated in Toowong. Honourable members opposite will be disappointed to learn that the university is far from being a hotbed of radical socialism. The student body consists primarily of fine young people who are working very hard at earning their degrees and take their politics seriously.

Evidence of this is provided by the result at the university polling booth, the Avalon Theatre in St Lucia, where the National Party earned more than 38 per cent of the vote out of a total non-socialist vote of 66 per cent. And just to drive home the point that our intellectual leaders of the future are moving strongly away from socialism and towards individual liberty—it is heartening to report that the most effective political organisation on campus is now the Young Nationals, a group that can rely upon my strong support. Its help during the campaign was most effective and much appreciated.

I am opposed to the university's growing any larger and feel that, as a State that has successfully managed to decentralise its industries, Queensland should be investigating how it can similarly decentralise its tertiary education centres to the benefit of all Queenslanders, be they in the country or in the city.

Let me assure the electorate and all my city colleagues that we new arrivals on the Government benches are solid and resolute in our support of the Government. We will work for the benefit of all Queenslanders, not just those who reside in the metropolitan area.

In the election there was a substantial swing to the National Party. Its percentage increased from 24 per cent to 35 per cent. I take the opportunity to thank the extraordinary number of people who actively worked in the campaign, and the Premier, whose strong and constructive leadership is the reason that so many of us are in this place today.

In the party room I shall be advocating certain policies in which I have a particular interest. Some I have already mentioned. But I shall take advantage of the House's indulgence to mention some others now.

To me, the most important principle of human existence is the freedom of the individual. One way of evaluating freedom is by reference to decision-making ability, decision-making being shared between Governments and individuals. It is obvious that decision-making is power, and the more power that Governments have, the less remains to be shared amongst individuals.

One of the most dangerous methods by which Governments undermine individual decision-making, and hence destroy individual liberty, is by excessive taxation. I am proud to belong to a party that is dedicated to reducing the tax burden. I can be counted upon as a supporter for tax reduction and an opponent of proposals for tax increases or new taxes. As a result of wise government, Queensland is the lowest-taxed State. One of the reasons why all my colleagues on this side of the House will still be here in three years' time, and will be joined by even more National Party members, is that this Government will do even more to lift the taxation burden from the shoulders of Queenslanders during the life of this Parliament.

There is, of course, a limit to the extent to which State Governments can influence the total tax problem. For that reason, a major campaign for the reduction of taxes imposed by the Federal Government is needed. A major step in this direction would be the introduction of a single rate income tax, a flat tax concept strongly supported by the National Party, and I pay tribute to Senator Florence Bjelke-Petersen for her pioneering efforts in that regard.

The Commonwealth tax burden must be alleviated in other areas, especially through the reduction of tariffs. Tariff policy discriminates unfairly against Queensland, which is a net exporting State.

Another hidden and, therefore dishonest, tax is Government borrowings. The only true measure of taxation—the real weight of the burden on the people—is measured by the total of Government expenditure. In order to finance continuing profligate increases in federal expenditure, the Hawke Government has subjected us to a frightening deficit. It amounts to mortgaging our future to pay for the excesses of the present.

Members of the Queensland Government have a responsibility to do more than just govern Queensland wisely; we have a national responsibility as well. That was well illustrated by the immense contribution made by the Premier in 1975, when his personal intervention did much to bring down the inept Whitlam Government. Now the Hawke socialists present an equal threat, and once again it is up to Queensland to take the lead in bringing about a change in the federal sphere.

We will not be satisfied with the half-hearted approach to free enterprise, which was the hallmark of the Fraser years. The Fraser Government made little effort to reduce the crushing burden of over-government in certain areas. The introduction of retrospective legislation actually hampered the cause of individual liberty.

I also believe that freedom of choice must incorporate the freedom not to choose. Accordingly, I consider it improper that Governments should fine people for not voting. The abolition of compulsion is a worthy aim in itself. I shall work for the retention of preferential voting but the removal of compulsion.

While dealing with electoral matters, I pledge my unequivocal support for my party's opposition to public funding of election campaigns. The need to raise funds means, at least, that parliamentarians feel answerable to their own supporters. Why should the public fund groups that may not reflect their aspirations or their attitudes? Public funding of political parties is the reality of such a move, and the perpetuation of the present political parties is the end product. What chance would there be for smaller parties to evolve if such funding came about?

A couple of other matters are of concern to my electorate and, therefore, to me. The Honourable the Minister for Mines and Energy has already undertaken to review the system of electricity charges for churches. The churches are now charged the commercial rate, which is top heavy for limited users of power; thus the churches and the welfare organisations they support are charged unfairly for what cannot be defined as commercial usage. This anomaly has been made apparent to the Minister and I hope that it will be dealt with to the benefit of the congregation of churches, not only in the Toowong electorate but right across the State.

Another area of concern is that rate reductions for pensioners bring no benefit to pensioners who reside in body corporate buildings. This matter is of particular interest to my constituents, since the prevalence of unit dwellers is probably higher in Toowong than anywhere else in Brisbane and perhaps in Queensland.

During my campaign and since my election, a great many problems have been brought to me. It is interesting to note that the majority of these problems relate directly to the insensitivity and remoteness of the Brisbane City Council. That body is unique to Australia as a refuge for empire-builders and bureaucrats. It is a body which seemingly is keener to build monuments to itself rather than to look after the real everyday problems of my constituents.

It was this council that, seemingly in a fit of pique, closed the Toowong library. I take this opportunity to commend the hard work of the two aldermen in the area, Denver Beanland and Sallyanne Atkinson, for the work they did in forcing the council to change its mind. This much-needed public facility will be re-opened early in December. But why it was ever closed will remain a mystery.

The general feeling in Toowong is one of council neglect. That is a staggering situation when the rates in the area are exorbitant, and still rising. The Toowong shopping centre is a good example. It has no public conveniences and no bus shelters. The newly constructed median strip was seemingly designed to help the flow of traffic, but it causes traffic congestion, inconvenience and loss of income to the local traders.

Naturally, I am optimistic that at the forthcoming elections the people of Brisbane will vote heavily for a non-socialist Lord Mayor and council. I believe we should look closely at restricting the operations of the Brisbane City Council to a genuine Brisbane city area, the rest of the city being divided into municipalities more attuned to the needs of their residents and based on a genuine community of interest. I have no doubt that a large number of public-spirited men and women would be keen to serve in an honorary capacity as elected aldermen for each of those municipalities. We would then have local authorities genuinely responsive to the needs of the population.

I thank the House for its courtesy and hope it is indicative of the rapt attention that all my utterances will receive in the future.

Mr SCOTT (Cook) (3.42 p.m.): I am pleased to have the opportunity to take part in the Address in Reply debate. It is an important debate in this House, especially for somebody who represents an electorate such as Cook, because I will take honourable members on the inevitable Cook's tour. I am pleased to see that the Minister for Health and the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police are in the Chamber.

Mr Menzel: Why don't you ask him about the road?

Mr SCOTT: The members of the National Party do not know what electorate they are talking about. I am astounded at the lack of geographical knowledge among members of this House. What electorate is the road in? I was in the gallery this morning with esteemed guests when the honourable member mentioned the road and I could hear members of the National Party breathing "Cook, Cook, Cook". It is in Barron River! Take it up with the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services (Martin Tenni).

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I ask the honourable member to address remarks through the Chair.

Mr SCOTT: I accept that admonition and I will continue to talk through the Chair to those who do not know anything about geography.

One would expect people who are members of the National Party—one could call it the State Party—to know a little bit about the geography of the State. The road under discussion runs from the Daintree River to the Bloomfield River, and is all in the northern part of the electorate of Barron River. I am quite happy to have something to say about it, but the road is not in the Cook electorate.

Custom provides that one extends the loyalty of one's constituents to the Government of the day and the Governor, and I certainly do that. Many of my constituents would not be aware of the role of the Governor. That is probably just as well because I do not think that events during the election campaign enhanced the position of the Governor of Queensland. Almost every maiden speech from the new members of the National Party has referred to the Queen's Medal, the flag and many other such things. Certainly they are entitled to their points of view. Australia must grow as a nation and at some time or other that first step to cut the ties must be made. Surely the first real step has to be to reconsider altering our flag. I will not enter into an argument about it. I have read both sides of the argument. If Australia is a nation that is quite capable of standing on its own two feet it should have its own flag. Such a desire does not display any disloyalty to the Crown or the soldiers who died under that flag. Relatives of mine suffered that fate. My father fought under the flag in France during the First World War. But the point is that we are the nation of Australia. Actually, the little expression of royalty that is rearing its head is rather interesting. I would like to hear the Minister's opinion on the role of the Governor in the lead-up to the election. I mentioned this briefly during the debate on the Appropriation Bill.

Mr Prest: I think the Minister wants to forget that lead-up.

Mr SCOTT: There are a lot of things that he wants to forget.

I will not remind him of some of the more bitter moments in his political life, but I will remind him of the role of the Governor. It is very opportune that the Minister for Health should be here, because he was one of the people for whom the Premier managed to have the Governor—the Queen's representative—delay the acceptance of the resignations of the Liberal Ministers. That was a dreadful state of affairs. I say quite flatly that the Governor was manipulated by the Premier.

Mr Austin: That is a disgraceful statement.

Mr SCOTT: No, I stand by that statement. That is exactly what happened. It was a diminution of the role of the Governor in this State. Worse was to happen, because the Premier then claimed that he had a minority Government. It was incumbent upon the Governor, if he was acting in terms of what is generally accepted as constitutional principle in Australia, to require the Premier to call this House together. But the Premier did not have the courage to call this House together and prove that he had a minority Government. To do so would have really split political affairs in this State much more than they were at that stage.

I believe that the Premier did a cowardly thing. He procrastinated. He gave the Governor certain advice. He is entitled to do that, but why did the Governor not require the Premier to call an election as quickly as possible? I note that when Malcolm Fraser thought it opportune to go to the people the first move he made was to ask his chief electoral officer how quickly an election could be held. If the Premier was a man of the convictions that he expresses so freely, and which the press appear to believe, he would have asked the Chief Electoral Officer how quickly he could go to the people. But he did not do that; he used his own office and the Governor's position. He then appointed Ministers. One of the appointed Ministers—the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services—has now entered the Chamber. It is not his fault that he was appointed to his position, but nevertheless it was not the proper thing for the Premier to do. It gave the Premier and the National Party a great advantage in the lead-up to the election.

I know who are the destroyers of conventions in politics in Australia. They are part of the right wing, and the further right one goes the closer one gets to what can only be called the fascist right wing in this State. That is where the greatest damage is done to constitutional conventions in this State. I totally deplore it and certainly would not be part of anything like it. So the Imperial system has now been morally weakened in this State. Government members keep referring to republicanism, but they know who are the people who are leading inexorably in that direction—the far right wing of politics in Australia.

I worry about a Government that shows that sort of integrity, because I know that the Premier is very bitter about my retaining the seat of Cook. He was assured by Mr Killoran, a very senior public servant—in fact, I would put him about No. 3 in this State—that he would win the seat of Cook. I have told this story before, but part of it bears repeating. Mr Killoran said he could win because he had been campaigning very steadily over the later years of his incumbency. Unfortunately, the director totally misjudged the situation in the electorate and did not win. He said to the Premier, “I just couldn’t win in that situation.” He did not give any reasons; he did not explain why he could not win. He simply said, “It was not my fault that I did not win.” The Premier was bitter because he was counting on winning Cook as a National Party seat to give him a majority in the House. The Premier displayed his bitterness typically.

The history of my involvement with the Premier is, firstly, that he told some people I did not write to him. There are not many reasons for writing to the Premier about his department. I took the point, and in the past three years the Premier has received between 400 and 500 letters from me about matters that are encompassed by various departments. The Premier did not like that.

The next story he told about me was that I did not come to see him on matters pertaining to the electorate of Cook. I am quite happy to maintain a relationship with him by simply writing to him. In one room in this place, he saw fit to publicly attack me because I won Cook. He said with a great deal of bitterness that the electorate was bought for me.

I was interested to note that he made exactly the same comment to the newly elected member for Mt Isa. It was shameful that the Premier should tell the member for Mt Isa that he would have a very hard row to hoe, that he would be getting nothing in Mt Isa. The same implication was involved in his conversation with me. I intend to fight that approach as bitterly as I can.

The Premier is an extremely old and bitter man. He attacks people simply to show his bitterness. He should be big-hearted and a little less boorish and accept that the National Party did not win the seats and that members with some degree of competence did.

What is to happen about funding the Cook electorate? Stories have circulated about the amount of money that has gone to National Party electorates, and I know that pork-barreling has taken place. So far, I have been reasonably happy with Government expenditure in the electorate of Cook, but it has many needs that I will spell out this afternoon.

I am worried that a vindictive Government and Premier might reduce the level of funding in my electorate, thereby making the people suffer because of the way they voted. I do not really believe that, because I am articulate and I will highlight anything that happens. I will be watching things very closely, and I am sure that the honourable member for Mt Isa will be doing the same. I have a high regard for his competence. He won that seat by defeating a Minister, which is a big feather in his cap.

Mr Kruger: We will hear more from him.

Mr SCOTT: We will hear much more from him. He will make his mark here.

I have noted some of the maiden speeches. Some of the authors of the speeches are quite interesting. I use the word “authors” because all the speeches were written in the finest detail. In some ways, I do not blame members for doing that, because it ensures that their speeches read well in “Hansard” and, after all, they are maiden speeches.

Mr LINGARD: I rise to a point of order. I take objection to that remark. All the speeches were not written by someone else.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I do not think there was any personal reflection.

Mr SCOTT: That was a fairly inept try. If that is typical of the action of the man as a principal, I should hate to be one of his students or to have one of my children as a student at the school.

Mr LINGARD: I rise to a point of order. I find that remark offensive.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I take the honourable member's point of order. I ask the honourable member for Cook to withdraw his personal implications against the member for Fassifern.

Mr SCOTT: I will withdraw the remarks.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member makes any personal reflections, I will have to stop him.

Mr SCOTT: Mr Deputy Speaker, you will be listening very carefully to what I have to say.

It is appropriate to say something about the newly elected members. There has been talk about an urban rump. I wonder whether it is an intellectual rump. I do not mind some of the old, country-style people in the House.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr Kruger: Like "Ginger".

Mr SCOTT: The honourable member for Lockyer seems to think that he can come on heavily; but at least, in many ways, he knows what he is talking about. He comes from the country, and I appreciate that. However, I wonder how he will get on with some of his new-found colleagues. Some of them are quite egotistical. Without doubt they feel that they are God's gift to this House and to their electorates.

I made notes of some of their speeches. This one gets me, "Success brings support in all aspects of life." I am worried that that is the attitude of people who have come into this Assembly on the National Party wave. It is all right to be success-oriented in life, but I hope that they might show a little concern for people who are not so successful. That attitude troubles me. When it is tied to their opinions of their own worth, I wonder what sort of contribution they will make in this House.

I shall quote from some notes that I made of the speech of the member for Fassifern (Mr Lingard). He can ask me to withdraw my remarks if he likes, but they are as close as I could get to what he was saying. He said—

"I have taught in both primary and secondary schools, and I was a master in a private school in Brisbane. I have university degrees in both Arts and Education. I was the youngest high school principal appointed to that position, and subsequently I became the youngest president of the State Secondary Principals Association."

I understand that that is not quite true, and I shall take that matter up at a later date.

Mr LINGARD: I rise to a point of order. Once again, I take offence, because those remarks are true.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! Once again, I refer to Standing Order No. 120 in reference to the point of order. It provides that personal reflections shall be deemed highly disorderly. I consider that the honourable member for Cook is casting personal reflections on the capacity of the honourable member for Fassifern. I ask him to withdraw those remarks and to desist from that practice.

Mr SCOTT: Mr Deputy Speaker, I defer to your ruling on that, but I am still quoting from the speeches of the members concerned.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I do not mind the honourable member quoting from the speeches, but he is making imputations that are not entirely in order, and I so rule. I consider that, under Standing Order No. 120, the honourable member is casting personal reflections.

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a point of order. I refer to the way in which you, Mr Deputy Speaker, have interpreted Standing Order No. 120 and to the fact that, as this is the Address in Reply debate, the honourable member for Cook is allowed to make a wide-ranging speech.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I rule the point of order invalid. I remind the House of the ruling of a previous Chairman of Committees that, under Standing Order No. 120, personal reflections will not be tolerated by the Chair.

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a further point of order and ask: Who was the former Chairman of Committees?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no obligation on the Chair to name the former Chairman of Committees. The Clerk has a record of the decisions.

Mr SCOTT: Mr Deputy Speaker, I accept your ruling in that regard. I make the point that I am not attempting to cast any personal reflections on the people concerned.

Government Members interjected.

Mr SCOTT: I say that quite kindly. I am rather interested in their attitudes and the fact that they are talking for some of the people in Queensland. I shudder to think of the other people in their electorates who just do not accept those views. I am really suggesting that those members might like to temper their egos a little, remain in the Chamber and see what goes on. The attitude expressed in those speeches worried me greatly. Sorting out that little point of order has taken up a great deal of my valuable speaking time.

I shall proceed to speak about the Cook electorate. I am concerned that the Government might try to take retribution in Cook. As I have said, the electorate is progressing quite well, but matters such as health, education, roads—

Mr Tenni: We gave you \$25,000 for your Cooktown roads. I am trying to get a road constructed from Cape Tribulation.

Mr SCOTT: I would like to know whose electorate that is in!

I want to mention the urgent need that exists for a hospital in Cooktown. I take up the point also about representation on the Cairns Hospital Board. I understand that the rough budget estimate of the cost of a new hospital in Cooktown is of the order of \$3m. So far, the Cairns Hospital Board has set aside only a little over \$2m. Once again, as happens so often in rural Queensland, a vital decision is being deferred for another 12 months. I am worried that the decision will be deferred again.

Mr Tenni: It is all sorted out. Talk to the hospital board. We have fixed it all up.

Mr SCOTT: I am pleased because I drew this to the Government's attention. For once, it might have taken action within a reasonable time. If Cooktown now has representation on the Cairns Hospital Board, I am very pleased. But it did not have it for years.

Mr Tenni: I am working on getting a new ambulance for you.

Mr SCOTT: The Minister is too kind. Is there a redistribution coming up? Does he want some of my electorate?

Mr Tenni: I should, because I am doing everything for it.

Mr SCOTT: I am pleased to see that the Minister has his tongue in his cheek.

Other hospitals in the Cook electorate are in quite a reasonable condition. The hospital on Thursday Island is progressing. Normanton and Croydon have new hospitals. Something must be done about the health needs in Chillagoe before much longer. The Cook electorate has many other smaller health needs.

Prior to the election, the Minister for Health in the National Party minority Government (Mr Bertoni) wrote to all members of Parliament asking what the needs of their electorates might be. He did not check the records in his department, because I am sure that in earlier correspondence all conscientious members of Parliament had set out their health needs. I took the trouble to reply, and it is on record. I am sure that the Minister for Health (Mr Austin) will consider those matters. I have written reminding him of Mr Bertoni's letter and the need to follow these matters through.

Smaller towns such as Georgetown have an urgent need for community nurses. Many people from the stations surrounding Georgetown choose to retire there. As it has an ageing population and people who are too elderly and infirm to go to the hospital, there is an urgent need for a community nurse to visit homes around the town. Sisters at the hospital do not extend health care outside the hospital, as is the practice in the Health Department. That is not an unreasonable rule, but I cannot understand why the Government will not appoint more community nurses.

Mt Surprise needs a clinic and the people of Mt Surprise have pressured the Normanton Hospital Board and the Government, through the Minister for Health, to establish a clinic with a part-time sister. I am sure that it will happen before very long.

Mr Austin, when he was Minister for Health in the coalition Government, set up a number of multidisciplinary committees which travelled round Queensland. The group that came to my area were very active and took a good look at the health needs of the electorate. I hope that some action will be taken as a result of the visit by that group.

I asked a question of the Minister for Health about what happened between members of the multidisciplinary committees and the Director of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, who prevented them from visiting some of the health establishments that are under his control. I would like to know why that situation has been allowed to continue. The facilities in the Peninsula and the Torres Strait islands should have been taken over by the Health Department long ago because it would run the facilities in a much better way. The staff in those hospitals are above criticism: they do an exceptional job. They often accept employment with the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement without a full knowledge of the circumstances under which they will work.

Furthermore, they are given no worthwhile information on what happens in those communities or on what the health facilities are like; nor are they told that they may be the only qualified person on duty for days on end because the Government, in its parsimonious manner, simply does not have enough staff in hospitals on remote communities. The Government claims that it experiences difficulty in getting staff to go to those places. If it was prepared to pay adequate wages, it would get staff to go there.

The medical aid posts on the outer islands need urgent attention. They should be taken over by the Thursday Island Hospital Board. Proper training should be given to the Aboriginal and Islander people who work as nurses aides. What is needed is a structured training scheme that would allow trainees to move from level to level as their knowledge, and their pay, increased. In those community hospitals and medical aid posts, the staff work extremely well under difficult conditions.

I now raise a police matter that pertains to the town of Cooktown. An urgent need exists for additional police staff and vehicles in Cooktown. For some time the Government has been aware of that need. The three police officers and the one vehicle on hand in Cooktown to do police work are not able to cope with the work that they are required to do. The police officers do a remarkable job, but it is impossible for them to police the area from Cape Tribulation, north to McIvor Road and west to Lakeland Downs.

Mr Tenni interjected.

Mr SCOTT: I wrote to the Minister concerning that matter. The population of Cooktown has increased tremendously, and the possibility of having people with criminal records coming into the town and surrounding area is real. It concerns the sergeant of police in Cooktown. He does an extremely good job, but he does need that little bit of extra assistance.

Mr Tenni: I have a submission, and I will send you a copy of it.

Mr SCOTT: Am I to believe that it is like Christmas? I remind the House of a cartoon during the election campaign. It showed the Minister dressed like Santa Claus and carrying a great basketful of goodies. I am pleased to know that he has extended his umbrella—if I might mix my metaphors—to cover the Cook electorate. I will be watching the electoral redistribution very closely.

The hospital at Weipa needs urgent attention. It is not possible for mothers-to-be at Weipa to have their infants in the town; they have to be flown out to Cairns, Mt Isa or some other place of their choice. That is deplorable. It causes all types of family hardships. It means, for example, that children have to go with their mother and their schooling is disrupted. It means that husbands are left on their own even though they are working long hours on shift work. That is not a satisfactory state of affairs. I know what can be done, but again that little bit of extra money is required.

I suggest that the Government consider moving some of the resources from the south-east corner of the State to the more remote areas. The day the Government party changed its name from Country Party to National Party, what little it was able to contribute to Queensland politics in those days was diminished even further.

Weipa has a population in excess of 2 000, and the number of young people—young parents and young children—will continue to increase. The town needs a pre-school. It has had a kindergarten for a number of years, but it is not big enough or staffed adequately to cope with the large number of pre-school and kindergarten children in the town. This year, of the 60-odd children in the town who will attain the age of 3 or 4 years, only 40 will be able to attend pre-school. I have made representations to the Government. I sent forward a petition that, although it was taken up within a very short period, was signed by a substantial number of people.

Weipa has virtually been ignored by the Queensland Government. Towards mining towns it adopts the attitude that, because they are mining towns, it is not incumbent on the Government to do anything for the people in those towns. Mining towns are not controlled by local authorities; they are on mining leases and mining companies provide many of the facilities in the towns. Comalco is a shining example. It provides sealed roads, rubbish collections, beautification programs and so on for the benefit of the residents of the town, who, of course, work for the company. The company is guided by an active site committee. It is a good state of affairs, because it allows for a mixture of union involvement and company involvement. A great deal of good can come out of it.

I have not found a method of combating the way in which the Government ignores the towns. I am sure that other large mining towns in Queensland suffer in a similar way at the hands of the Government. It neglects totally the people living in remote areas. When a town has a population in excess of 2 000, surely something can be done. There is no doubt that growth will take place in the aluminium industry. That will lead to an increase in the population of Weipa.

There is also a need in that town for a court house and police station complex. No court house exists in Weipa. Matters are handled by the policemen. That is done competently and effectively. However, it is an unnecessary burden on their time. Again, the Government has neglected the people of Weipa. A stenographer is employed in the office. The lady usually knows a great deal about the normal paperwork and filing of various documents. A clerk of the court should be stationed in Weipa and air-conditioned premises should be provided.

I am pleased to note that the Minister is taking a note of the matters to which I am referring. The police in Weipa labour under very difficult conditions. They work in a very small building, with no air-conditioning. I have written to the Minister about that. At one stage, water was not provided to the lock-up. The Minister was kind enough to take some action. The police and the people who use that facility are very pleased about the action that was taken.

As to educational matters—I am concerned about the Thursday Island High School. To give honourable members a very brief history, part of the existing school was burnt about four years ago. It has taken the Government a long time to get its act into gear. For some time a move had been promoted to shift the high school from its present site to a new site. Eventually, land was acquired and planning was set in hand. It has taken a long time for any real action to be taken.

Provision for Years 11 and 12 is needed at the Thursday Island High School. I know that it will be made. However, that provision cannot be made in the existing facilities. I might add that, although the Government has called tenders, that does not

mean anything. If the price is said to be too high, or if the Government can think of a reason for deferring it, it will. There is no doubt about that. I will be watching the Budget papers very closely.

Mr Tenni: You are being unfair.

Mr SCOTT: I am not being unfair. Mr Tenni knows as well as I do the worst aspects of the Government. The people in his electorate suffer in the same way.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The honourable member for Cook will address other members by their correct parliamentary title.

Mr SCOTT: The Minister knows that the people in his electorate suffer. When he was a back-bencher, I remember him deploring the fact that the Government had not provided for this or for that in his electorate. I hope that the plans for the high school on Thursday Island go ahead. I will certainly be watching the situation very closely.

At Cooktown, a high top is needed. Promises were made during the election campaign. I think that the honourable Minister was campaigning with Mr Killoran. He was totally unsuccessful. I hope that he does better when he turns his attention to other electorates in future campaigns.

Mr TENNI: I rise to a point of order. Did the honourable member say that I went with Mr Killoran, campaigning?

Mr SCOTT: I did make that statement.

Mr TENNI: That is completely incorrect. I ask for that comment to be withdrawn.

Mr SCOTT: I withdraw it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the honourable member for Cook that Standing Order 141 relates to irrelevance on the part of a member during his speech. I would like the honourable member to relate his comments to the matters contained in the Governor's Opening Speech.

Mr SCOTT: Certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Governor canvassed things that were irrelevant. I am referring to matters that were not in the Governor's Opening Speech that should have been in the Governor's speech. I believe that honourable members have every right to canvass those items.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I do not consider that your remarks about the Minister's association with Mr Killoran are relevant to the Governor's speech.

Mr SCOTT: Perhaps I could say that the Minister did not want to be associated with Mr Killoran. He did not go campaigning with Mr Killoran in the Cook electorate.

In Dimbulah, there is a high top. A great need exists for a new building there. That was not mentioned in the Governor's speech. I am getting down to the small details. If an electorate is being run on a personal basis, these are the important things that worry the people in remote areas of a State. They have been neglected by a non-caring government.

I have yet to speak about road construction and I mention that in recent years the road to Chillagoe has been very, very well upgraded.

Mr Tenni interjected.

Mr SCOTT: With due respect, the Minister has been engaging in breast beating for the last half hour. I am speaking about the Cook electorate, not the Barron River electorate.

The Chillagoe road is now in a very good condition and the only thing that is lacking is that black sealant called bitumen. It is something that all the people in south-east Queensland know about and all the people in north-east and north-west Queensland know nothing about. How is it that a road can be brought to top-level, unsealed condition and the extra few hundred thousand dollars needed to put the bitumen on it cannot be provided? I ask the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services: What will happen to it? The condition of the road will deteriorate and the whole cycle will have to be repeated. The grader will skim off all the hard work of the road construction people. Eventually it will cost much more to put a proper surface on the road.

I know that the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services will be very upset because a number of members of his party were not aware that the Cape Tribulation road was in his electorate.

The \$300,000 that is to be spent to destroy the rain forest for the proposed Cape Tribulation road should be spent on the road between Bloomfield and Cooktown, which would make everyone, certainly my constituents, happy. During the wet season that is one of the roughest and most difficult roads in north Queensland to negotiate. I urge the House to note that the money should be redirected from that contentious road to one that will serve a great number of people living in the Bloomfield area.

A mention of Cape Tribulation raises the question of national parks. I believe that that road will destroy a fairly large area of valuable rain forest in a national park, which is something that I deplore.

Mr TENNI: I rise to a point of order. That is completely incorrect. The area of national park that that road will go through is very, very small. Also, it will only go through areas with very little tree growth.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has objected to the contents of the honourable member's speech in relation to a certain road. I ask him to withdraw those comments.

Mr SCOTT: In the interests of being able to use my remaining six minutes, I withdraw those remarks. I do not want to be turned out of this Chamber. I certainly appear to have the capacity to arouse the ire of Ministers. They have interjected during my speech and wasted my time. That is typical of the irresponsible attitude from those on the Government side.

I deplore the proposal to establish private enterprise on the Lakefield National Park. I am not sure whether that is a money-making venture on the part of the Government or whether the Government is pandering to some people who do not have the ability to buy freehold land in that area on which to establish their own tourist facilities. There is no doubt that the area is a great one for tourism and I want to see far more of it developed. However, if anybody wants to establish a private tourist facility there, he should buy his own land and not use land owned by the people of the State.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is suffering from a shortage of staff. I was quite astounded at the inept answer given by the Minister for National Parks to a very good question from a member of this side of the House. The Minister simply told the member to wait and see what is in the Budget. For endless years we have waited to see what is in National Party Budgets and nothing very good for people living in remote areas has ever come out of them.

The Government adopts a cavalier attitude towards the ownership and development of national parks. A company called Amoco has put a proposal to the Government to have national parks in the Chillagoe area handed over to it. What sort of way is that to treat land that is vested in the people of this State? Apparently Amoco has proposed some sort of a sweetheart deal to the Government in an endeavour to have part of a national park degazetted. That is a terrible thing to happen to the heritage of the people of the State, especially the children who will come into its ownership through the State. The cavalier attitude of the Government will deny those children of their rights. The Minister intends to hand over the land to a company that already has immense areas surrounding national parks. Amoco has purchased Chillagoe Station, which comprises several hundred thousand hectares. I can see the Minister shaking his head. I, too, think that it is a deplorable state of affairs that private enterprise should be able to purchase land surrounding national parks and stifle their development.

I comment now on Aboriginal affairs. I will be making a number of speeches on the subject in the future. I am pleased that the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs intends to visit our Aboriginal communities. His first stop will be Edward River. I wonder whether the lolly man, Mr Killoran, and his offsider, Felicity Taylor, will go with him. It is a very poor state of affairs when the director, who failed to win the seat of Cook, is able to return as an advisor to the Minister. The man should have resigned, as he said he would. He should have packed his bags and gone home.

I deplore the divisive attitude adopted by members opposite towards the Aboriginal situation in Queensland. They are constantly making statements which inflame the situation. I read in the newspaper a statement by Mr Katter that he was frightened of a Federal Government take-over of land in Queensland. All that the Federal Government will do is what this Government will not do—actually move in on Aboriginal land and give those people their proper rights.

Another interesting development was announced recently by the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police. The other day he made a ministerial statement in which he said that the Government was considering allowing individual Aborigines to own rights to their household allotments within the communities so that they could be legally handed down from generation to generation and be a place for families to take root. One provision would be that they could not be sold. That is inalienable freehold title. Has there not been a remarkable change in the Government's policy?

I am worried about the ineffectual approach taken by the Government. It is trying to head in all directions at the one time; trying to be all things to all people.

In conclusion, I am happy overall with the situation in the Cook electorate provided that the Government will listen to fair and honest representation and will do the things that are necessary.

(Time expired.)

Mr MENZEL (Mulgrave) (4.22 p.m.): First of all, I offer my loyalty and that of my constituents to the Crown. I congratulate the new members on both sides of the House. I am not here to knock Opposition members. I believe they should be given a go. I wish them all the best, because every one has a different point of view and should be allowed to express it. I want to see what they can do.

I congratulate Martin Tenni on retaining his seat and his Ministry. He has done a tremendous amount of work in north Queensland in a short time. In fact, he has done a lot of good work throughout Queensland. There are a number of things connected with his portfolio that we in north Queensland have needed—I will not bother mentioning them at this stage—and he has seen fit to get on with the job and provide them. That is what we want. I do not doubt that he will do the same throughout Queensland. He helps members in neighbouring electorates and is obviously on the ball. Members should not knock that attitude because, after all, they have a lot of work to do and if they can get some help, that is good. Sometimes a member needs help from a Minister to put his point of view forward.

I will continue to work for more schools in the Mulgrave electorate. The Government is in the process of building a new primary school at Atherton at a cost of about \$2m. Construction is well advanced. Roy Armstrong started fighting for this school and it is now becoming a reality. Atherton is an expanding area. More and more people are moving there to live. It is one of the best places in Queensland. It has a wonderful climate and scenery and is a beautiful place. It has great potential for rural growth and tourism. I am sure that the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts will carry on with the good work done by his predecessor.

The caretaker's residence at Lake Eacham requires urgent restoration. Honourable members who live in north Queensland no doubt heard recently about the vandals who destroyed many facilities at Lake Eacham. It was disgraceful. Only sick people could carry on in that way. At such places the caretaker's residence should have a phone so that he may phone the police and anyone who starts any nonsense can be dealt with.

Lake Eacham is so beautiful that if private enterprise is not prepared to do so, the Government should be prepared to build a kiosk. The Government could then lease the kiosk to private enterprise. Over the years people have considered building a kiosk but their plans have not got off the ground. Probably the task was beyond the scope of private enterprise because no-one was prepared to build it. The Government should take the initiative. It could well build a small kiosk to cater for the hundreds of people who visit the area at the week-end and during the week. Many visitors frequent the area because of its beauty.

The Government has done much to improve education in Atherton. A new science block has been provided at the high school. The Babinda school is to get a new library.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr MENZEL: It is the result of my good representations.

I am fighting for a new covered area at Babinda. Even the honourable member for Brisbane Central should know that, because Babinda has a high rainfall, protection from the weather that may not be needed in other parts of the State is needed.

The allowance made to small schools towards the cost of mowing lawns in wet tropical areas should be increased. I have made representations about this matter and I intend to press it in the future. In western areas, where there is little rainfall, the amount allowed is probably too high whereas in the wet, tropical areas the amount does not cover the cost of the constant maintenance that is necessary.

Mr Davis: I said earlier that education came too late for you.

Mr MENZEL: There would be no hope for the honourable member, for sure.

Before the Federal election, the Federal Labor Opposition, through Bob Hawke, promised to create 500 000 jobs. We are still waiting for them. Perhaps the honourable member for Brisbane Central should try a little harder to get the Federal Labor Government to honour some of its election promises.

Labor promised to reduce taxes. Instead, it has increased them. It imposed increased tax on lump-sum superannuation payments and a 10 per cent tax on subcontractors. That has placed a terrible burden on small subcontractors and small business people. It appears to have unlimited scope. It could be applied to virtually anything. The Federal Government should reconsider that tax because it places an additional 10 per cent cost on everything. That is how it has worked.

People are still paying the same amount of tax, but they are paying it earlier. Contractors are simply adding on another 10 per cent, and that is wrong. I know that that was not the original intention of the Hawke Government's proposal, but that is the way it is operating. Costs have been increased for the small, law-abiding citizen, and that is unfortunate. If a Government makes a mistake, it should be big enough to acknowledge that it has made a mistake.

Before the last Federal election, Bob Hawke visited Cairns with the Labor candidate for the area (John Gayler). They promised the electors of Leichhardt, if not of Australia, that they would abolish sales tax on freight. I am not here just condemning the Labor Government. Over the years, Governments of all political persuasions in Canberra have continued to impose that terrible sales tax on freight. It hurts people who live a long way from the capital cities or a long way from the point of manufacture of goods. As I said, the Labor Government promised that it would abolish sales tax on freight, but it has done nothing about it.

I challenge the present member for Leichhardt, John Gayler, to fight harder to ensure that his Government honours its election promises. Unfortunately, all that Mr Gayler has been saying of late is that he will stop a road from being built, or stop Federal funds being spent because he does not like the area in which they are being spent. All honourable members have heard of the decision concerning Babinda. John Gayler jumped in before the State election and made a lot of noise about that matter, and recently he has continued to make noise about it.

I think that people have to be a bit more constructive. They have to be more positive and say, "Right, we have to talk things out. We do not want to try to knock things. We have to try to carry out some of our election promises." I know that the Labor Government in Canberra is deeply divided on the uranium issue. I notice that the Labor Party in Queensland intends to hold a rally, or something of that sort, to discuss the uranium issue.

I sympathise with the Prime Minister that the uranium issue has arisen. I guess that he has tried to do the right thing. Unfortunately, when one tries to compromise with everybody, one makes some people happy and hurts others. One just cannot say, "We will mine uranium at Roxby Downs but not in the Northern Territory or in Queensland." Everyone must be treated equally. Unfortunately, the Labor Government in Canberra is so divided about the whole uranium issue that it has been trying to compromise and compromise, and it has got itself into a terrible mess.

The workers of the companies that mine the product are the ones who will suffer. The handful of demonstrators who are screaming, yelling and putting themselves in front of trucks and bulldozers in the desert will not suffer. Of course, when they behave in that manner they receive the attention of the media. No doubt they are having their fun; but the employees of these companies now have jobs, and other jobs would be very hard to get.

Until there is an alternative source of energy, I believe that the safeguards are reasonable to allow uranium to be used as a source of energy. After all, people can be killed in aeroplane or car crashes, and we do not ban aeroplanes or cars. All reasonable precautions are taken. The mining of uranium is one matter that the Labor Government in Canberra will have to sort out.

I commend this Government for the money that it continues to spend on the Palmerston Highway. Over the years, a great deal of work has been done on the highway, which serves a large section of the lower inland part of the Mulgrave electorate. Every year I try to ensure that the Minister makes a reasonable Budget allocation for the highway. It is hard to get everything done, but good progress has been made on the highway. I want that work to continue because it will assist the people of north Queensland.

I am pleased that the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing has agreed to my request to build a passing lane on the bottom third of the Gillies Highway in the next year or so. I would like to see more of the Gillies Highway upgraded, and that is what I am currently trying to achieve.

The member for Cook mentioned that Mr Bertoni, when he was Minister for Health, wrote to members of Parliament and said, "What would you like?" One of the things that I thought was necessary in far north Queensland was the installation of the dialysis machine at the Cairns Base Hospital. Even the honourable member for Brisbane Central would have heard me on a number of occasions ask questions of the Minister about the need for one to be installed at Cairns because many people have had to fly to Townsville twice a week, at tax-payers' expense, for treatment on the machine there. That was a great strain on the patients, and sometimes they had to be accompanied by relatives. I am pleased that the Premier announced when he was in north Queensland that a dialysis machine would be installed at the Cairns Base Hospital.

It has also been of benefit to north Queensland that the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services (Mr Tenni) is the member for Barron River. He added his weight to the request for the provision of a dialysis machine at Cairns, as he has done on other occasions. He also helped to get approval for the establishment at Edmonton of a substation of the Gordonvale fire station, which is in my electorate. Within a couple of weeks of his being appointed to the Ministry, the proposal was initiated. That is the way I want things to be done; that is the way Mr Tenni wants them done.

Mr Tenni: I spoke to the Minister for Health about that dialysis machine. It is ready for delivery tomorrow.

Mr MENZEL: That is good.

I have been informed by the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing that the Atherton Turf Club, through the Atherton Shire Council, has been given a grant of \$318,000 for the construction of an administration building and stables and an improved water supply at the Tolga race-track. The improvements to the racecourse will not only benefit the people in the electorates of Mulgrave and Barron River who live on the Tableland; it will also give the racing industry in far north Queensland a tremendous boost. Far north Queensland is getting a good deal from the State Government.

Mr Tenni: You and I fought for a new bridge over Rocky Creek. We should get together on the development of a new road through from Mareeba to Atherton.

Mr MENZEL: Yes, The Jump Up. We have been fighting hard for a new bridge over Rocky Creek. We fought hard for the present bridge, which is now getting old. The Minister and I share a common boundary between Walkamin and Mareeba. We made joint representations to have the road in that location upgraded, and real progress has been made.

The peanut industry is an important industry in the Mulgrave electorate. I pledge myself to the continued support and maintenance of the Peanut Marketing Board, which plays a very important role in maintaining stability in the peanut industry. I have had

many dealings with the board and the growers. On two occasions when problems existed, I was a member of delegations from the peanut industry when they came to Brisbane. I pledge my continuing full support for orderly marketing within the peanut industry.

Mr Tenni: You also have a new industry now, the macadamia nut industry.

Mr MENZEL: That is true. Perhaps some members are envious of some of the things that are happening in far north Queensland, but no doubt they will appreciate enjoying the fruits of our labours during the lunch and dinner recesses.

Mr Tenni: Before long we will be supplying the whole of the east coast of Australia with all of its fruit.

Mr MENZEL: That is so.

As I was saying, the dairying industry is a very important one to far north Queensland. It has very competent leadership. At times unfair criticism is levelled at its leaders, but they do an excellent job. Although the industry suffers and could continue to suffer from the results of over-supply overseas, it continues to do well.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (4.43 p.m.): Firstly, I pledge my loyalty and that of the constituents of my electorate of Sherwood to the Crown, and I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your election to that high office. I pledge my support for your role as Speaker in the House.

The matter of pledging loyalty is no longer a mere formality—I trust it is not a mere formality—because the institutions that we look to in this State and country appear to be under attack.

Mr Davis: Who by?

Mr INNES: Ask, and you shall hear.

One wonders for how much longer one can address the Governor or use terms such as “the Crown” and “royal” As a proud member of the Royal Australian Air Force Reserve, I wonder for how much longer that body will be able to enjoy that traditional title.

I congratulate the new members and wish them well in their endeavours on behalf of their constituents. I commend those members who had the grace to compliment and thank their predecessors. I recall that the members for Aspley and Townsville were generous in their praise of the work done by the former members for those electorates.

No matter to which party a member belongs, he has a great deal of work to do on behalf of his constituents. I do not believe there is such a thing as a lazy member of Parliament. A member's telephone starts ringing at 7 o'clock in the morning and it does not stop until late at night. A member has a job to do seven days a week. Every member makes a contribution to the welfare of his electorate and this State.

I thank those departed members—a number of them are members of my party—who have not been mentioned so far in this debate. Every member makes his or her contribution, and that contribution should be remembered and acknowledged.

The Governor, in his Opening Speech, mentioned the Westminster system.

Mr Davis: That would be a farce, because it does not operate here.

Mr INNES: At times one wonders whether any significant number of persons in this Chamber have any understanding of what the Westminster system involves. It would be good if each party undertook some responsibility to educate its members on the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly and on the Westminster system. The reality is that there were members of this Chamber who went down with their guns blazing in defence of the Westminster system and whose record of diligence and support of the principles of the Westminster system were unparalleled. One hopes that those who now stand in their place and open their mouths in support of the Westminster system can at the end of their turn show the same dedication by act and by support for those principles that they presently acknowledge. The proof will come.

The Westminster system is important. It stops people in our form of democracy taking to the streets with Molotov cocktails and guns. It is only when people believe that the democracy is representative and when they have some sort of say and some control

that those temptations or pressures that build up in some parts of the world are stifled and stopped. The moment that those persons feel that they do not have a say, we will see glimpses—I hope never to the same extent—of the same disorder that has been experienced throughout the history of the Westminster system. The Westminster system was wrought out of conflict, out of dissent and out of rebellion. The assertion of the dominance of the right of the House of Commons can be found in the lives of people such as Sir Thomas More, who refused to buckle under the claim of untrammelled personal privilege of the monarch of his time. Any untrammelled attempt by any individual or small group of persons to exercise power will create counter pressures which will be the antithesis of what is involved in the Westminster system. One cannot merely pay lip-service; one must live it.

I am proud to continue to serve the electorate of Sherwood. It is a fine electorate with fine people. We have a great sense of community spirit, unusual in an urban or suburban area. The electorate of Sherwood has an internally centred and internally operating community in both the old part of the electorate and in the Centenary estates. It has very strong community groups, p. and c. associations, service clubs, churches, Red Cross and other vital volunteer organisations that help to cement that community sense that makes people happier with their lives.

If a contrast is drawn between the city and the bush, the people in smaller communities tend to feel more secure. They know who other people are; other people know them. In many ways there are more involuntary controls on behaviour because people know who they are, know where they are, and know that responsibility can be sheeted home. The advent of the car and mobility has caused a significant worsening in the social behaviour of young people. They can drive to a place at which they are not known. Some of their social inhibitions have been broken down. I am pleased to say that in my own electorate we have some of that cement that is more characteristic of a smaller, closer community. In overall terms, the position of my electorate is good.

As always, some schools need some attention. In August, an upheaval in Queensland postponed a visit by the Minister for Education at that time to the Corinda State High School. As many honourable members do, I have a problem with the provision of fans and lighting in schools. Because the Corinda State High School has a special education unit that would have more wheelchair students than any other school in Brisbane, because the Montrose Home is close by, it has a particular problem. For some little time I have been attempting to get covered ramps so that in wet weather those children who have to use the ramps can remain dry, although that is not as important as being able to proceed safely up and down the ramps to the different levels of the school. I trust that that matter will be pursued.

Some people speak of class sizes. Many members are former schoolteachers. Frankly, I find nothing more ridiculous in this modern world than the fact that in a hot, tropical climate—the same applies to southern Queensland in the summer months as applies to other parts with more intensity for a greater part of the year—all class-rooms do not have fans. It is also ridiculous that high school examinations can be interrupted by the lack of adequate lighting. The reduction of class sizes should not be considered until students are provided with sufficient illumination and can study with as little heat as possible so that conditions are made more conducive to learning. I realise that the education system has some sort of progressive scheme of priorities that commenced at Cape York and moved south. I also know that the department has some funny criteria in terms of lighting. Buildings are categorised according to when they are built—because of the size of the windows. When, because of a lack of light, teachers in ground-floor class-rooms have had to put reflecting paper on overhead projectors so that they can teach students and Year 11 students have had their examinations deferred, the education system stands condemned. It is not sufficient that p. and c. associations, in the end result, as a matter of inevitability, assume the burden, with a bit of subsidy money, of installing what should be basic requirements.

Mr Davis: I thought you would be telling us of the Liberal campaign and what went wrong.

Mr INNES: If I want the honourable member for Brisbane Central to make my speech, I will ask him, but with his track record there is no likelihood of that.

Before I proceed to other matters I say that my electorate is in good shape but—and I am sure that I share this with many other members—some matters need attention.

I have no doubt that over the coming years the conversion of Centenary Highway into a four-lane highway and the second phase of the Centenary Bridge will be completed. Major freeway works are proceeding where the Western Freeway joins Centenary Highway near Fig Tree Pocket. Major upgrading at the intersection of Ipswich Road and Centenary Highway is in the pipeline. Those two projects are designed to increase the flow of traffic. Just as with the flow of water, if the inlet and outlet are increased in size, the size of the pipe joining them has to be increased. Already at the busier times of day there is grave congestion at those intersections. I have no doubt that the Main Roads Department, as a matter of logic and progression, will increase the width of that road over the next few years.

The reality of the Liberal Party's problems is that its percentage loss in seats was greater than its percentage loss in votes. However, we still retain a quarter of a million votes in Queensland. We are still the State branch of what is and will remain overwhelmingly the biggest non-Labor party in Australia. I say that because this is only a temporary setback. We will be back with increased numbers in three years' time, whenever the elections are held, or whenever any by-elections are held.

The reality is that the Liberal Party is still dedicated to the same principles on which Menzies founded the party. We are dedicated to free enterprise, individuality, thrift and practical compassion for those who cannot do for themselves. We are committed also to institutions such as Parliament and the Westminster system, the Crown and constitutional monarchy, which have been vital to the progress and development of this country. We are not in the league of the Senator Evanses of this world in statements about our flag. It is the same flag that is draped about Mr Hawke's shoulders every time he appears in one of the slides that is produced by his political party and sent to television stations. The same comment applies to the literature produced by the ALP in the last election campaign. Wherever one saw a Labor Party head, one saw the Australian flag. One would have hoped that it was done with pride; but, of course, it was nothing but the cosmetics of electioneering. When showing the press round the new Federal Parliament House, Senator Evans said that it would be appropriate to find a flag with more universal appeal. What does Labor mean by a word like "universal"? It means appealing to small groups of people. It is not used in the sense of appealing to the majority of people, because that would not accommodate those special little groups that are so influential with and so important to Labor parliamentarians trying to jockey for position between the Left, the far Left, centre unity and what some people try to say is the conservative or traditional Right.

I have no doubt that in their view of things there is nothing wrong with doing away with the Queens Medal or the Victoria Cross, something which is less a reference to monarchy than it is to a tradition. For instance, it is like the member for Wolston going to the Oxley State School Swimming Club, as I have done—we share the patronage of the club—and presenting the R. J. Gibbs trophy for whatever the event is. His support is commendable, and I have no doubt that in years to come—years after he has ceased to be the member for Wolston—the R. J. Gibbs trophy will still be presented. It is a tradition; a matter of pride. If one does not have pride in traditions, one does not have pride in one's State or country. The issue of the Queens Medal is incredibly trivial. It is a trivial obsession on the part of the Labor Government to change something that has a national reputation, and even an international reputation, for excellence in rifle-shooting. What price Queensland? What will Queensland be called? What will Victoria be called? Do we pander to the small special-interest groups which have so much influence in Labor politics? I suppose Queensland will become president's land or R. J. Hawke land. I suppose Victoria might become Pankhurst. If we chase the interests of ethnic groups—and I am in no way decrying or derogating the contribution that all people who have come to Australia have made to this great country—the obsession is to debunk or get rid of those traditions for which people came here. They came here because this place was better. They stayed because it was better. It was better because we inherited good traditions and we did not take over bad traditions. Many of those traditions happen to have a British origin. We put up with them, like them and support them.

The reality is that our institutions are valuable. They have withstood the test of time and are to be supported. In this country, a level of social engineering is involved, with a political purpose. A political purpose can be divined in almost anything that is happening at the Federal level under the Hawke Government. I do not say that Hawke is the most left-wing person to be identified in the party—he is trying to cut a swathe for himself as some sort of a pragmatist—but there are still those who believe, just as Senator Susan Ryan believes, that the more people are made dependent upon the Government, the more they are likely to be Labor voters. That is what it is about.

When Government makes thrift a dirty word, when it takes away from people any benefit of thriftiness, it creates problems. People affected by the means test come to my office—doubtless other members have similar experiences—and ask, “Why did I save? Why did I make sacrifices? I am in no better position than those who spent the lot. If I had gone to the races every Saturday or to the boozier every Friday, or had spent the lot in a profligate way and had not looked after myself, I would be no worse off” Thrift and the building of modest assets are being penalised. That cannot be done. When thrift is penalised, the society we belong to is destroyed, because the dynamic which led to the building of our society is destroyed.

In modern terms, the socialists have given away control of the means of production, distribution and exchange. As Senator Reg Withers said recently, that does not have to be done now.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: He is a fine inspiration!

Mr INNES: He is a fine, pragmatic and practical politician. Even the Labor Party should have some respect for him. At least he has the word “toe-cutter” involved somewhere in his name.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr INNES: In fact, his father was a member of the faceless men of the Labor Party in the 1920s. He saw the light. His father was a member of the committee that established the platform of the Labor Party—the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

What is modern socialism? It does not worry about who owns anything; it simply believes in moving in and controlling it. It puts the managerial class in, or passes all the necessary laws to effect control. It realises that ownership is no longer necessary because the destiny of modern companies can be controlled merely by controlling the Companies Act, or controlling all the other bodies that impinge on the control and destiny of the vehicles of production and manufacture in our community.

Modern socialism is really comprised of people who wish to deliberately build up government, and people who are dependent upon government. They advocate bigger government because it creates bigger taxes. More people are made dependent and, so the theory goes, there are more potential Labor voters.

Today is a very important day following an important decision made in the Senate last night, after a House of Representatives move. Socialism must be fought wherever it is found. The Federal Labor Government came to power promising tax cuts. Taxes cannot be cut if government is enlarged. The question of timing is involved. If, for a variety of reasons, including unemployment—and unemployment must have priority—taxes cannot be reduced, the Government should not increase spending on non-urgent issues such as an increase in the number of members of Parliament.

The proposal to increase the size of the Commonwealth Parliament by 35 members is an outrage. It is socialistic, and it is supported for purely political purposes. It cannot be supported in principle at this time; it cannot be supported in terms of numbers.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr INNES: I stand here proudly as a member of the only major party that opposed the proposal and was consistent in its opposition to bigger government and, therefore, to more taxes. In particular, the move is absolutely contradictory to the interests of preserving a federation.

Mr Davis: In other words, you are attacking the National Party.

Mr INNES: I am taking on the National Party and the Labor Party. At the last three elections, I have fought the National Party and the Labor Party.

We all know that the Commonwealth Government, particularly the Labor Government, has been duplicating those parts of government that are clearly left by the Constitution to the States and over which the States are given paramount authority. The Commonwealth Government duplicates everything unnecessarily, and this is happening at a time when the priority is to keep taxes down and to leave thrifty people and workers with more money in their pockets.

If we are talking about individual rights, there is no more important right for people than to keep in their pockets the money they earn, and only to provide essential services should somebody be allowed to take that money. If somebody proposed to take 40 per cent or 60 per cent of what people earn by stealing \$40 or \$60 from every \$100 earned, people would say it was an outrage; but governments do it by way of taxation. Every time people shout for more of this and more of that—for more non-essentials—they are shouting for more taxation and are interfering with the most basic right, which is for them to keep in their pockets the money that they earn.

Getting back to the proposal to increase the size of the Commonwealth Parliament by 35 members—first, it is unnecessary and it is not urgent at a time such as this. It is contrary to a promised program of the Federal Labor Party to reduce taxes. It will lead to even more expense in terms of more government. Under the proposal, 35 offices, 35 research assistants, 35 electorate secretaries, more parliamentary librarians, more superannuation and more travel entitlements will have to be provided. Someone estimated that it will cost \$10m. That means the expenditure of \$10m on something that is not urgent and need not have been done at this time. Also, it will mean that 35 more people will be building empires for themselves and, no doubt, seeking to take over more State functions, which again is unnecessary. In fact, it is contradictory and in derogation of the balance between the Commonwealth and the States.

Mr Casey: They tell me that you are going to nominate for one of the new seats. Is that true?

Mr INNES: That is absolutely untrue. For the last four years, some people have been trying to make me the Federal member for Moreton. Everyone knows that I did not stand for Moreton, and I have no intention of doing so. I will be around for a while yet plaguing the member for Mackay.

The reality is that in this Parliament I and, I am sure, my colleagues in the parliamentary Liberal Party are in the business of—

Mr R. J. Gibbs: There are not many of them.

Mr INNES: I ask the honourable member to look at the quality of the Liberal members in this House. Three of the other five members have been in this Assembly for 20 years. Only two other members have been in this Assembly longer than the member for Nundah (Sir William Knox), the member for Mt Coot-tha (Mr Lickiss), the member for Yeronga (Mr Lee) and the member for Ithaca (Mr Miller). If the honourable member for Wolston wants to know something about the Standing Orders and good government, he should come and talk to the members of the parliamentary Liberal Party. We will have plenty of advice for him.

The proposal to increase the size of the Commonwealth Parliament by 35 members is the first instance of galloping socialism in its modern form in Australia. It was supported by both the Labor Party and the National Party for very short-term political gains—more seats, more jobs, more people in little holes, more people with support staffs. As Sir William Knox, my leader, so ably said this morning, a short-term objective has been achieved at the expense of the long-term interest of Australia. That is the point of view of the Liberal Party, and I understood that it was the point of view of the National Party.

The Liberal Party believes that the socialists, whether in their old or new guise, are not the best masters of the destiny of this country or the best mobilisers of initiative and productivity. The move will secure a hung Senate by ensuring that the Labor Party has a certain number of seats in the Senate. It will also perpetuate the dominance of minority groups and the impediment that minority groups impose on coherent and balanced policies of Government.

The Liberal Party is still in business.

Mr Prest: The only small business that is protected in Queensland.

Mr INNES: It is not just small business; it is small business, middle-sized business and big business. The Liberal Party will continue to stand for the principles of thrift, individual rights, private enterprise and the institution of—

Mr Mackenroth: Like you did yesterday morning on that vote. Principles?

Mr INNES: Let us consider that vote and another vote in this House. Everybody, and a chairman in particular, is entitled to some leeway. A chairman is entitled to make decisions and to be supported in those decisions. Members of the Labor Opposition were not very quick with their footwork. A variety of options was available to the Opposition; but, as usual, it picked the most politically, practically and morally inept path. Mr Speaker will be supported by us in the overwhelming majority of his rulings. He is entitled to a little bit of leeway in the rulings he makes, particularly in his early days in office. If members of the Opposition were really sincere, they would allow the Speaker to enjoy some period of grace in his first days in office.

I turn now to the motion that the Labor Party Opposition tried to move last week.

Mr Mackenroth: I did not say anything about last week.

Mr INNES: I think it was last week that the Opposition tried to move a motion in relation to the Elections Act.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr INNES: I will speak for myself; the honourable member for Redcliffe can speak for himself. Members of the Opposition have been party to truncating the period for the debate on the Address in Reply. The Address in Reply debate and the Budget debate form the urgent business of the House.

The Liberal Party has never made any bones about acknowledging the judgment of the people and acknowledging who controls the Treasury benches, even though that was achieved with only 38 per cent of the vote, and two turncoats. The Budget will be passed. That is the urgent business of this House. The Budget will pay the public service and will allow the business of the State to proceed.

The reform of the Elections Act can be dealt with at another time. I have very strong views about the action of two members, and I have views on what the Elections Act should provide.

Mr Mackenroth: Did they rat on your party?

Mr INNES: They ratted on their party and they ratted on the trust of a large number of voters in their electorates; but that can be dealt with at another time, when I will make my attitude clear. I will not become involved, nor will the Liberal Party, in playing yo-yos for cheap political purposes, or parliamentary tactics, on behalf of the parliamentary Labor Party. If the Opposition had been consistent, it would have approved a certain sessional order involving urgent business that must be despatched for the running of this State. The Labor Party should be consistent and leave other matters for a more important occasion.

Ms WARNER (Kurilpa) (5.15 p.m.): I rise to convey my thanks to the people of Kurilpa for electing me to be their representative in the Queensland Parliament. I will do all in my power to be responsive to their needs and to represent their interests both in this Chamber and elsewhere.

I wish also to thank all those people who worked on my campaign. My special thanks go to my campaign directors, Cath Rafferty and Di Fingleton, who are in the public gallery today. They did a great deal of hard, slogging work. I consider that the efforts of the Kurilpa campaign team made my election possible. I thank the ALP central administration for its excellent advice and support, and I thank my many friends and well-wishers who encouraged me during the campaign. I say thanks to my family—my mother, my husband and my children—for putting up with me during the long campaign.

Kurilpa is a typical inner-city electorate consisting of a large transient population and a large elderly population. The shopping areas are depressed, with small business struggling to pay high rents and making little if any profit. Kurilpa is, therefore, an area that requires a significant amount of community resources such as low-cost housing, domiciliary services for the aged and a variety of child-care and vacation-care programs.

Currently, the electorate contains very few services for those in need. The voluntary welfare agencies in the area constantly cry out for assistance from the Government. They know what causes hardship and they know what happens when people are denied their basic needs. Those agencies try to make up for Government negligence. Whereas in other States the Governments share funding responsibilities, that is not so in Queensland. Kurilpa lacks any community centre that can provide and co-ordinate information services for those who require emergency help, counselling, low-cost housing, child care and so on.

Adequate housing is a major requirement in the area and it is the subject of the majority of queries that come to my electorate office. In spite of that, the Housing Commission informs me that there is a two-year waiting-list for people who require housing.

With increasing unemployment and the high rents that have been forced upon the residents of Dutton Park and Highgate Hill as a result of escalating land prices, the pressure for low-cost housing is increasing. The funds that are available to the Housing Commission are insufficient to meet the need.

Education facilities in Kurilpa require Government action. A number of problems can be identified. School principals point to the fact that p. and c. associations often have to cope with the cost of basic essentials such as liquid soap, hand towels, duplicating paper, lawn-mowing supplies and books for remedial teaching. If the Government is to claim that it has a free education system, those resources should be supplied as a matter of course.

The schools have mounting repair and maintenance bills and their toilet blocks are in a state of disrepair, thereby causing a possible health hazard. The schools suffer from a lack of teaching and support staff. That is a growing problem, particularly for schools whose enrolments are dropping below 200.

Vacation care and care before and after school are almost entirely lacking. At Yeronga State High School a need exists for counselling staff. A number of pupils at that school are experiencing difficulties.

Because of the lack of funds available for State education in Kurilpa, in which the p. and c. associations are not made up of wealthy people, the quality of education facilities leaves much to be desired.

I turn now to more general matters. Given that the national mood is one of consensus, I felt it was necessary to recognise that there must be some common ground between myself and others, including my political opponents and even the Premier (Mr Bjelke-Petersen). On reflection and after much soul-searching, I realised what we had in common—we are both members of minority groups. I am one of only three female members in this House, and the Premier—assuming that he voted for his party—is one of a 38 per cent minority who did so.

It must be kept firmly in mind that, in spite of all the self-congratulatory behaviour that members of the National Party have indulged in over the past week, the National Party is still only a minority party. If it were not for the infamous gerrymander, it would not be able to form a Government.

An even more shadowy minority group for whom the Premier is an agent is that small, elite and anonymous group that controls Queensland's economic life. It is necessary to have an understanding of what is happening to the Queensland economy now, and what its prospects are for the future, to see how dramatically the interests of foreign-based capital control Government policy not only in the economic sphere but also in every area of Government activity from welfare policy, conservation policy, anti-union legislation, civil liberties—or lack thereof—to policies on Aborigines and on what is taught in the schools.

Honourable members may remember a bumper sticker which was an excellent example of black humour. It read, "See Queensland first before Joh sells it." Although that is funny, the import is frightening. It is not merely a slogan; it is borne out by hard facts as presented recently by Dr Ian Lowe, director of the science policy and research centre at Griffith University, in a recent paper entitled "Transnational Control and Mining Companies in Queensland" He points out that 85 per cent of Queensland-produced minerals are under foreign control. The Premier, assisted by massive advertising on television, would have us believe that this is natural, and indeed leads to prosperity. However, if we compare our position with the norm in other OECD countries, we realise that we are being ripped off and sold out.

A recent United Nations publication showed that the USA and Japan have no foreign ownership of mining. The figures for Sweden, the UK and West Germany are 3 per cent, 7 per cent and 24 per cent respectively. However, the figure for Australia as a whole is 58 per cent. Although that is high by world standards, it pales in comparison with Queensland's 85 per cent.

Queenslanders should be aware that deceptively local-sounding names such as Gladstone Aluminium, Alcan (Queensland) and Mount Isa Mines mask a network of foreign companies which own either very large proportions or 100 per cent of those seemingly Australian companies. Alcan (Queensland) is 100 per cent Canadian owned. Gladstone Aluminium has only 8 per cent Australian equity. Many people may have swallowed the National Party rhetoric that it does not really matter who owns Queensland because foreign investment means long-term prosperity; but the facts are to the contrary. Since mining companies employ only 2 per cent of the work-force and have very dubious tax practices and the industry by its very nature is environmentally destructive, we should very carefully scrutinise mining activity so that present and future generations of Queenslanders obtain the maximum benefit from our natural resources. The present Government's record is one of woefully inadequate scrutiny. It is negligent in disregarding the long-term effects of an economy which is so dependent on mining as a source of wealth.

Let us consider the activities of some of those companies and their relationship to the present Government. Given that Queensland is one of the major mining States, one could be forgiven for thinking that this would produce enormous tax revenue for the State which could be ploughed back into the economy to provide alternative employment or services.

Several times last week members said that they were proud to live in a low-tax State. I ask: Low taxes for whom? For shareholders in New York, London, Paris, and even Johannesburg! These low taxes are produced by a combination of especially generous taxation concessions for the mining industry, low rail freight, low electricity charges, low royalties and what could only be charitably referred to as clever financial arrangements, such as transfer pricing, the use of tax havens and financing which takes the form of loans rather than shares.

The Premier has admitted that royalties are deliberately kept low because the Commonwealth takes mineral royalties into account when making disbursements to the States. The Premier claimed that the low royalties were adequately compensated for by charging higher rail freight charges, allowing the State to obtain tax which is hidden from the Commonwealth. That is a dubious claim in itself. The claim was disputed by the miners' federation, which showed that the Queensland rail freight rate was one-quarter of the rate in New South Wales. Even the "Financial Review", not a known left-wing journal, stated that the rail charges did not adequately offset the loss of revenue on royalties. Since then, the Queensland Government has negotiated rail freight charges behind closed doors. That is yet another example of lack of public accountability and the erosion of our democratic rights; that is, the right of the people to know what deals the Government is making with foreign companies.

In 1973 T. M. Fitzgerald wrote a report for the then Federal Minister responsible for minerals. That report noted that the Gladstone refinery had never paid any tax because its owners chose to finance its operations by using loans rather than shares. Thus, what should have been a payment of dividends became loan repayments, on which no tax was imposed.

Another clever method is to use what is called transfer pricing, that is, to sell extracted minerals to a subsidiary company in another country at less than the market value, thus attracting less tax in Australia. Ian Lowe gave the example of Alcoa, which earned \$276m between 1964 and 1978. During that period, using some of the methods that I have outlined, the company paid no tax. In 1979 Alcoa was selling aluminium to its parent company in the USA at \$108 per tonne when the world price for aluminium was between \$130 and \$150 per tonne. Some tax to the Australian Government was thus avoided.

Another method is the use of tax havens such as Hong Kong. That involves the formation of paper companies which buy Australian minerals at artificially low prices, pay only the low Hong Kong tax rate of 12½ per cent and sell at market prices to Japanese customers. Taxes in both Australia and Japan are higher than those in Hong Kong.

All of these mechanisms are general knowledge in the world of big business and high finance and are considered reasonable practice. The people who are not privy to these shady deals are the electors of Queensland. The deals are complicated and it is easy to

become baffled by the figures. But surely the Queensland Government, with all the expertise within the public service at its disposal, should know what is going on and should move to prevent it. I believe the Queensland Government does know what is going on but it connives in these practices because it is committed to mining at any price. Even the Liberals, before they were unceremoniously thrown out of office by their so-called partners, thought matters were getting out of hand. Maybe that is why they were dumped. They supported a register of foreign ownership of land, a first step in making public the activities of the foreign investors.

It is not because I am jingoistic or particularly chauvinistic about foreign ownership; I think it is laudable to share our wealth with people from other countries who need it. My concern arises because Queensland's minerals are extracted, at the expense of the Queensland public, in the interests of some of the richest people in the world. These are the share-holders in transnational companies. They are a small, rich and powerful elite—the playboys of the western world. It is unfortunate—perhaps that puts it too kindly so I will say that it is tragic—that the long-term interests of the State have been sacrificed for short-term and short-lived mineral bonanzas. The usual pattern of this type of development is that the investment of the foreign company is initially large with a setting-up of plant and machinery. As the minerals are mined and shipped out, dividends are paid to overseas share-holders. The money outflow rapidly increases and it overtakes the inflow. In 1965 there was an inflow of \$65m, which reached a peak of investment of \$243m in 1972. However, by 1980 there was a net outflow of \$352m. A normal Government response to this imbalance is to entice new investment by providing even more attractive concessions and deals in order to balance the books. So the vicious cycle goes on and the Nationals are adamant in their pursuit of these policies into the future.

I remind the Government and members of the House that minerals are a finite commodity which take millions of years to replace. Apart from the inevitable destruction of the environment, which necessarily occurs during the mining process, future generations will simply not have minerals to sell.

The Queensland economy is marked by its lack of a substantial manufacturing base, which means that the State is forced to import many of the necessities of life and fails to provide adequate levels of employment for our own population. As the Government makes it easier for finance capital to make quick profits out of mining, it is unlikely to venture into manufacturing, which would provide the State with more long-term benefits. If Queensland utilised its own minerals to produce goods for both the domestic market and for export, it would enjoy a more balanced economy with greater stability. The rapacious mining companies cannot be allowed free rein so that, in the words of Sir Mark Oliphant, Australia becomes nothing but a hole in the ground.

The reason I have examined mining and the role of multinationals is that mining dominates the Queensland economy and its interests and needs shape much of the State's political, social and cultural life.

So when one looks at the cold, hard facts of economic life one can better understand why the Government insisted on buying gates for the Wivenhoe Dam from Korea, even though they were not suitable for the purpose. They were purchased at the expense of Australian companies because Queensland is beholden to Korea for being so kind as to buy our minerals.

It is clear that the National Party has become captive to the interests of the transnational companies, and these interests often conflict with the interests of Queensland taxpayers. Why else would the transnationals be given such preferential treatment? Obviously the companies are grateful to the Nationals and throw a little money their way to fill the coffers of the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation. The Nationals put the donations they receive to good use. They do all in their power to make Queensland safe for multinationals; thus the misnamed National Party should be more properly called the Multi-national Party.

The National Party has tried to ensure that in Queensland there will be no right to dissent and no opportunity to question Government policy. We in this State have become a national joke in respect to the Premier's jackbooted attitudes towards civil liberties. In particular, the growing numbers of people who oppose uranium mining have been savagely crushed—witness the skirmishes in 1977, 1978, 1979 and 1980 when

the Queensland police were instructed to hurl people into the watch house for simply wanting to exercise their democratic right to protest—a liberty enjoyed in every other Australian State.

In spite of the substantial arguments raised regarding civil liberties, the Government, in its typical fashion, maintains its repressive legislation to intimidate all those who wish to voice dissent at any time. Only last year, Aborigines who wished to bring their demand for land rights to the attention of the public were harshly treated under these same laws and new repressive laws. Why would the Government react so savagely to protest? It is because Aboriginal land may contain minerals which, in Queensland, are reserved for foreign ownership.

Those are two examples of how social policy is determined by economic motives. There are other social policies which are more subtly connected with the economic interests of transnational capital. It would be comforting to think that the Government's parsimonious attitudes towards social services stemmed only from an innate fiscal conservatism. However, the problems lie deeper than that, and these social policies are both reflections of and perpetrators of conservative philosophy.

The recent Government decision to declare 1984 as the Year of the Family can be seen for what it is—a piece of National Party propaganda. Again, we are likely to be treated to an extravagant television campaign, not unlike the one we saw before the election, in which we will be urged to admire emotive pictures of happy smiling families. There is nothing wrong with that in itself; we all enjoy pretty pictures and nostalgic hackneyed phrases; but when these are foisted upon us in replacement for real Government policies that should improve family life, we must protest at the sham and at the delusion.

We must look at what the image veils; we must look deeper for the political motivation that we can be sure exists, given the National Party's sophisticated political machine. In calling for a Year of the Family, the National Party is trying to exploit our natural fondness for our relatives and to use these basic human emotions for its own political advantage in a cynical, predetermined manner.

Until now, the National Party has failed to give a definition of the family. I will offer a working definition of the family. It is a group of people, usually related but not necessarily so, living together for mutual benefit, support and succour. This definition includes virtually every member of our society, and I sincerely hope that 1984, as the Year of the Family, will include everyone in that broad definition, not just those who choose to live in nuclear families.

If the Government was genuinely concerned about people in families, its policies would reflect a concern about child care, facilities for the aged, housing, education and welfare. Sadly, they do not.

I noted with interest that the member for Greenslopes recognised the existence of social need within her electorate. Unfortunately, she is in the wrong party if she wishes to tackle these problems. The member noted that there was a child care problem, and recognised the problems of the aged. She then quick-wittedly came up with the solution that the aged should look after the young, thereby relieving the able-bodied people in the middle of their responsibilities. Child care is a community responsibility, and the Government, comprising elected members of the community, must share that responsibility. Again, Queensland is the only State that provides not one cent for community-based child care.

The electorate of Kurilpa has no community-based child-care facilities. Those that exist within surrounding electorates, thanks to Federal funding, are full and have long waiting lists.

I commend the member for Greenslopes for recognising the issue. A more usual response is that of the Minister for Welfare Services and Ethnic Affairs who, with an alarming disregard for the facts, announced that there is nothing wrong in Brisbane Prison. The Government, with its head firmly in the sand, refuses to even look at the problem.

If this Government was truly interested in the needs of the family it would not have refused the pittance needed by Women's House to maintain support for those women and children who are victims of domestic violence. Next year will prove to be another financial nightmare for all women's refuges in Queensland because of this

Government's hard-heartedness. So much for a commitment to the family! Are we to assume that because women are forced to leave their husbands they are no longer members of the family?

Conservative propaganda is full of clichés about the good old days. We are never told when the good old days were. Last week a number of National Party members said that they believed in traditional values. I repeat that we are never told when the good old days were. Perhaps they relate to the pre-industrial society, the great Depression in the 1930s, the war years, or maybe the early years of this century when Queensland was known as the "Red State". They never really say. When, exactly, were families so much more wonderful than they are now?

The ideology of the pumpkin scone claiming a false nostalgia disguises the real import of National Party policies, which is to turn Queensland into a reserve for multi-nationals to hunt for minerals.

It is clear that the National Party and its cohorts use false images to manipulate and brainwash the Queensland electorate. One reason the Nationals have been able to do this can be found in the disturbing trend in education policies, which explicitly rejects a critical approach to education.

We live in a complex, confusing society that is experiencing rapid technological and social change, in which people need critical skills in order to make sense of their lives. It is no accident that critical education material like SEMP and MACOS was banned at a time when the civil liberties movement was mobilising or that the National Party has banned the development of sex education in our schools in a State that has the highest illegitimacy rate in Australia. Instead, we have a simplistic approach to education, with emphasis on the three R's, which fails to equip children with the intellectual skills necessary to deal with current social reality.

Education statistics for this State are appalling. For instance, 57 per cent of Queensland children leave school at 15 years of age compared with 49 per cent for Australia as a whole. In Queensland, 48 per cent of teachers are still 2-year trained or less, and that is double the national average.

While people in Queensland are kept in the dark they can hardly question the images on their TV screen promising that all is great in the Sunshine State and that the world's problems can be solved by sinking a can.

These expensive images are undoubtedly financed by the profits of multi-national investment, which mask and disguise the cold fact of how Queenslanders are ripped off. In the 1930s we needed Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers and Clark Gable to distract us from the realities of the Depression. In the 1980s we need attractive advertisements with images of happy families surfing and hang-gliding, and macho men dribbling soft drink down their hairy chests. All of these images set out to be manipulative, to ensure a passive acceptance of believing all that we are told.

The purpose of all this is to produce a compliant population that will not challenge economic policies which support and sustain the high levels of multi-national activity in the State. It can be demonstrated, as I have done, that these activities are disastrous for our long-term prosperity and welfare.

If we are to look ahead to more appropriate strategies for the future, which do not include high levels of unemployment, exploitation of the underprivileged or wholesale exploitation of our natural heritage, we need economic strategies that do more than service the needs of transnational companies. We need an economy oriented to the needs of the people.

If the Government will not believe me or if it rejects the advice given by Dr Ian Lowe, perhaps it will believe a report entitled "Towards a Strategy for Economic Development in Queensland" which was compiled by the Co-ordinator-General, Mr Schubert, who concludes that "the rapid growth in mining and mineral processing industries will be more difficult to achieve in the future" and that "despite the very strong growth of Queensland key minerals sector which directly employs 2 per cent 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".

Mr Schubert, the Government's own servant, has warned of a slowing in demand for energy resources. He points to the fact that we find it difficult to diversify because we have a low-skilled work-force, and that our education system lacks the sophistication for the development of technology-based industry for the future. Will this report, like so many others, gather dust on the Premier's shelf?

It is probably tempting for the National Party Government, with its face firmly turned towards the past, to refuse to recognise the danger signals in the Queensland economy. It is probably tempting for National Party members to continue to abuse democratic niceties. They are probably itching to deal with the unions once and for all and to lock up all those spikey-haired protestors and throw away the key.

It is probably a great temptation for the Premier, who is not noted for his patience, to overstep the mark in his haste to subjugate everyone who disagrees with him; but his style of antidemocratic tyranny will not go unchallenged. The next three years will be interesting. Let us see how many protest movements the Government can provoke. By its negligence, it has already provoked a riot in the Brisbane Prison.

If Queenslanders are allowed to go to the polls in 1986 or before, they will be able to test the short-sighted and narrow-minded policies of this Government. They will, of course, have to overcome the gerrymandered boundaries which by then will be redrawn by the magic pen of the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing.

We will not allow this Government's policies to go unchallenged. We will not be silent. We will not go away. I undertake to bring the issues that affect the people of Kurilpa to the attention of this Parliament and to do all in my power to mitigate the effects of the inhumane policies of the present Government on the families in my electorate.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (5.43 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to join in the debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply so ably moved by the member for Pine Rivers (Mrs Chapman) and seconded by the member for Greenslopes (Mrs Harvey).

I take the opportunity to pledge my allegiance and that of the people of my electorate to Her Majesty the Queen and to point out how well this country has been run under the monarchy.

I was a little disappointed to hear Labor members say that they do not respect Her Majesty or her representatives in this country. I cannot help but recall a comment of the member for Wolston. He pointed out that he received 64 per cent of the votes in his electorate and that they were the people he would represent.

Since my election to this Parliament a little over four years ago, it has been my privilege to represent the whole of the Gympie electorate. When people come to me for advice or assistance, I do not consider their politics or how they vote on polling day. In many instances, people seeking assistance from me are Labor supporters. I help them willingly and I believe that I have a responsibility to do so.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: So do I.

Mr STEPHAN: I am pleased that the member for Wolston agrees with me. I ask him to carry out that responsibility in his own electorate. If we do that, we will go a long way towards improving the lot of those we represent and the State as a whole. Instead of crying about how difficult life is, we should look on the bright side.

On a number of occasions claims have been made about a lack of opportunity to question the Government. I noted at question-time this morning that the Leader of the Opposition asked only one question. He has thus shown that he is not prepared to take advantage of the opportunity to question the Government when the opportunity is offered. Time and time again the Opposition fails to use question-time to its best advantage.

Mr Warburton: You ought to withdraw that. That is not correct. You don't know Standing Orders.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WARBURTON: I rise to a point of order. I suggest that the member ought to correct his statement. He referred to the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition asked two questions this morning. One of them he put on notice for tomorrow.

Mr STEPHAN: Mr Speaker, can the member for Sandgate take a point of order for somebody else?

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

Mr STEPHAN: Time and time again I notice that the Opposition does not take advantage of the time allotted to questions without notice. Members on the other side insist on putting long questions on notice, the answers to which could be readily obtained by addressing letters to the relevant Ministers. If Opposition members are sincere in their desire to question the Government, surely question-time gives them the opportunity to do so. Apparently they are incapable of doing so. I am not sure about their capacity to ask questions without notice. They certainly have not shown any. If they are to be critical, their criticism ought to be relevant.

Yesterday the member for Lockyer drew comparisons between Queensland and the States of New South Wales and Victoria. In the debate on the Appropriation Bill last week I drew similar comparisons. However, in this debate I wish to refer to the premium rates charged for workers' compensation. Representations have been made to me about the anomaly that exists in the premium charged when an employee comes within two different categories. The premium charged is the higher of the two. For instance, a person may be employed under the categories of pastoralist and farmer. Another may be involved in building construction and department store employment. There needs to be an amendment so that it is not the higher premium that is charged. A sour taste is left in the mouth of an employer when he is called upon to pay the premium.

The following table contains a comparison of workers' compensation premium rates that are charged in the various States on the basis of the premium cost per \$100 of wages paid—

Industry	Qld	NSW	Vic.	Tas	WA	SA	NT
Building and construction ..	\$ 4.70	\$ 22.72	\$ 21.88	\$ 6.04	\$ 21.98	\$ 14.36	\$ 18.19
Department stores	1.30	2.33	4.68	0.88			
Pastoralists	3.65	9.79	15.72	4.55	4.53		
Coal-mining—underground ..	8.02	17.48 (South)	40.22				

A Government Member: One of the reasons for the wide disparity in those figures is Queensland's cheaper hospital costs.

Mr STEPHAN: There would be many reasons for the wide disparity, and the reason put forward by the honourable member would indeed be one of them. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that in the industries to which I have referred the premiums are a cost against employment and against the wages. The amounts that are paid to the compensation boards in the various States differ tremendously.

One feature of the table is the huge difference between the figures set out for underground coal-mining. The figure for Victoria is five times that for Queensland. It is wrong for anyone to claim that the figures reveal a sad state of affairs in Queensland. On the contrary, they show that the Queensland figures compare very favourably indeed with those for the other States. Surely that is one reason why so many people come from southern States to live in Queensland. Certainly, for other reasons, it is a better place in which to live; but it is also a better place in which to live for that reason. Queenslanders have an asset that people in other States do not have—a little bit more money in the pocket.

I turn now to the road toll and to steps that are taken to reduce it. I refer particularly to defensive driving instruction. On Queensland roads, too many people are losing their lives from various causes, not the least of which is, as I said last night, the nut behind the wheel.

It is interesting to note that the defensive-driving course was developed by the National Safety Council in the United States of America and it was introduced into Australia in 1969 by the Queensland Road Safety Council. The voluntary instructors do a magnificent job. Since 1969, more than 80 000 people have graduated from the course. The course is the most successful single, post-licence, driver-education program of its type in Australia.

Drivers of all ages have in their hands an onerous responsibility, one that is not always matched by the skill required to successfully handle all road conditions and situations in which both machines and drivers are found from time to time.

To assist in the expansion of the defensive-driving course, recently the Queensland Road Safety Council introduced the system of voluntary defensive-driving course instructors. The success of the trials has become quite evident. I have attended graduation ceremonies, and I realise how highly the course is thought of by those graduates who have received instruction.

I turn now to the school bus system, which poses the greatest problem for the Education Department. It is a necessary evil. Some children are on school buses, travelling to and from school, for as long as three hours each day. It is not difficult to imagine the reasons why some problems, such as larrikinism, arise and the difficulties that confront drivers in trying to control them.

There are other areas of concern involving the driver, the operator and the owner of the bus. The Departments of Transport and Education are involved in the transport of schoolchildren. If the two departments could be brought together, a solution to some of the problems may be found. If the school bus transport system operated under one department only, it would go a long way towards ironing out some of the problems. It would make it easier for the operators to operate efficiently.

The cost of replacing a school bus is approximately \$100,000. In many instances, a school bus travels only a short distance each day. Sometimes it may be necessary to utilise the school bus for a purpose other than the transport of schoolchildren. In country areas there is a need for the buses to convey small parcels, especially at times when no other transport, such as bus or train, is available. People living in country areas would find it advantageous if the operator of the school bus was permitted to transport and deliver small parcels at the same time as he is transporting the schoolchildren. It would involve a saving of time for some parents and provide additional financial support to the bus operator.

Because of the high interest rates that are charged, problems are experienced by bus operators in servicing loans provided for the purchase of new buses. Although finance has been limited, terms similar to those that have been offered under the Young Farmer Assistance Scheme would be of tremendous assistance to bus owners. Under the Young Farmer Assistance Scheme loans are allocated at interest rates lower than those usually charged. If the owner was provided with such assistance, he could operate an efficient transport system that would benefit the parents and the schoolchildren.

Because of the short distance travelled each day by the bus operator, it is difficult for him to remain in employment. Sometimes it is necessary for him to find part-time employment to repay his loan. Sometimes a driver must find a part-time job so that he can work when the bus would otherwise be standing idle after transporting children to the school. If it is possible to find a part-time job, so much the better. Employment on a part-time basis, such as for four or five hours in the middle of the day, is not readily available. If bus operators could be assisted in that way, it would go a long way towards creating a better environment and more stable atmosphere for the operators and the children.

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

Mr STEPHAN: I compliment the Governor on his Opening Speech, in which he commented on the level of Government assistance to primary producers presently being only 4 per cent, compared with 24 per cent afforded to the manufacturing industry. What is important is not that the assistance is only 4 per cent, but that the anomaly is recognised and remedied by the Government.

In an all-out effort to remedy the imbalance, we hope that measures will be introduced to help combat such problems faced by primary industries as soil erosion, the eradication of animal diseases, a boost to productivity in vegetable production and the dairy industry, and the development of new and superior crop varieties. Primary producers deserve that support to enable them to continue to produce food for the people of the State and for expanding world markets. When one realises that rural industries earn Queensland \$2,200m annually, one can judge the importance of the industry and the importance of recognising that it deserves as much assistance and support as other industries.

One form of assistance is through education. At the present time an urgent need exists for TAFE courses for the agricultural and horticultural industries. Although those industries are to a very large extent keeping pace with technology, young people entering the industry need the encouragement and support that can be provided by TAFE colleges. I have ascertained that there is strong support for these courses, particularly in the vegetable industry. It is hoped that courses in that field will commence in 1984. Curriculum development will take place next year. It is proposed that a technical services group will offer courses at three different levels: short-term or part-time courses for current or potential farm employees to install basic farm practices in machinery operation and harvesting techniques; the pre-employment courses, designed for school leavers; and the higher level courses, which will include subjects such as irrigation practices and spraying techniques. The courses will include subjects on financial and personnel management, for which farmers have a great need.

The recent course, entitled fruit and vegetables post harvest, which concentrated on the handling of fresh fruit and vegetables from the grower through to the consumer, was a great success. Developed through the TAFE colleges, the course was very well received. The COD has indicated to the Industry and Commerce Training Commission the need for a horticultural apprenticeship scheme. The commission is a great supporter of the establishment of such an apprenticeship scheme.

The horticultural industry is greatly in need of an improvement of techniques and the introduction of improved varieties. The industry itself has shown the lead, with the support of the Department of Primary Industries, in the genetic improvement of various vegetable crops. The objectives of the research grants and programs presently under way are to expand significantly the resource collection in Queensland by a program of introduction of varieties and breeding lines of present vegetables' wild relatives with new types of vegetable crops from overseas sources, to evaluate this material in conjunction with vegetable varietal improvement throughout Queensland, to develop a data bank and to maintain it as a source for vegetable improvement programs and the improvement of facilities for crossing, screening and seed production activities for varietal evaluation and the breeding of vegetables.

The industry needs access to many of the improved varieties that have been developed overseas. The matter of plant variety rights immediately comes to mind. For quite a number of years the Federal Government has been procrastinating about the introduction of plant variety rights, which has left the industry in somewhat of a bind because those in the industry know full well that some of these new varieties, which have been successful in overseas trials, are now coming on to the world market-place. In some instances they have been tried in Australia with vastly improved results, but because they are tied up with plant variety rights they are not presently available to Australian producers.

If the vegetable industry is to be successful it needs to produce not only for the local market but also for overseas. Because the industry is at a disadvantage with varieties, it will be placed at an even greater financial disadvantage because it is starting behind par. The overseas market has been developed slowly, and it needs a shot in the arm. The introduction of new plant varieties could provide it.

I now turn to pest and disease control methods. The Queensland fruit-fly immediately springs to mind because it is one of the worst fruit and vegetable pests in Queensland. There is always a distinct possibility of the fruit-fly infecting fruit and vegetables that have been grown for export, so great care must be taken to ensure that larvae are not in the fruit when it is packed for export to New Zealand, the East or even the southern States. The Queensland industry supplies those markets in the winter-time, and does very well.

However, in recent years specific microbiological insecticides have been developed for certain species of caterpillars which attack vineyards and vegetable crops. Some insects are highly effective against mosquito larvae and black flies. It would appear likely that the screening of suitable isolates from items in world collections, along with the locally occurring micro-organisms, will reveal a suitable candidate for a biological insecticide for fruit-fly. Anyone who has anything to do with fruit-fly would realise just how necessary it is to find a solution to this enormous problem.

It has also been revealed that several micro-organisms which grow on leaf surfaces as a food source for adult fruit-flies appear promising as the basis of a greatly improved bait formulation, since they are attractive to both sexes. The expected formulation is of this powerful attractant and feeding stimulant with the selective microbiological insecticide

and it is hoped that this will provide the break-through so desperately needed. Those are some of the problems the industry is investigating with Government support. I mention them to indicate that primary producers do not usually sit down and wait for somebody else to do their work for them.

Research funding priority, a land use program and soil erosion are other areas that are being very closely monitored. They certainly need careful attention. There is a great deal of soil erosion along the coast and in most other agricultural areas, and it is most important that steps be taken to overcome the problem. I do not mean that all agricultural pursuits on sloping land should be stopped, because that would not overcome the problem. All that would do is shift the problem from one place to another, make it much more expensive to grow crops and render land almost useless. A commonsense and far-sighted education program is required.

It would be stupid to allow water to run straight down a hill and take the dirt with it. We should ensure that the water is contained and the soil remains on the hillside. I do not agree with the suggestion that land with more than a certain degree of slope should not be cultivated.

Deer-farming is an expanding industry in the south-east part of Queensland. The deer were brought from England as pets and have lived in Queensland for a number of years. Their number increased in the Brisbane and Mary Valley areas until they almost reached pest proportions. Quite a number of beef producers found that they were getting no return from growing crops for their cattle because the deer were eating the best of the crops in the evening. That led them to take steps to farm the deer. It is very expensive to trap deer and fence them.

Because this was a new industry, no guidance was available. However, the deer-farmers have done very well. The deer have bred so well that a yearly sale is held. This year the sale was again conducted by the Harts at Oakwood in the Kandanga area. Attendance was by invitation only because it was expected that the 90 head of red deer would be highly sought after. All the deer were not sold. However some of them were sold to interstate buyers for \$1,300 to \$1,400. The prices were well deserved considering the cost of breeding and bringing them to sale condition.

The industry exhibited deer at the Brisbane Royal National Show, and they were received fairly well. Many people were curious. Some did not believe that deer could be caught and handled, but they become very tame and are almost pets.

This fledgling industry is developing very well. The local production of venison cannot cope with the demand. In the light of the concern in the industry when the New Zealand product was being imported, the industry has a bright future.

Yesterday we debated the Mining Titles Freeholding Act Amendment Bill. Many problems similar to those dealt with in that Bill arise with some special leases controlled by the Lands Department. I have received representations from land-owners who are experiencing problems similar to those created by miners' homestead perpetual leases. People have been making representations to me about the value of land that has been in the family for a couple of generations. After a wonderful job has been done to turn it into a viable cattle property, the cost of freeholding is the same as if it was bought in the market-place. It cost the people a lot of money to develop the land and it will cost them a lot more to freehold it.

It is a matter that we must watch very carefully. I have made submissions about it to the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police, and I certainly do not intend to forget about it. An anomaly exists with the freeholding of special leases compared with the freeholding of land under the Land Act and Another Act Amendment Act 1981. That anomaly must be removed very quickly if we want to assist land-holders to freehold their land. I believe that all land-holders have the right to freehold their land, and they deserve all the encouragement that we can give them to achieve that end.

I turn now to the tourist industry. There is no doubt that that industry, although somewhat of a fledgling industry, is growing in importance along the whole coast of Queensland. I refer, in particular, to the Cooloola Coast area, which is situated between the Sunshine Coast and the Sugar Coast. When the region was first developed, the Cooloola Coast area, for one reason or another, was not recognised.

People engaged in industry on the Cooloola Coast, firstly, sought to be associated with the Sugar Coast. Then they looked to the Sunshine Coast. However, they were unsuccessful in their moves. Now they are seeking financial support to promote their own area, and I support them in that move. They have done a tremendous job in promoting their own region.

In order to raise funds, these people have been selling membership of the Cooloola Coast Tourist and Development Association for \$240. More than 200 memberships have been sold. The money has been used to print brochures, to carry out promotional work and to build a tourist and information centre in an area in Gympie that is referred to as the Duck Pond. I am sure that most people who have travelled along the Bruce Highway would have seen that area.

If the people in the Cooloola Coast area were to receive assistance under a tourist promotional program, it would certainly be appreciated. There is no doubt that it is a beautiful area. There are the coloured sands and the sand blows in the Rainbow Beach area. Fraser Island has an attraction all of its own. At holiday periods thousands of four-wheel-drive vehicles travel over that area.

As I said, the Cooloola Coast is certainly a beautiful area and it probably will develop under its own steam; but it could do with a little bit of help. It needs to be promoted so that people can come and see what the hinterland and coastal areas have to offer.

I congratulate the Minister for Works and Housing on the effort he has put into his portfolio. I know that he is criticised for not providing sufficient Housing Commission development and schools, but he should be congratulated for the amount of development that is taking place in my electorate.

I receive as many requests as any other member in this Chamber for subsidised housing and rental accommodation.

Mr Fouras: I do not believe that that is true.

Mr STEPHAN: It is true. Per head of population, there are as many requests for subsidised housing as there are in the city. People are coming to the coastal and rural environments to escape the smoke and haze of the city. Many single parents are coming to live in those environments.

A great amount of money has been spent in providing Housing Commission accommodation. Money has also been utilised in the low-interest or subsidised-interest housing schemes offered by the Queensland Housing Commission. As assistance was needed for the operators of school bus services, assistance is needed to provide single parents with subsidised or low-rent housing.

Queenslanders can be proud of their drive to succeed and to produce a high quality product. We should aim to let the pride in our work show and to do something for our country in return for what Australia does for us.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (7.39 p.m.): I am honoured and proud to speak in the Parliament of Queensland.

It is an honour to be part of this Assembly, which has such a distinguished record of innovative and progressive legislation. Queensland has led the democratic world in legislation that introduced widows' pensions, compulsory workers' compensation, free hospital care, education as a birthright for Queenslanders, unemployment and sickness benefits, the 40-hour week, and adult franchise in local government. All these policies have given dignity to Queenslanders as members of a democratic society, dignity to Queenslanders as workers, and dignity to the less fortunate and underprivileged. These achievements have been the result of initiatives of great Labor Governments through the Parliament of Queensland.

In the field of services to and achievements for farmers and people in rural and provincial towns, the Parliament of Queensland also has a great history. Marketing schemes, as established in 1926 under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act and the Sugar Acquisition Act of 1915, guaranteeing prices for primary industries, co-operatives and assistance for transport, education and local government in rural areas are previous Labor Government achievements for decentralisation of industry in the State.

By way of example, I point out that the sugar industry has been Australia's best organised and most successful primary industry, thanks to the foresight, initiatives and determination of former Labor Governments in Queensland. It was the Labor Governments under men such as Ryan and Forgan-Smith that provided the base for over 60 years of ordered and profitable development in the sugar industry. It is a well-disciplined and unified industry, one that protects and fosters all sections within it, including the farmers, the millers and the workers.

On behalf of the Australian Sugar Producers Association and the other sugar-milling associations, I take offence at the comment made by the Premier in the House on 24 November, when he said that those organisations and their representatives were "stupid" in their negotiations with the sugar industry employee unions. I totally reject that slur by the Premier, together with that by the honourable member for Mulgrave, on those organisations. The ASPA has served the sugar industry loyally for over 75 years.

It is with pride that I take my place in this Parliament as the member for Bundaberg. As the representative of the people of Bundaberg, I thank all those people who assisted me in my election to Parliament. Firstly, I thank my wife, Kimberleigh, my children, Sacha and Skye, and fellow-members of my family who are sitting in the public gallery. I thank the Labor branch members, the solid campaign committee, Young Labor and the local unions for their solid support. I extend special thanks to the Bundaberg women's branch of the ALP and to the electors for their loyalty in selecting me and continuing the great tradition of Labor and Labor Independent representatives for Bundaberg.

This loyal association of Labor and the Bundaberg people commenced in 1892 with the Honourable George Hall and continued with such honourable members as Thomas Glassey, George Barber, Bernard McLean, Ted Walsh, Lou Jensen and my predecessor, Jim Blake.

Special mention is warranted for the help and guidance given to me by Jim and Edna Blake in appreciating the role of a Bundaberg representative in the Parliament of Queensland and for Jim's contribution to this Parliament, especially in the field of primary industries. He would have made a great Minister for Primary Industries.

It is the sincere and honest service of these previous representatives of Bundaberg that I recognise and will strive to continue to the utmost of my ability and capacity.

On behalf of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows, I have the honour to bring to this Parliament a toast of loyalty to the Queen and her Parliament in Queensland. It was with great pleasure that I received this toast of loyalty on behalf of the Queen and Parliament of Queensland at the Manchester Unity Movable Conference held in Bundaberg this month. I also express the loyalty of the citizens of my electorate to Her Majesty the Queen.

Bundaberg is second of the Queensland cities most dependent on the sugar industry. It is the narrow economic base that is of concern to my district and electorate of Bundaberg. When the sugar industry suffers low prices or drought, or a combination of both, the economy of Bundaberg is drastically affected. In 1981 the Bundaberg-Isis region produced 579 000 tonnes 94nt sugar, with a value of \$158m. Expected production in 1983 is only 425 900 tonnes, at a value of \$118m, a fall of \$40m on the 1981 district sugar income. This income instability is very difficult for local businesses to withstand while trying to remain economically viable.

It is the effect of drought and the need for the conservation and development of water resources on which I wish to speak. The average annual rainfall of the Bundaberg region is the lowest of any non-irrigated sugar-producing area in the State. The average rainfall ranges from 1 118 mm in the coastal sector to 965 mm in the western sector.

The problem of overall inadequacy of average rainfall is aggravated in the Bundaberg region by relatively poor distribution throughout the growing season and high variability of annual rainfalls from average and uneven occurrence of below-average years. Rainfall deficiencies in the important growing months, from September to January, subsequently affect the crops' ability to achieve maximum growth.

Rainfall data analysed for this century shows that two or more successive years with below-average rainfall occur once in 5.8 years, with an average continuous duration of 3 years. The worst period was from 1899 to 1924, when 19 out of 25 years were below average. These low-rainfall periods must be expected to occur again.

Interest in an irrigation scheme in the Bundaberg region dates back to 1885, nearly 100 years ago, as a consequence of the development of sugar-cane growing on the Woongarra scrub situated on the southern side of the Burnett River. The first survey for an irrigation scheme was from the Elliott River, and in 1890 a committee was organised to investigate. However, the cost dampened enthusiasm. In 1906 the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission was authorised by the Queensland Government to inquire into the merits of a proposal to irrigate the cultivated areas in the Woongarra area. By this time the cost of a scheme based on the Elliott River had risen from £53,725 to £169,000.

Because of the extreme dry-weather pattern of the early 1900s, large plantations—Gibson and Howes at Bingera, Young Brothers at Fairymead and the Qunaba plantation—used the Burnett River water or underground wells to irrigate cane land.

The first Irrigation and Water Supply Commission report on the combined irrigation possibilities of the Burnett, Kolan and Elliott Rivers was released in 1929, through the efforts of an irrigation committee formed under the chairmanship of the late Ben Anderson. However, no action was taken on that report.

Major droughts in 1932 and then again in 1946 spurred the formation of the Bundaberg and District Irrigation Committee on 1 July 1946 at a public meeting chaired by the city council mayor, Alderman F. H. Buss. In a deputation to the Minister for Lands (Hon. A. Jones) in November 1946, the committee was again told there were no funds for a major irrigation scheme. It became clear that more intense lobbying was required by the local community to foster support on a State level for Government backing.

In 1957 there was another severe drought. The irrigation committee met Government Ministers and the Irrigation and Water Supply Commissioner (Mr F. B. Haigh), but were again disappointed. There was a lack of funds. It was finally the bad drought of 1964-65 that brought the critical matter of water shortage to a head. Owing to increased pumping, underground water levels were falling and salt intrusion became a problem. It was a serious matter for both the Bundaberg city water supply and the district sugar industry. In that year Isis produced only 17 per cent of its mill peak.

Between 1961 and 1968 the area irrigated nearly trebled, with most of the water coming from the underground. The underground basin was depleted well beyond its safe limit, to the extent of being 100 per cent over-used. Another major drought in 1969 worsened the salt-water intrusion into the underground basin. The situation was desperate.

A combined Department of Primary Industries and Irrigation and Water Supply Commission report entitled "Water Conservation, Underground Water Supplies and Irrigation—Bundaberg Region" was released in April 1969. The scheme was adopted in principle by the Queensland Government, which allocated \$8.3m. On 9 February 1970, the Commonwealth Minister for National Development and the Queensland Premier jointly announced the Commonwealth's grant of \$12.8m for the construction of the Monduran Dam (now Fred Haigh Dam) and for associated channel works. The Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme was born.

The reaction of the district to the announcement is best summarised by the late Ben Anderson, chairman of the Bundaberg and District Irrigation Committee, who stated—

"This is the greatest breakthrough for Bundaberg in our time. I would not predict what benefits will accrue to the city and district, to its primary and secondary industries, as a result of the scheme. The benefits will be unable to be calculated."

However, some 85 years after the initial interest in an irrigation scheme for the Woongarra scrublands, the irrigation story is not finished. A lack of funds continues to be a scourge on the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme. Inflation now bites into the allocated funds and progress towards completion has slowed to an unsatisfactory rate, remembering that the original proposal was for the 10-year construction period for Stage 1.

In February the 1975 BAE report was released at the direction of the Federal Government. It found that the scheme was economically viable. The Federal Labor Government allocated an additional \$4.5m to meet the increased cost of the construction of the Fred Haigh Dam and other associated works and fulfilled the Commonwealth Government's commitment.

In November 1973, the Kolan River Barrage was completed. By 1975 the Monduran Dam was filling with water and the first farmers in the Gooburrum reticulation system were served with surface water. Five years later the barrage on the Burnett River was completed.

From 1970 to 1976, the Commonwealth Government had contributed \$17.8m, compared with the State Government's contribution of only \$7.9m over the same period. Although the State Government had allocated \$8.3m in 1969, by the end of 1976 only \$7.9m had been spent. This caused construction of the reticulation system of the scheme to drop behind schedule.

1976 was significant for the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme. Mr Ben Anderson retired as chairman for the Bundaberg and District Irrigation Committee, having been associated with irrigation committees since 1929. His enthusiasm for the irrigation needs of the district have been continued through the Bundaberg and District Irrigation Committee by Mr E. H. Churchward as chairman and Mr G. Chenery as secretary. However, in the same year, 1976, only one of the two siphons on the Gin Gin main channel was installed, which has limited the capacity of the system to provide sufficient water at times of high irrigation demand and will mean an extra cost will be incurred when the second siphon is installed. The folly of this State Government decision to install only one siphon was realised in the summer of 1982-83.

The completion of the reticulation and distribution system for Stage 1 of the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme is now on a 60:40 State/Commonwealth Government funding arrangement. Last year \$10m was allocated and an extra \$1m is to be provided under an employment-creation program. Such a level of funding is totally inadequate for a reasonable completion date. If funding is kept at the present level and inflation remains high, it is doubtful if any final completion date can be given.

I call on the State Government in 1983, three years after the proposed completion date for Stage 1 of the scheme, to negotiate with the Federal Government for continued funding on a 60:40 State/Federal basis and to pledge that the fund will be indexed to at least their present level.

This year, under the demands of city water supply and farmer irrigation, the limitations of the irrigation scheme were exposed. Excessive underground pumping is still occurring on the southern side of the Burnett River at a rate in excess of the annual safe yield of that water basin. Water is the life-blood of farming, industry and city and urban dwellers. The people of Bundaberg have the right to expect that at some time in the future an adequate water supply enabling the use of garden sprinklers will be available. To attract other industries to Bundaberg, secure and adequate water supplies are needed. Diversification of industry is a key requirement for stability and growth of the region to make it less dependent on the sugar industry income with its cyclic troughs caused by low world prices and variable production levels.

It has been shown that underground water is the cheapest supply of urban water, considering the cost of treating surface water. A co-ordinated approach is required by the users of water—the shire councils, Bundaberg City Council, farmers, Bundaberg District Irrigation Committee and the Water Resources Commission—to plan the water requirements of the region for the mutual benefit of all users and to provide water for the region at the lowest cost.

It is appropriate that by 1985, 100 years after the initial call for an irrigation scheme in the Bundaberg region, a detailed investigation of the water resources conservation and requirements to the year 2000 is to be undertaken to formulate plans on the following grounds—

- (1) As underground water is the cheapest water supply for urban and industrial uses (actively canvassed over many years by the mayor of Bundaberg, Alderman Cliff Nielsen)—
 - (i) What are the expected requirements of the Bundaberg and district shire councils and can adequate underground water be allocated to these bodies?
 - (ii) Will an immediate investigation be made into the possibility of putting more farmers onto surface supply in the Woongarra area and allocating more underground water to these councils by (a) the possible upgrading of pumps on the Burnett River and main channels surface system to enable more farmers to be supplied by this source; (b) determining the feasibility of providing surface water to farmers from a weir storage on the Elliott River as the underground

water levels rise and water returns through the leakage zone to the Elliott River, and an economical safe water yield may be expected from this source; (c) undertaking a feasibility study into returning excess drainage water from Moore Park coastal farms back into the main irrigation channels and used for farming, future coastal urban supplies, or the North Bundaberg water supply?

(iii) Will the financing of these projects between the appropriate councils, farmers and Government be determined?

(2) The completion of the Kalliwa Dam on the Burnett River is necessary to secure the future development of the city of Bundaberg and the stability of the Bundaberg/Isis sugar and other agricultural industries, the possible future expansion of these industries and the development of new secondary industries.

Water is one key resource that is important to the development of the Bundaberg region. As in many areas of Queensland, drought has disastrous effects on individuals and district economies. Security, stability and economic growth can be assured when limiting resources are provided. Water is a limiting resource for the Bundaberg region. The hard work, determination and foresight of the people of the Bundaberg region over 85 years to obtain adequate and secure water supplies for the district needs can be fulfilled by making a concentrated effort to complete the present scheme in a reasonable period and by allocating available water supplies for the mutual benefit of all water users in the region.

Just as the further development of water resources requires detailed planning, so too does the traffic plan for the town of Bundaberg. Traffic growth over the next two decades will slow down to capital city peak hour pace unless a detailed traffic plan is established for the city.

The major requirement to improve traffic flow is the provision of a second traffic bridge over the Burnett River. The construction of the present traffic bridge for horses and buggies commenced in 1898 and opened on 24 August 1900 and it served a population of 5700 people.

In Janette Nolan's "History of Bundaberg", the then residents of Bundaberg are quoted as saying that the "lack of it (the bridge) was retarding the progress and checking the natural growth of this important community". That statement is as relevant today as it was in the 1880s and 1890s, but today cars, trucks and semi-trailers use one bridge that was designed for the horse and buggy traffic of last century. The present bridge is unique in that it is the only traffic bridge over a major river in a major town that has T junctions at each end that restrict traffic flow. That might have been good for runaway horses, but it is no good for cars.

In 1977 even the Minister for Main Roads saw the urgent need for a new bridge. Producing the plans, he said, "Traffic will be flowing over the new bridge by 1982." However, the Premier's now infamous comment during the election campaign, "I have never heard of it", indicates either poor communication in Cabinet, forgetfulness on behalf of the Premier, or just another broken promise of the National Party as this bridge has been a National Party commitment since 1974. It will be an integral part of traffic planning.

Unless the east-west traffic situation on the southern side of the river is planned, Bundaberg will have a serious traffic problem. There are only two major through roads serving east-west traffic. They are Bourbong Street and Walker Street, both of which are crossed by a railway line. Afternoon peak-hour traffic delays are caused by trains crossing or shunting.

Although Walker Street can be widened to four lanes, that would not be a permanent solution to the problem. The appropriate authorities, that is, the Main Roads Department and the city council need a traffic plan for the city. Another major through road will be required to augment Walker and Bourbong Streets. I request the authorities to consider a through road, such as George Street, with an underpass under the railway as being one alternative to augment the future east-west traffic flow.

I now bring to the notice of the House representations made by the fruit and vegetable growers of the Bundaberg region for adequate Department of Primary Industries facilities to serve their research and information needs. The fruit and vegetable industry in Bundaberg is one of the fastest, if not the fastest expanding primary industries in Queensland. The facilities of the Primary Industries Department have failed to keep pace with the expansion. Although this industry is worth nearly \$30m to the district, it has only two research staff and two extension people are provided to handle all inquiries.

Bundaberg farmers have been leading the way in Australia in the adoption of new technology and farming methods, especially the use of trickle irrigation and plastic mulch-farming systems. The farmers have to develop the new farming techniques with local machinery and chemical agencies as local Department of Primary Industries facilities are either totally lacking or staff is not available. The experience gained in this development is often very costly for individual farmers.

I recognise the innovativeness and skilled management of district farmers which have made Bundaberg the leader in the use of trickle irrigation and plastic mulch-farming systems in Australia.

The facilities of the Department of Primary Industries are so poor that one of its officers has the seedling shed for developing new varieties in his back yard. I believe that even the Minister for Primary Industries would be ashamed of these facilities in Bundaberg. New Department of Primary Industry facilities were proposed and planned back in 1974 and in 1977. Since then, this rapid expansion of horticultural industries has taken place. I am sure that the newly appointed Minister for Primary Industries will make this one of his priorities. To allow the Bundaberg district to maintain this growth, research facilities must be provided to service this urgent need of the fruit and vegetable growers. I urge the Government to consider the needs of the fruit and vegetable growers of the Bundaberg region, most of which is situated in the electorates of Isis and Burnett, so that high priority can be given to providing adequate facilities by the Department of Primary Industries.

Honourable members uphold the virtues of their own electorates, especially the tourist attractions. The Bundaberg region has a potential for tourist growth because it has a unique tourist potential unequalled in the southern hemisphere. This potential for international tourists is based on the sugar industry. The Bundaberg region is the only area in the Southern Hemisphere where tourists can see all aspects of sugar and sugar-cane production—the cultivation and growing of sugar-cane, the associated research at the Southern Bureau of Sugar Experiment Station, the manufacturing of cane harvesters, the spectacular firing and transport of cane, the raw sugar milling and sugar refining and distillation of molasses into the famous Bundaberg rum. Also they can visit the bulk sugar terminal and port. With the co-ordinated approach of the Queensland Government Tourist and Travel Corporation, the local cane-farmers, the sugar mills, the distillery and the regional tourist operators, that latent tourism potential can become a reality.

I now wish to relate the following comments directly to the Address in Reply debate. In the Opening Speech presented by the Governor, it was stated—

“ my Government will uphold the rights of States and resist any attempt to erode these rights.”

They are very commendable sentiments. However, at the very same time, the State Government is eroding the rights of local government with the introduction of a building industry complaints tribunal consisting of building industry representatives, to over-ride the decisions of local councils. The establishment of this authority has been condemned by the Local Government Association. Is it a case of Caesar judging Caesar?

Local government has become a puppet of the State Government by threatened interventions, sackings of local councils by the Minister and the general erosion of State Government subsidies to local councils during the reign of the National Party.

The National Party has reduced subsidies to local councils, through the Department of Works, for roads and bridges, from 20 per cent to 10 per cent—a 100 per cent reduction; for street improvements, from 20 per cent to 10 per cent; for drainage for mosquito control, from 50 per cent to nil; and for concrete water channelling, from 25 per cent to 10 per cent. In fact, most State subsidies to local councils through the Department of Health for community services and also for water supply and sewerage, have been either cut completely or drastically reduced.

This overbearing and domineering policy has meant that local government charges in Queensland, especially over the last five years, have increased at a greater rate than local government charges in other States. These increased charges have no relation to a person's ability to pay, particularly to an unemployed person's ability to pay. The increase in rates is symbolic of many increases in Government charges in this State.

The honourable member for Pine Rivers, in moving the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, indicated that Queensland is a low-tax State. Queensland is a low-tax State for the rich, but a high-cost State for the ordinary Queenslander, the unemployed person, the pensioner and other Queenslanders on fixed incomes.

As the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, there were over 4 000 price rises in this State during the wages freeze. In the comparison of the cost of living based on essentials, our capital city rates poorly.

The Queensland Bread Industry Committee's price comparison for a loaf of sliced bread, as at 7 November 1983, is 86c in Brisbane, compared with 80c in Sydney. The Brisbane price for bread is 7.5 per cent higher.

The Queensland Milk Board's retail price comparison for a bottle of milk shows the Brisbane price at 42c, compared with a Sydney price of 38c. The Brisbane price for a bottle of milk is 10.8 per cent higher. In fact, Brisbane had the highest price for milk of any capital city in Australia.

This disgusting trend of high prices for Queenslanders is further shown in the cost of electricity for pensioners. For a pensioner using 500 units of electricity per quarter (light and power and water heating), the cost in Brisbane is \$43.51, compared with only \$23.56 in Sydney. The Brisbane price is, I am ashamed to say, 80 per cent higher.

Again, Queensland's capital wins a race that only means hardship for our pensioners. I am talking about bread, milk and electricity—basic essentials for staying alive. I point out to the honourable members for Pine Rivers and Gympie that Queenslanders are disgusted when the Queensland Government boasts of having the lowest priced cigarettes, but Queensland has the highest price for milk in Australia and the highest electricity costs for pensioners in Australia.

Further boasts were made of job creation over the period 1980 to 1983. However, these figures are old. As the honourable member for Sandgate indicated, between October 1982 and October 1983, 15 600 fewer jobs were available in Queensland—a poor record indeed. On a per capita basis, that was the largest employment decline of any State.

The honourable member for Pine Rivers then outlined the virtues of the Government by quoting the number of new businesses and new company names registered. Yet the next speaker, the honourable member for Greenslopes, in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, stated that she expected the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology to begin arresting the alarming failure rate of small business. To talk of new businesses then later acknowledge alarming failure rates of businesses does not really engender confidence.

The honourable member for Greenslopes later commended the Minister for Welfare Services and Ethnic Affairs for proclaiming 1984 as the Year of the Family, but she failed to condemn the same Minister for Queensland's being the only State in Australia that does not provide full funding for women's refuges.

Later in the debate, the member for Maryborough referred to "elite blacks". I suggest that we give the honourable member some black boot polish and let him feel how elite it is to be black.

I now turn to the most disappointing aspect of the present State Government's performance. It was highlighted in a report entitled "Towards a strategy for technological development in Queensland" presented to the Queensland Government. It stated that Queensland has the least skilled and least educated work-force in Australia. That is the failure of this State Government for which it stands most condemned. As the Leader of the Opposition quoted "in comparison with the rest of Australia, Queensland has a lower-skill work-force. For example, 57 per cent of the Queensland population left school at 15 or earlier, compared to 49 per cent for Australia as a whole."

Are the honourable members for Fassifern and Condamine, both former teachers, proud of the fact that this State under National Party-led Governments, has the least educated work-force, and that the Queensland Government spends on education significantly less of its Budget allocation than the national average? In other words, Queensland is still behind the rest of Australia in education spending. My father was a teacher for nearly 50 years. If he were still alive today, he would be horrified to learn that Queensland has the least educated work-force in Australia.

Mr Speaker, our wealth is in our children. They are our future leaders, our future workers. Yet this Government is dragging its feet in the education of the State's most precious resource—children. Unless we give our children a purpose in life, we have failed.

I pledge myself, as I know all members of the ALP pledge themselves, to the education of our children so that they may play a positive and meaningful role in the future of our society.

I give a pledge to the people of Queensland, and especially to the people of Bundaberg, to uphold their security, to uphold their prosperity, and to uphold their dignity.

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (8.14 p.m.): I congratulate the honourable member for Pine Rivers on her maiden speech, in which she moved the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I also congratulate the member for Greenslopes who so capably seconded the motion.

I pledge my loyalty and that of my constituents to the Crown.

I thank my campaign committee members for their work in having me re-elected to represent the people of Warwick. They worked very hard and that is one of the reasons I am here. My campaign director, Mrs Scrymgeour, made me work harder than I wanted to. The campaign was so successful that the National Party vote was higher than the combined anti-Labor vote has even been in the Warwick electorate.

I should like you, Mr Deputy Speaker, to convey my congratulations to Mr Speaker on his elevation to that high office. I congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment as Chairman of Committees. Honourable members will be pleased with the efficient way in which you two gentlemen carry out your duties.

Mr Casey: You should have had Mrs Scrymgeour running your campaign for Speaker.

Mr BOOTH: She would have been a big help. Honourable members might have to put up with her in Parliament one day, so they should not knock her.

The previous speaker, the honourable member for Bundaberg, has left the Chamber. I cannot see him lasting the next three years in Queensland. He hates the place. He devoted almost the whole of his speech to knocking Queensland.

For his benefit, I should like to tell a story that was recited by a former leader of the Labor Party and Premier of Queensland, Forgan Smith. He attacked people who knocked Queensland and their country.

Mr Casey: I did not know you were ever at a Labor Party meeting.

Mr BOOTH: Well, I heard him.

He told a story about an American who came to Australia and who attended a funeral of a member of a sect that believed in saying something about the deceased at the graveside. The minister conducting the ceremony waited for someone to come forward. No-one did. So the Yank came forward and said, "If no-one wants to say anything about our dear departed friend, I will tell you something about America."

If the honourable member for Bundaberg continues to knock his own State wherever he goes, and also knocks this institution of Parliament, he will not be remembered very favourably by Queenslanders.

A Government Member: He knocked the sugar industry.

Mr BOOTH: He did. I shall come to that later.

I congratulate all new members. I hope that they will be satisfied with the contribution that they are able to make in this place and to their State. Most new members come here full of enthusiasm, but they find it a little harder to make headway than they expected. However, all members believe that they have made some impact and that they have realised some of their ideals.

I want to dwell for a few moments on the rapidly escalating costs on farms. Not many people in Australia know exactly what is happening in the rural sector. The previous speaker claimed that milk should be given away at no charge and he dealt with one or two other commodities.

A Government Member: And he wanted a 30-hour week.

Mr BOOTH: Yes, he even mentioned that. How does he expect prices of commodities to be very low when employees are working a 30-hour week?

Be that as it may, I want to bring home to honourable members the fact that rural costs are increasing. In relation to the type of farming that I understand, the highest costs are those of fuel, fertiliser, spare parts and capital items such as equipment and tractors. Over the last 12 months, prices of spare parts have virtually doubled. The farming community cannot afford such huge costs; they are simply too high. Unless rural costs are held down or, alternatively, unless the incomes of farmers are increased, many casualties will occur in the rural sector. I do not think any honourable members want to see that happen.

What did the Federal Government do about the plight of the farmers? It promised to do something about the high cost of fuel. But what did it do? It increased the price. On top of that, it said that the price would automatically go up every six months.

The Federal Government did not even have the decency to accept its responsibilities and increase the price itself. It established a system under which the price increases automatically. The Federal Government broke its promise to the producers and to the people of Australia by setting up a system under which the price of fuel will increase automatically every six months. That is something about which most people are particularly worried.

Mr Randell: I cannot hear one word of protest from the ALP on the other side.

Mr BOOTH: Not one word about the automatic adjustment. It ensures continuing inflation.

Not only will it increase every six months, but the Federal Government has abdicated its responsibility to the people of Australia in that it has set up an automatic system. Opposition members will not stand up in the House and say, "We have to do this," or "We have to do that."

No matter what a farmer's input may be, he is faced with escalating costs. It does not matter whether it is fertiliser or some other product; costs are escalating. The escalation of costs is taking place so quickly that the people interested in the farming scene are worried about it. It would not surprise me if the Federal Minister for Primary Industry is worried about it. To begin with, he was excluded from the Cabinet. He was then reluctantly given a position. However, he does not have much input and he has very little say on matters.

I wish to refer now to a financial tragedy that occurred in the Queensland Graingrowers Association. It has serious problems. I do not suggest that the Government should rescue the Queensland Graingrowers Association. Surely we should examine the situation to see whether we can do something to help. I know that there are probably reasons why assistance cannot be provided. However, I think that we should see what can be done. It is an absolute necessity to maintain the graingrowers association. It should be rescued and put back on its feet.

Mr Casey: The best way for the Government to do that would be to make it a statutory body under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act.

Mr BOOTH: I do not know whether that can be done. They have never asked for that. That is a problem.

Mr Casey: That is the best way for the Government to do it.

Mr BOOTH: It might be, but they have never asked for it. I take on board the honourable member's comment. It is a sensible comment, but it might not be possible to implement.

The Queensland Graingrowers Association is the organisation that stabilised grain prices. If it is pulled out of the arena, grain prices could be reduced by as much as 25 to 30 per cent. What a body-blow that would be to the graingrowers of this fair State.

Mr Underwood interjected.

Mr BOOTH: I do not know whether the Fraud Squad was necessary. They probably did some foolish trading and had too much confidence in a member of their staff. The honourable member can make such comments. He has never suggested that before. If the honourable member has information that makes him think that that is what should happen, we should hear from him at the appropriate time.

The member for Bundaberg has just resumed his seat. He said that he spoke on behalf of the ASPA. He also said that there should be a deal for the 38-hour week. Everyone would like a 38-hour week. Even honourable members would like a 38-hour week in this place. Everyone would like a 38-hour week if it was not so costly. The only reason why people worry about the 38-hour week is the cost. If hours could be reduced and it would not hurt anybody, nobody would complain. Unfortunately, somebody has to pay for it.

Mr Menzel: He is so far out of touch that he does know that a lot of the employees have rejected it.

Mr BOOTH: I did not know that, but I think he was quite foolish. He even took the Premier to task on this. I think that the Premier's comments were quite correct. We would like a shorter working week if it was not so costly.

Mr Casey: Can you tell me how much it would cost the sugar industry?

Mr BOOTH: No, I cannot.

Mr Casey: I will tell you: it would cost nothing.

Mr BOOTH: The honourable member knows that if a person works 38 hours instead of 40 hours, he need only put 40 over 38 and multiply by 100 to find the cost as a percentage. It would be substantial.

Mr Casey: It is the best industrial deal ever to be negotiated in Queensland.

Mr BOOTH: I do not think so.

Mr Randell: An industry that competes on world markets has a duty to keep costs down.

Mr BOOTH: Yes, that is another thing. Any primary industry that exports its produce will not be competitive on world markets if it increases costs by reducing working hours.

Mr Randell: Doesn't that mean a loss of jobs?

Mr BOOTH: Yes, it can lead to a loss of jobs as well as to an increase in costs right across the board. It will push the costs up for the people whom Opposition members claim to represent.

Land in Warwick has been acquired for the future construction of a TAFE college. Because of the number of people from Warwick and smaller surrounding towns such as Killarney, Allora, Clifton and Stanthorpe, Warwick has a great need for a TAFE college. The towns of Warwick and Stanthorpe decided to combine to apply for the TAFE college. Students will come from as far as Inglewood and Goondiwindi. The establishment of TAFE colleges in any reasonably sized town is essential. Obviously in the future many people will have to be retrained. I would like to think that there would be no need to retrain people; but it is essential that retraining is available to a person who has worked in an industry or been a small businessman, who has struck trouble and who encounters difficulties when he is put on the labour market. People should not be forced into early retirement, which in many cases leads to a sad end; so the retraining of people is absolutely essential.

If at some time in the future the Government decides to lift the compulsory minimum school-leaving age, more TAFE colleges will be required right across the country. There are those who do not have the ability to grasp academic subjects, and it would be foolish to force them to attempt to. They should undertake a course more suited to their own abilities, whether it leads to an apprenticeship or to something else.

Mr Mackenroth: You could get them to take out membership of the National Party.

Mr BOOTH: There is no harm in that, either. A person who is clever enough to do that is certainly a wise man. About 35 years ago I did that and I have never regretted it. I have not only had an input into the running of the State but also enjoyed the social side of the National Party. If the honourable member has a son, I recommend that he tell him to join the National Party; he will never regret it.

At every opportunity I will press for the construction of the TAFE college at Warwick within a reasonable time. I think I will be successful.

Although much has been achieved in the Warwick electorate in the past three years, some things need to be mentioned. For instance, the Warwick State High School needs a new library. Although the present library is quite good, it is too small and unsuitable for the present size of the school. The school needs a free-standing library to provide the best facilities for the students.

Mr Davis: What about Stage II of the Leslie Dam?

Mr BOOTH: Stage II of the Leslie Dam is well under way. I am glad the honourable member reminded me about that, as that is a good-news story. If the honourable member would just sit tight, I have some good news for him on a few other matters.

Extra accommodation is required at the special school at Warwick East because the population in that area is increasing. Special schools away from the metropolitan area have to take some students who perhaps should be attending other institutions. I pay a tribute to the teachers at the special school, who do an excellent job. Although three years ago \$60,000 was spent on upgrading the accommodation, even more space is now required. The school has two units and has been fairly fortunate with the teachers and facilities it has been given. There is no doubt that further accommodation is necessary and I will be drawing that to the Minister's attention at the first opportunity.

I now deal with the roads in the district. Warwick is situated on the main highway and is what I call a cross-roads town. It is imperative that the roads be maintained in good order. The district has seen the longest period of wet weather that I can remember and some of the roads have started to fall to pieces. This is not the fault of the shire council or the Main Roads Department. It is just that there has been so much rain that water has soaked under the foundations. The council needs financial support. It has received some financial help through flood relief, but it needs as much financial help as possible. I hope that in the very near future the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing will inspect the damage to see what can be done.

I am quite happy with the program of highway construction. New work continues each year, and within two years it should reach the top of the Gap. The increased width of the highway will be a great boon to motorists. New bridge construction has been quite good. A few more are needed, but I have to say that the area has been quite well treated.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central reminded me about the Leslie Dam gates. I can inform him that the civil works will be completed in December—only a few days now. Tenders for the gates have closed. A successful tenderer has been decided on and it is expected that the gates will be on top of the Leslie Dam in about 12 months. The tenderer has two years in which to finish the job, but I understand that he is negotiating on the basis of completing the job within 12 months.

I now turn to the hospital. A modern 40-bed nursing home opened in Warwick last year and was much appreciated. It was even better than had been anticipated. However, the hospital still has some problems. Some members of the hospital board feel that the only way to overcome them is to completely rebuild the hospital. There is really nothing wrong with it—it is well maintained—but it is just not modern enough. If it cannot be rebuilt, another operating theatre should certainly be provided. At present there is only one theatre, and that causes problems. The casualty ward is rather small, and, because Warwick is a cross-roads town, unfortunately there are sometimes casualties in substantial numbers. There is no question that Warwick needs either a new hospital or the existing one to be substantially upgraded. I will be pressing the Minister for Health on that subject.

The cattle industry has been one of the most stable industries in the Warwick area. That claim is borne out by the throughput of the saleyards, which rank about eighth in Queensland. That is not a bad effort and shows the industry's importance to the area. But of even greater importance are the meatworks at Warwick and Killarney. Between them they employ about 300 people and are a valuable asset to the district. Even more importantly, they appear to be trading successfully. Some of the major meatworks have not been trading too well and are having problems. They have put forward a rationalisation plan which they claim is needed. It entails the closing down of some meatworks. It would be foolish to close down some meatworks just because they are not operating successfully at present. The free enterprise system that allows the survival of the fittest

is the best solution to the problem, and the Government should not be forcing a business to rationalise or unnecessarily prop up another business. We should continue past practice—allow the market-place to find its own level—and let the companies that can expand do so.

The Warwick Bacon Factory, run by Hart Bros, and Hancock's Meatworks at Killarney have very modern facilities. The Warwick meatworks has an export licence and Hancock's supplies the local market. I am proud that these works have been able to do as well as they have. I will certainly oppose any efforts to rationalise the industry and push them out of business to prop up some larger works.

The honourable member for Ashgrove was a little critical of sports grants. The Government can be mighty proud of what it has done for sport. The honourable member for Ashgrove said that people in sport have to find most of the money they need. Of course they have and they usually do. In the past three to five years in my electorate virtually every club has acquired a new clubhouse. In earlier days the subsidy was 33½ per cent. A lower subsidy is now payable, but it is a great help to the clubs. They know that if they can raise enough money to start building, the subsidy will help them to provide excellent facilities, which can be enjoyed by those who engage in sport. Whenever a new industry is considering coming to a town, the first question asked is, "What sporting facilities are available?" We are thankful for our sporting facilities and are proud to have them.

Two new shopping centres are under construction at a cost of about \$10m. Some people believe that when they open there will be too many centres in the town but, in my opinion, the city is ready for these two innovative shopping centres. They will provide better shopping facilities and, for some people, it will mean more competition. Since the building of the two new shopping centres commenced, many existing businesses have been renovated. It seems to me that, overall, Warwick will have a face-lift.

Some of the increased confidence in Warwick is attributable to the big housing program that has been under way for three or four years. Warwick has experienced a building boom that has not been common to other parts of Australia. It has resulted in a face-lift for the whole town, and has infused a great deal of confidence.

An Opposition member spoke about subsidies for local authorities. The Government must try to help local authorities to provide water and sewerage. The small township of Killarney needs a sewerage system because the septic tanks there are not working well. For sewerage to be available to the citizens at a reasonable price it will have to be backed by a lot of Government money. Although the survey has not been completed, if the local authority has to bear all the cost of the sewerage, it seems that a householder in Killarney will be called on to pay \$500 a year. That is out of the question.

The honourable member for Kurilpa and several other Opposition speakers spoke about an electoral gerrymander. I thought that I should do a bit of research to see just what a gerrymander looks like. I shall talk about the Federal gerrymander. I see the member for Ipswich West looking at me. I have some surprises for him and also for the member for Kurilpa. Unfortunately, she is not in the Chamber, but I am sure that someone will relay to her in the morning what I have said. I do not think that she knew quite what she was talking about when she mentioned some matters today. I think that someone might have fed her some propaganda.

We constantly hear the claim that the National Party holds Government in Queensland with only 38.88 per cent of the vote.

Mr Davis: Good.

Mr BOOTH: I have not denied that fact. Labor members say that, with 38.88 per cent of the votes, the National Party holds the majority of seats in Queensland. What is conveniently forgotten is that there is a two-party preferred system in Queensland, and the National Party and the Liberal Party received 54 per cent of the vote. The National and Liberal Parties hold 55 per cent of the seats in the Queensland Parliament. So that does not differ greatly from the 54 per cent of the vote that they obtained. The ALP, which received 44.01 per cent of the votes, holds 38 per cent of the seats.

I thought, in case this was the only criterion that the ALP wanted to consider, that I should examine what has happened in the Federal sphere. And this will surprise the honourable member for Brisbane Central and his lone colleague on the Opposition benches tonight. That shows that Labor members do not give much loyalty to their speakers.

I return to what happened in the Federal sphere. In the 1983 Federal election, the ALP obtained 49.5 per cent of the vote. One would imagine that it should have obtained 49.5 per cent of the seats in the Federal Parliament. Now, let us look at the results. Surprise, surprise! The ALP won 75 seats and the Opposition won 50 seats. In percentage terms, the ALP obtained 60 per cent of the seats with only 49.5 per cent of the vote.

The Federal Labor Party is not even satisfied with that. It intends to have a redistribution to gerrymander the electorate still further. The Labor members want to entrench themselves in office. They come into this Parliament and say that there is a gerrymander in Queensland. They forget that the anti-Labor vote at the last State election was 55 per cent and that the anti-Labor parties have about the same percentage of the seats.

There is no question in my mind that the gerrymander in the Federal sphere is considerably worse than it is in Queensland—if there is a gerrymander in Queensland. I think that these things just happen. But when the National Party is successful at an election, it is terrible and Labor members run round throwing their arms in the air, but when these things happen in the Federal sphere after they have been master-minded by Mr Hawke, it is really good.

Mr Simpson: The Labor Party uses the gerrymander only as an excuse for not winning.

Mr BOOTH: The members of the Labor Party had to tell us something. They told us that they were going to win. I think that they even arranged to take over the Executive Building the day before the election. They counted their chickens before they were hatched.

A Government Member: They were going to win 48 seats.

Mr BOOTH: Yes. They finished with 32 seats. When one looks at the members of the Labor Party, one wonders how they won so many seats. However, I am sure that the electors in Queensland will rectify the situation on the first occasion when they get a pencil and ballot-paper in their hands.

I return to what I was saying about the escalation of costs in primary industry. That is something the ALP should be looking at, because, if costs continue to escalate, people will be forced out of primary industry and members of the Labor Party will have to pay a lot more for their food. They will not have enough money to hire the taxi of the member for Brisbane Central. Some costing should be carried out to see whether primary industry can be helped.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr BOOTH: The policies of the Hawke Government are exacerbating the situation in which primary industry finds itself.

The pages of history reveal that not one nation has remained a great nation once it abandoned its primary industry. Primary industry is a sheet anchor for any nation.

An Opposition Member: I do not know why you do not look after primary industries better.

Mr BOOTH: Although I am on the side that looks after them, I would like to look after them a little better.

If primary industry is to survive, hold this country together and maintain its exporting ability, it must be able to compete. Any industry that is forced to export, such as the sugar industry and the pig industry, finds that it cannot survive with the increased costs involved in exporting.

Primary industry is the life-blood of my electorate and of this country. I assure honourable members on the Opposition benches that although they might think that primary industry will continue to carry the burden for ever, it will not. Primary industry suffers from the very heavy impact of taxes applied to fuel, fertilizer, spare parts and capital equipment. The taxes on those articles are killing primary industry. It cannot pass those costs on, because it is at the end of the line.

The member for Bundaberg said that Queensland should have the cheapest bread and milk in Australia. He said everything should be cheap, and he expects primary industry to produce cheap commodities. Queensland has a tropical to semi-tropical climate that makes the cost of some primary products higher.

Honourable members should do the best they can for Queensland and for Australia. If they ensure that assistance is given to primary industry, they will be doing just that.

Mr UNDERWOOD (Ipswich West) (8.48 p.m.): In speaking in this debate, I should like to discuss the Cape Tribulation National Park.

Today the Labor Party called for a halt to all road-works in the area until a complete management plan for the Cape Tribulation National Park is available for public scrutiny. Members of the Opposition do not believe that the park should be opened to the public until sufficient staff are appointed to make it fully operational. The bulldozing of the road through the area without any regard to environmental, economic management or law enforcement impacts is grossly irresponsible.

Members of the Labor Party recognise that the Cape Tribulation area is the largest refuge of humid tropical lowland rain forest remaining in Australia and believe that it must be protected for the benefit of this and future generations. We further recognise that the area is invaluable as an economic asset if it is properly managed, because rain forests are at the top of the sight-seeing list for most interstate and international tourists. To substantiate that argument, I shall quote from an article that appeared in "The Courier-Mail" in July this year under the headline "National parks: A \$100 million boost to Queensland's economy"

The opening paragraph states—

"Business and general economic benefits well in excess of \$100m a year will stem from the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service's \$9m-a-year budget."

That is a factor in excess of 10 in the profit to Queensland. The article goes on—

"For the clarity of that conclusion we have to thank three people in particular. The Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service's deputy director (technical), Mr Clive Price; a Gatton Agricultural College lecturer who specialises in nature reserves and wildlife management, Mr Bob Beeton; and the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation's chairman, Sir Frank Moore.

Mr Price summed up the situation in the title of a paper he delivered recently to a Cardwell conference of tourism operators, local body representatives and conservation groups.

He called it 'Nature-based tourism — the economic pot of gold'."

Besides those people and members of the Australian Labor Party who believe that immense wealth can be gained economically, environmentally and by way of creating jobs in Queensland from national parks, the Premier himself believes it.

I have here an article from "The Cairns Post" of 14 June 1980—it pays to keep files—under the headline "National park for Cape Tribulation". That article states—

"The Queensland Government would declare a new national park in the Cape Tribulation region north of Cairns to preserve one of the most valuable and spectacular areas of rainforest in the world, the Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, said last night.

He made the announcement in Cairns at the completion of the second World Wilderness Congress.

Mr Bjelke-Petersen said the new nature reserve would cover more than 14 000 ha taking in most of the luxuriant tropical rainforest along a 47 km stretch of coastal wilderness between the Daintree and Bloomfield rivers.

"The area provides a living museum of plant and animal species in what is one of the few remaining examples of undisturbed coastal rainforests in the world.'"

A Government Member interjected.

Mr UNDERWOOD: It is amazing that the Government member on the back bench is interjecting. The phrases and words used by the Premier on that occasion are the same as those used more recently by the greenies, whom the Premier condemned this morning.

The article continues—

"The Premier said a dense mantle of rainforest in the proposed park enveloped the Great Dividing Range and extended down its slopes to fringe white, sandy beaches, punctuated by creeks and rivers.

'The park will provide an outstanding example of Queensland's wild heritage,' Mr Bjelke-Petersen said.

Agreement on creation of the new nature reserve was reached this week at discussions between the National Parks Minister, Mr Gibbs, and the chairman of the Douglas Shire Council, Cr Andrews.

'The vision of the council will allow all the generations of the future to appreciate this breathtaking example of nature's work,' the Premier said."

I could not have put it any better myself. The article goes on to say—

"Mr Bjelke-Petersen predicted the new park would prove a drawcard for visitors from all over the world and attract investors willing to establish first class tourist lodge accommodation in the area.

He said Queensland's National Parks and Wildlife Service would construct walking tracks and camping facilities designed to encourage use of the park by family groups seeking nature-based recreation activities."

Mr Lingard: I'll guarantee you have never ever been there. I'll bet you have never seen tropical rain forest.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I have been there and seen it on a number of occasions.

The Premier's comments were followed up in the following year by the then Minister for Tourism and National Parks (Mr Elliott), who has since been sacked from Cabinet. When commenting on the declaration of the park as it is known today, he said in greater detail what the Premier had said in the previous year when making a promise not only to Queensland but to the world. He said—

"A huge tract of North Queensland rainforest that's been compared to the jungles of Brazil was today declared National Park.

National Parks Minister, Tony Elliott said the declaration of more than 14,000 hectares of luxuriant and scientifically significant rainforest north of Cairns—would be welcomed world-wide.

Mr. Elliott said the newly-declared area, between the Daintree and Bloomfield Rivers, had been amalgamated with existing parks to form the Cape Tribulation National Park—embracing more than 17,000 hectares and including some of the few remaining examples of undisturbed—"

there is that word "undisturbed" again—

"coastal rain forest in the world."

That word was used by the Premier, the former Minister, and today by the greenies, as the Premier stated in a derogatory way. The press statement further states—

"Mr Elliott said: 'There's nothing to compare it with anywhere in Australia.'"

That is what the ALP said, too. The statement continues—

"'It's been justly compared with the Brazilian rainforests, with scenery that's equally spectacular. But in terms of plant species, the Cape Tribulation National Park is considered by biologists to be one of the richest areas on the globe.'

He said—the new park was an outstanding example of Queensland's and Australia's wild heritage and its declaration would attract international attention at a time when many of the wet coastal rainforests of the world had disappeared.

He saw the new park as being a valuable source of scientific study as well as a drawcard for both domestic and overseas visitors.

The declaration ratified a promise of the Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, to the 1980 World Wilderness Congress.

Mr. Elliott said that there was now about 1.6 million hectares of national park north of Cairns.

He said a management plan for Cape Tribulation was now being prepared."

Mr Katter: If it is so lovely, how are people going to get in to see it without a road?

Mr UNDERWOOD: The Minister has only just entered the Chamber. He has not been here all the time. Honourable members have heard his clear thinking and his elucidation during the last few days. I would not take on board any comments from the Minister in view of the statements that he has made about the people of Queensland.

Mr Katter: You still haven't answered my question.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I will come to it in a moment. I have 40 minutes.

As I have said, the press statement continues—

“He said a management plan for Cape Tribulation was now being prepared.”

It must be borne in mind that this management plan was promised on 6 August 1981 by the former Minister. The press release further states—

“‘There’s already a quite high visitor rate to the region and I’m keen to make the National Parks and Wildlife’s presence felt in the area as soon as possible’, he added.”

Recent events, which I will outline, have shown that the promises made by the respective Ministers have been broken. The action that has been approved, encouraged, and paid for in part by the State Government will allow the pillaging and looting of the flora and fauna of this magnificent national park. Vandals and lesser beings, such as fire-bugs, shooters and litterers, will be allowed into the area because a road—or should I call it a track—will be pushed through the heart of that park. When the cacophony stops, the Minister might listen. The question that he asked before is being answered.

Mr Katter: I am not very interested in your speech.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Of course the Minister is not interested in things that are of great importance to the State. He is not interested in the economic welfare of the State, particularly in the north.

The road is being pushed through the heart of the national park. Pillagers and looters will be able to rip the guts out of the park, whereas now they are confined to the periphery. Later they will be allowed to enter the area in four-wheel-drive vehicles. They will be able to remove the flora and fauna. Those persons could be small-time operators or big-time professional crooks.

It is a well-known fact that people travel to the north for various reasons, such as holidays, and expeditions. They find a nice little grove containing stag-horns and other epiphytes. They put them in the back of their wagons, bring them home and sell them for a tidy sum.

The Minister said that he was concerned about the smuggling of flora and fauna out of the area. The State Government has given permission for the uninhibited exploitation and ruination of this wonderful park.

Mr Katter: Didn’t you read the report?

Mr UNDERWOOD: I am just getting to that, because it backs up exactly what I have been saying.

The annual report of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service for the year ended 30 June 1983 was presented to the Parliament yesterday by the Minister. On page 8, point 4 states—

“Concern continued at the theft of native plants, vandalism, the presence of domestic pets on parks, the taking of native birds and animals and problems caused by flying foxes, crows and some other birds.”

That concern is expressed not once in this report but on a number of occasions. Because there is no management plan, insufficient staff, insufficient vehicles and insufficient back-up resources, those things will continue to happen. Certainly those things happen now before the service has the control of the massive Cape Tribulation National Park. Those are not the words of outsiders or the Opposition; they are the words contained in a report tabled by the Minister. The Minister probably has not read the report, so he would not be able to comment on it. If he has read it, he is covering up or does not understand it. He can take his pick of those options I have just given him or he can stand later in this debate and justify himself.

For the benefit of honourable members I will now quote from page 23 of the annual report as follows—

“Cairns region
National parks

The year was a difficult one for park administration in the far north Queensland region, which is administered from Cairns.

In the face of sharply declining resources of staff and maintenance ability, and a continuing acute shortage of vehicles, the energies of the region were consumed in what was basically a holding operation, with little room for new initiatives.

Numbers of staff on parks fell by 10 per cent following the decision that there were to be no replacements for those who left. Transfers to other regions had no reverse movement.

Increased responsibilities have not brought an increased allocation of vehicles. An estimated 20 per cent of total man-hours available to wages staff within the region have been lost as a result. Three major park areas are now operating without vehicles, and only three parks have an adequate allocation.

The overseer responsible for the Cape Tribulation, Mossman Gorge, Barron Gorge and Davies Creek National Parks provides the extreme example of difficulties caused by lack of transport operating from Cairns with vehicles borrowed whenever he can."

He has to borrow a vehicle to inspect one of the largest parks in the world, yet the Government intends to open it up so that any Tom, Dick or Harry can go there to pillage and loot it. In other words, there will be absolutely no supervision. The Government intends to open up the treasury and let everybody walk in without posting a guard. It is both a treasury of nature and a financial treasury.

Mr Katter: You are absurd. We trust the Queensland people.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Can I quote the Minister on that?

Mr Katter: Yes.

Mr UNDERWOOD: In what way does the Minister trust them? Does he trust the Aboriginal people of north Queensland?

Mr Katter: Yes, I most certainly do.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Then why did he make those horrific statements about them recently?

I will move from the management of the park to the management of the flora and fauna of the park and quote from the section of the annual report headed "Wildlife Management". It reads—

"The Wildlife Management Section is responsible for caretaking the fauna and flora of Queensland and carries this out by monitoring and regulating the harvest of open season species, enforcing legislation and by encouraging the public to adopt an enlightened attitude towards fauna

Responsibilities such as regulatory and advisory inspections, issue of permits and field patrols over broad areas, demand more staff to carry out the task effectively and promptly. Minimum two-man patrols and five-day-a-week offices for permit issue are not possible at present.

Five full-time overseer staff and a part-timer assist rangers but cannot be expected to assume all of the often demanding legislative responsibilities."

That is an obvious reference to the supervision of national parks, particularly at Cape Tribulation.

Mr Borbidge: There will be a Budget tomorrow. You might find out a bit more then.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Why did the Government decrease staff numbers by 10 per cent in a year prior to an election, when all the goodies are passed round? Everyone knows that the Budget in a year after an election is very dry, as there is not much in the bottom of the barrel.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr UNDERWOOD: That is hypocritical. I will be interested to see how the Minister's portfolio fares in the Budget tomorrow. Even one of his own staff members appeared on the news tonight challenging it. He has put his job on the line. I will be interested to see what happens to him. His name was very long and I cannot pronounce it, but members should be able to see the segment if they go to the library.

Under the heading "Police fauna squad" the report states—

"Public awareness of fauna legislation has increased reported incidents in south-east Queensland limiting the squad's time in areas like the far north."

All members know that the far north is the area that is pillaged of flora and fauna by smugglers and looters, yet the police Fauna Squad has difficulty getting to the area.

I now want to deal with that part of the report headed "Research and planning" I point out here that when Opposition members questioned the Minister this morning about management plans, he did not know anything about them. He discovered that he was on toast and had to work out what was actually in the report of his own department. On page 26 under the heading "Planning Services" the report states—

"Wet tropical coast: Immediate development of Service infrastructure and recreation areas on Cape Tribulation National Park has been the initial study of an in-Service group. A draft report is being prepared."

Members might remember that a few moments ago I referred to the former Minister (Mr Elliott), who was sacked, saying in mid-1981 that a report was then being prepared. Now, two years later, the same statement has been made. Today the Minister said to the media that he thought there was a report somewhere. In the middle of an issue that has been going on for a couple of days the Minister does not know a thing about it. What has he been doing? I suspect he has been doing nothing, or he just cannot handle the job.

I want to deal with research and planning because when a major world asset is being dealt with, as the Premier and the former Minister have said, there must be proper planning and research. Under the heading "Reserve Management Planning" the report states—

"While many projects in regard to Reserve Management Planning throughout the state are current, the reduction in available planning staff from four man-years to under one man-year from early 1982 to June 1983 has meant a substantial delay in action and completion of management plans. The more complex planning project necessitating greater detail consultation has also attributed to the reduced output."

Mr Katter: Mr Scott is there with you. He will tell you that he wants that road to go through to Cape Tribulation.

Mr UNDERWOOD: The member for Cook can speak for himself, and he can do that very well. The Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs knows that the area is not in Mr Scott's electorate. He has made his views well known.

Mr Katter: I notice he is very quiet on this subject.

Mr UNDERWOOD: He has not kept very quiet on the subject.

Mr Scott: You weren't in the House today.

Mr UNDERWOOD: No, the Minister was out on the grog somewhere. That is his problem. That is why he is so chirpy tonight.

Mr KATTER I rise to a point of order. The honourable member said that I was out of the House all day on the grog. Firstly, I was not out of the House all day, and, secondly, I do not drink, unlike him.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I cannot smell his breath, so I will withdraw it. The report continues—

"Other areas of planning in the Service are taking considerably more effort and reserve management planning is undertaken primarily as interim solutions to many complex problems."

Interim solutions serve their purpose.

The problem is that we have a major reserve—a "global asset", in the words of the Premier and a former Minister—but we do not have the staff, the vehicles and other back-up resources necessary to supervise what is already open to the public. Yet it is to be opened further so that everyone can come in and wreak havoc.

One of the major problems is lack of supervision of decisions of this kind. Decision-making by this Government in recent times, as every piece of legislation amply portrays, has been by way of regulation and Order in Council, without supervision. Decisions are being made without reference to Parliament, although Parliament has a Subordinate Legislation Committee.

Yesterday, the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts, who is newly appointed, tabled, amongst other things, a proclamation under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975-1982, which was gazetted on 20 August this year; Orders in Council under the Fauna Conservation Act, 1974-1979, gazetted on 18 June this year; various matters under the Land Act gazetted on 13 August, 17 September, 15 September, 1 October and 8 October; Orders in Council under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975-1982, gazetted on 20 August, 3 September, 17 September, 24 September, 22 October and 29 October; and by-laws under the Queensland Museum Act gazetted on 24 September. At the same time, he tabled various reports. Most of those matters were gazetted after Parliament adjourned on 9 August this year.

One of the documents I have referred to provides a glaring example, across the board, of lack of ministerial activity. I refer to the Order in Council of 16 June 1983 under the Fauna Conservation Act, gazetted on 28 June. It dealt with an open season on various fauna—ducks in particular. The open season was from 2 July 1983 to 13 August 1983, both inclusive. If the Subordinate Legislation Committee had disallowed that Order in Council, how could we have reversed the activities allowed under it? How could we have put the ducks back on the pond? That may appear to be a silly or facetious example, but it is typical. In many instances Orders in Council are tabled six, seven or eight months after they have been gazetted.

I come now to the next point relative to how this sordid business has been boiling up, and will continue to boil up. I have illustrated how the Government allowed certain things under the system established by its numbers, and the acquiescence of the Liberal Party.

I will now present the background to the murky dealings in this affair relative to the major asset I referred to earlier. I am dealing with how the National Party and the former coalition National-Liberal Government corrupted and subverted the system of government. I am referring to million-dollar land deals in the rain-forest area. A Swiss-based development company is making millions of dollars out of one-hectare rural retreat subdivisions in the rain forests of far-north Queensland. I know that this particular area is south of the park, but I will show that an area I am concerned about is north of the park. That is where the road is relevant. It is quite a story.

I repeat that a Swiss-based development company is making millions of dollars out of one-hectare rural retreat subdivisions in the rain forests of far-north Queensland, north of the Daintree River, in the Douglas shire. These 200-million-year-old forests have been subdivided into hundreds of blocks for speculators, who will make little, if any, money from their investments compared with the developers.

The company, Southedge Daintree Pastoral Company, has sold \$5m worth of land in the last 12 months, and in the last year has subdivided a further 500 1-hectare rural residential blocks worth at least \$12m. However, a recent administrative investigation by the Queensland Parliamentary Commissioner, to which I will refer later, found that the decision of the Douglas Shire Council in relation to rezoning approvals had been "deficient" and, in one case, had been motivated by "irrelevant considerations".

In 1980, the Douglas Shire Council submitted a town plan for State Government approval. As is normal practice, it included objections from the public, with council opinion on the objections. The council had recommended that most of the area north of the Daintree River, with the exception of Crown land, should be zoned "rural general farming". However, one of the objectors to the town plan before was George Quaid, a real estate owner and manager-secretary to the Southedge Daintree Pastoral Company.

By influencing Cabinet members, the owners of the Southedge Daintree Pastoral Company had secured promises that 1 508 hectares of their land could be rezoned "rural residential". Hence, the Minister for Local Government (Mr Hinze) directed the council to alter its town plan accordingly.

The council protested at this rezoning, since some of the land was potential sugar-growing areas. As a result, in February 1981, the council resolved to "negotiate" with Quaid "since Cabinet had directed council to rezone". That can be traced back to the council minutes of 17 February 1981.

The chairman of the council, Councillor Andrews, who is now deceased—by the way, he was a member of the National Party—expressed the opinion that a compromise acceptable to council would be that the areas of land above 12½ per cent slope could be rezoned "rural residential". I refer to the council meeting of 17 February 1981. However, Mr Quaid argued that this was not sufficient land allocation for his company. In addition, he argued that no-one had demonstrated the value of the land for sugar production and, furthermore, that Mr Prescott's subdivision of "rural residential", known as Camelot Stage 1, had sold out, which proved the existence of demand for rural residential blocks.

Therefore, he requested—

- (1) The creation of a new zone, that is, "rural horticulture";
- (2) Subdivisional by-laws so that all lands with greater than a 12½ per cent slope, both "rural horticulture" and "rural agriculture" could be subdivided to one hectare; and
- (3) In total, 2 716 hectares, that is, 774 hectares "rural residential", 419 hectares "rural agriculture" and 1 323 hectares "rural horticulture", be recommended for rezoning.

That is almost twice the amount originally directed by the Minister.

These changes to the town plan were agreed to in a special council meeting in early March 1981, despite the objection of one councillor, who feared the problems of subdivision on steep slopes in areas that the Department of Primary Industries had assessed as unstable and potentially hazardous for land slips and soil erosion. However, Mr Quaid argued "that his Company had found the best use of its land", since "they had tested the market" for rural residential subdivisions, and that the council would benefit more from increased rate collection than sugar production. I refer to the minutes of that council meeting on 10 March 1981.

At the same council meeting, the Southedge Daintree Pastoral Company, firstly, offered to pay all costs of the visit to the Minister for plan approval, and, secondly, requested that Mr Prescott's land, Camelot Stage 2, be approved for rezoning, and I shall refer to that later.

All discussions between the company and the council were held in private, and the final recommendations to the Minister were made without reference to the public, whose last opportunity to place objections to the town plan was almost two years previously.

The effect of the changes was virtually a new town plan. In particular, the introduction of a new zone "rural horticulture", as well as a subdivisional by-law that allowed all land in the shire on slopes greater than 12½ per cent to be subdivided into 1 hectare blocks, had far-reaching consequences for the whole shire, since there are many steep hills and ranges in a rural-based zoning. As a result, when the council approved the proposed changes, residents wrote to the council requesting a deputation and seeking information in May 1981. A list of questions was presented to council, and over 40 letters from individuals objecting to the proposed amendments requested that the amendments should be made public and that the council should receive official objections prior to final gazettal.

Nevertheless, the requests were ignored by the council and it failed to answer some questions asked by residents in their deputation. When further representations were made, the council advised that "the matter was closed and that further correspondence on such matters will be of no advantage". That is in the minutes of the council meeting held on 6 October 1981.

The residents then sent information to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations in May 1981 and April 1982. He replied in May 1981 and then, later, in January 1983. In his letter of May 1981, the commissioner declined to intervene until the council had answered the deputation's questions. However, his latest letter indicated that the council was at fault in its decision-making procedures. I will read that later.

Since gazettal of the town plan in June 1981, the council has approved approximately 700 one to 2 ha rural residential blocks in the Parish of Alexandra which have a "rural residential" zoning as well as "rural horticulture", "rural agriculture" and "rural general farming" zonings. Many of these blocks are on slopes that are greater than 12½ per cent and densely forested.

In order that one ha rural residential subdivisions could be approved below minimum town plan size of 2 ha, the council used its discretionary powers under clause (5) of its subdivisional by-laws. The same applied for below minimum allotment size on "rural general farming" zoned areas.

To avoid any legal challenge for excessive use of its discretionary powers under clause (5), the council advertised in May 1983 to amend the subdivisional by-laws. However, since the council had failed to approve the amendments in a council meeting before advertising in "The Cairns Post", it readvertised in July 1983. This caused some confusion for objectors.

From February 1982 until March 1983, the Southedge Daintree Pastoral Company has subdivided and registered 543 blocks of land worth at least \$12m. Some of this land is of prime conservation value, with extremely rare rain forest communities. In addition, during that same period 147 blocks, which were mainly one ha blocks, were sold for \$3,300,000. As well, two blocks were sold for \$360,000, making total sales of almost \$4m. This land is reputed to have been bought for \$200 per ha.

Another entrepreneur subdivided his farming land which was zoned "rural general farming" into 24 one ha blocks, approval being granted by the council using its discretionary powers of clause (5), which he then sold for \$400,000 within a month of registration. There are other cases similar to that one.

In the last year, the council has processed 43 subdivisional applications made on behalf of Southedge Daintree Pastoral Company and a smaller number by other individuals for the coastal area of the Parish of Alexandra.

Directors of the Southedge Daintree Pastoral Company, Arne Peterson and George Quaid, used their influence with certain State Cabinet members to gain approval and favoured treatment of their objection to the proposed town plan.

When the council strongly protested against the company's proposal for 1 508 ha "rural residential" zoned land, the persuasive powers of the directors, especially George Quaid, and the direction from Cabinet, convinced the council to approve twice as much land—2 716 ha—for rural residential development than Cabinet originally intended. Therefore, that company, by pursuing its own profit, is directly responsible for the alienation and degradation of rain-forested lands north of the Daintree River.

The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) directed the council to alter the town plan, and so upheld the developer's objection.

In addition, the Minister and Cabinet approved of the new arrangements for the town plan, that is—

- (a) new zone—"rural horticulture";
- (b) subdivisional by-laws—1 ha on all lands zoned "rural horticulture" and "rural agriculture" if slopes are greater than 12½ per cent; and
- (c) deletion of the by-law to protect areas of high historical and scientific interest,

and decided that no further public involvement would be called for. That is the direct opposite to the Premier's promise to the world congress. Therefore Cabinet and, in particular, the Minister for Local Government have direct responsibility, by approving the Douglas shire town plan with amendments which could have severe consequences both for persons buying land from developers (unsuitable soils on steep slopes in high rainfall area and also flood-prone land) and for loss of some of the most scientifically important rain forest communities in Australia. The 1 400 ha national park in that area is not fully representative of some important rain forest communities.

The council could have politically resisted the changes to the town plan and only submitted parts of it for gazettal. One councillor, the only one to vote against the amendments, proposed that the town plan, with the exception of the area under question in the parish of Alexandra, be submitted for approval. The motion lapsed for want of a seconder.

The council had ample opportunities to drive a hard bargain with both the developer and the Minister. Even after gazettal of the plan, the council could have refused 1-ha development, since the minimum allotment sizes in town plan zones were not met by subdivisional plans, but instead it chose to approve by using clause (5) stating exceptional circumstances.

In addition, the parliamentary commissioner has stated that the decision-making procedures by the council were deficient and indicate bad advice given to the council on several occasions. Therefore, incompetence by the council has left it open to manipulation by the developer and intimidation by the State Government.

In time, the council will have to provide services for the 3 000 to 4 000 residents of these subdivisions and at great expense to rate-payers for the whole shire, since the developer has not had to provide them. In addition, the present costs that the council must meet are numerous because of the problems of absentee owners (for example, road maintenance, pest and weed control and fire hazards.)

The Southedge Daintree Pastoral Co. P/L has two shareholders, Peterdane Holding Ltd of Basle, Switzerland (3 281 302 shares) and George Quaid Jnr of Mossman (1 share). The directors are Arne Pedersen (Toowoomba), George Quaid Jnr (the manager and secretary of the company) and R. Davis, solicitor (no shares).

In 1975, the company owned 353 491 ha of freehold land and 171 425 ha of leasehold, most of which is in northern Queensland.

Allegations have been made of State interference with both the Douglas Shire Council and Mareeba Shire Council on behalf of Southedge Daintree Pastoral Co.

In 1964, the manager of the company, George Quaid, was chairman of the Douglas Shire Council. There is more to come.

(Time expired.)

Mr NEAL (Balonne) (9.28 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to participate in this Address in Reply debate. In so doing, I pledge my loyalty and that of my constituents in the electorate of Balonne to the Throne in the person of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

I congratulate His Excellency the Governor (Sir James Ramsay) and Lady Ramsay on the manner in which they uphold their high office and on the dignity and decorum with which they carry out their duties. They have certainly endeared themselves to the people of Queensland and have done much to uphold the system of government that recognises the Queen as its head and strengthens the ties with the monarchy.

We should be proud of our heritage, our flag and our traditions. Certainly I am not ashamed of them. We are only deluding ourselves if we think we can change our past or try to make out that it does not exist. We have a great deal of which to be proud. As someone once said, "We should never despise the traditions of the past, but we should build upon them so that we are better prepared for the future."

I congratulate all new member on their election to this Assembly. I am sure that they come here with high ideals and a genuine desire to change things for the better. It has always been traditional for a new member's maiden speech to be heard in silence. I was led to believe that new members were expected not to provoke too much controversy. I believe that in this Address in Reply debate some of those members may have flirted with that privilege. However, I wish them well.

I thank the electors of Balonne for again placing their confidence in me. I pay special thanks to my campaign director, Bob Lindores of St George, and all those persons who worked with and assisted me over the years.

I congratulate Mr Speaker on his election to his high office. I am sure that he will give of his best. I also pay tribute to our previous Speaker, Sel Muller, for the excellent job that he did during his term of office. He was a friend of mine. I enjoyed many pleasant times with him. I wish him and his family the best of health and a very happy retirement.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I extend my congratulations to you as Chairman of Committees. I look forward to working very closely with you. The panel of Temporary Chairmen, as well as Mr Speaker, carry out a very demanding job in maintaining and upholding the dignity and decorum that we expect of this Assembly.

I congratulate the honourable member for Pine Rivers for the manner in which she moved the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I congratulate the member for Greenslopes on seconding the motion. A great privilege has been bestowed upon them to be able to do that.

I have listened with a great deal of interest to the contributions of honourable members. I am very pleased to note the positive attitudes of the new Government members. I think that they will make a very worthwhile contribution to the government of this State and to the Parliament.

The member for Cook made his usual vitriolic contribution. In all the time that he has been a member of this Assembly, I have not heard him make one constructive contribution. He usually devotes most of his time to knocking the Government. In fact, he would do the Empire State building proud as its door knocker. He cast reflections on His Excellency the Governor and said that His Excellency had been manipulated by the Premier. Of course, he should be well and truly aware of the fact that the Premier is quite within his right to advise the Governor on certain matters. The ALP is prepared to claim that privilege for the Labor Party in the Federal sphere. Of course, it applies to the State sphere as well. I remind Opposition members of that. It must also be remembered that the Governor did not have to take that advice. Because he chose to do so, the honourable member for Cook made a sordid accusation. He claimed that the Governor should have insisted that the Premier call the House together and immediately announce an election date. There was no constitutional reason why the House had to be recalled. The Government had sufficient funds to continue. The Premier quite rightly announced the election date at the appropriate time.

The election campaign began. One of the interesting aspects of it was the ALP's scare tactic when it set about trying to frighten the public servants and people employed by the Government under contracts and persons providing Government services. It was suggested that they would not be paid and that the Government contracts would not be honoured. That accusation fell flat on its face. The Leader of the Opposition tried to justify those claims when he spoke during this debate.

Unfortunately for the Leader of the Opposition, he discovered that the electors of Queensland were not as gullible as he had thought. Now that the people have made their decision, the Opposition is bellyaching about it. It does not want to accept the decision; it is not happy with the umpire. The Leader of the Opposition is now bleating about the National Party propaganda machine. He claims that it was not because the National Party was voted into power by the people; that it was not as the result of the past performance of good, sound government, of a proven track record; but that it was that infernal National Party propaganda machine. I have never heard such a load of claptrap. It certainly was not because the Labor Party was superior, which was one of its claims. The people of the State quite clearly rejected the ALP.

I now turn to other matters in the Governor's Opening Speech. He referred to State rights as contained in the Constitution, which I believe continue to be under threat from the centralist Labor Government. In fact, there is no doubt about that. I have attended a number of Constitutional Conventions at which the ALP has expressed the view that it seeks the erosion of State rights. Every amendment at those Constitutional Conventions has been centred on giving more power to Canberra and less to the States. When one considers the views of the present Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) as expressed in his 1979 Boyer lecture, one can see that the present Commonwealth Government is heading along that line. He said—

“Australia would be better served by the elimination of the second tier of Government—that is the States—which no longer serve their original purpose and act as a positive impediment to achieving good Government in our current community.”

That is what Mr Hawke thinks of State Governments, so it is quite obvious that State rights are under fire.

Senator Gareth Evans has had much to say on this subject. On one occasion he said—

“Section 96 provides a means of implementing programs in areas where direct legislative power is limited.”

He has also described how section 96 of the Constitution, the section dealing with the grant of powers, was used by the Whitlam Labor Government to impose its policies on the States.

Mr Kruger: You have been belting Whitlam for years.

Mr NEAL: I am quoting Senator Gareth Evans.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Murrumba may not interject unless he is sitting in his correct seat.

Mr NEAL: I am not particularly worried about him. In fact, I am hoping for a few interjections from him later on.

Senator Gareth Evans has also said—

“The Labor Government embraced the established system of tied grants to the States . . . true it is that such grants had never previously been employed to this extent as instruments of Commonwealth influence.”

So the views of the Commonwealth Government on the matter are quite clear. The State Government must strongly resist any attempt to erode the rights of Queensland.

I shall deal with some matters in my own electorate of Balonne. The first one concerns education, a sphere in which the State Government is doing a pretty good job. Contrary to some criticism, progress is being made. Sufficient funds will never be available to satisfy the educational wants of many people, because no matter how much money they are given they still will not be happy. Of course, the department has a budget to stick to and has to keep its priorities in the correct perspective. The Government has been doing that and, in answer to a question this morning, the Minister for Education gave us a run-down of class numbers.

One aspect of education that concerns me is the breaking of the nexus in granting State aid to private schools. The Federal Government now proposes to provide assistance to private schools on a needs basis. The State Government has always treated private schools on an equal footing with State schools.

The worst feature of the Commonwealth's proposal is that many people living in isolated areas have no alternative to sending their children away to private boarding schools. If the Federal Government breaks the nexus, it will penalise those people. Those people pay taxes to the common tax pool. The money is used for the State education of children. Having paid taxes for that purpose, those people then have to pay for the privilege of sending their children away to private schools. The Government should be looking at assisting private schools as much as it can because of the important role that they play in education.

The education facilities in my electorate are of a very high standard, and I compliment the Minister for Works and Housing on the job he has done. A new home economics block has just been opened at the St George High School. A new manual arts block is needed there as well. It is planned for construction in the not too distant future. The high school at Miles is in need of both a manual arts block and a home economics block. At present pupils in those classes have to walk through the town to the primary school and use its facilities.

Some of the small schools in my electorate have been causing concern, particularly the one at Daymar. It appears that, owing to low numbers and a lack of prosperity in the local rural industries, the school will close at the end of the school year. I hope that the Minister for Education will not act too hastily to shift the existing facilities. I have seen an overnight return to prosperity, particularly in the wool-growing areas. I recall that in 1973 many people were in dire financial straits, but wool prices increased dramatically in a very short time. People who, because of their financial problems, had not been employing labour soon found themselves with good solid equity in their enterprises on which they were able to borrow funds from the bank. The value of their stock increased and they were able to re-employ labour. The need for small schools can change almost overnight if there is a return to prosperity in an industry that leads to the employment of more labour.

I wish to touch on the roads in my electorate. They are very important, because they are the arteries along which the life-blood of the local communities flows. Unfortunately, this year there have been a number of floods in the electorate. In fact, parts of my electorate are flooded at present. Road foundations have been undermined by all the water and a tremendous amount of restoration and repair needs to be done by local authorities. Because of that, their capital works programs have not progressed as might be hoped. That creates further problems.

I travel widely on the highways throughout my electorate. I have noted after travelling on a fairly good surface on one day that two or three days later massive pot-holes have developed because moisture got under the foundations.

The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing is very understanding. Some of the councils in my area are flat out on restoration work. I appreciate the importance of a local authority employing people from local communities. If it can be avoided, contractors and gangs from outside ought not to be employed on local work. Road maintenance is an ongoing process. Councils are geared to carry it out and we should look after them as much as possible.

The honourable member for Warwick referred earlier to the collapse of the Queensland Grain Growers Association. I represent a very large grain-growing area. The collapse of the association has very serious implications. If it is not rescued we will lose not only an organisation that has put a bottom into grain prices, but also an organisation that has given tremendous service to its members and many other rural producers who are not members of the association.

The Grain Growers Association provided favourable insurance cover for its members. It provided a lobby to the Federal Government on tariffs and various other matters, and it intervened on behalf of its members on the matter of grain freight rates.

The member for Warwick spoke earlier of his concern about the price of spare parts and the escalation of costs in the rural sector. The Grain Growers Association was particularly active in ensuring that companies backed their products with plenty of spare parts. It also intervened in the honouring of warranty commitments on machinery. It had an input into the guide-lines for oil exploration on rural holdings. It has been a very important primary producers' organisation.

Mr Casey: Why did it not operate under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act?

Mr NEAL: The honourable member for Mackay will have to ask the association about that. I am sure it will be prepared to make a decision on it. To my knowledge, it was not considered in the past. It may be worth while for the association to think about it. I hope that the rescue operation succeeds and that, if required, Government assistance will be forthcoming.

Mr Casey: The association would always have had protection and assistance if it had operated under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act.

Mr NEAL: That may be so, but many primary industry organisations do not operate under that Act. The association is one of them.

If the association does go down the tube, the tragedy will be that there is no industry organisation. The growers may join other primary producer organisations that do not specialise in the grain-growing industry. To get such an organisation going again would require starting from scratch, and I dread the thought of such a move. It would have to rent an office, employ a secretary and buy a typewriter—the whole bit. It would take a long time for the organisation to get back to where it is today.

Another matter that I wish to mention briefly concerns Telecom's Countrywide Calling program. I am not very happy about this program that Telecom is introducing in the more sparsely populated areas of the State. I believe that it is the right of any person in Australia to have local call access to his nearest community service centre, which normally contains a hospital, doctor and other services.

A number of meetings of people who are concerned about losing that local call access have been held throughout the State. Of course, Telecom has restored local call access to some subscribers. I refer to an article that appeared in "The Queensland Graingrower" recently, which stated—

"Country resident local call access to their service town has been restored conditionally, a spokesman for Telecom's Countrywide Calling program, Ron Balding, said this week.

He said also that it would be Telecom's decision as to which was the service town in respective areas."

That is very important. If Telecom is to say to people that a small town that has an hotel and one store is their service town, they will be penalised for living in that area. Surely those people should have local call access to a service town of reasonable proportions.

Overall, Telecom has provided an excellent service to many people. However, it is applying the decision that it has made on local call access to people who live within a 32-km radius of a service centre. Calls to that centre will be charged at the local call rate. Calls to areas outside that radius will be charged at the metered call rate.

A number of residents in the Goondiwindi area, who have the STD area code 076, held a meeting and kicked up a shine about this matter. They held a further meeting, which was attended by a Mr West from Melbourne. I have forgotten his correct title, but he is a very high official in Telecom. He restored the local call access for people connected to Mundine, Toobeah, Lundavra and The Gums, which happens to be my telephone centre. That sounded very good and the people were appreciative of the fact that they would be charged only the local call rate when they made calls to their nearest business centre. I might add that I live a neat 32 km from the local town. Of course, it is a double-edged sword. Although Telecom says that the Countrywide Calling program will give people cheaper access to certain areas, it seems that the cheaper access will be to areas that people do not want to contact. People have no affinity with many of the areas.

After my local call access was restored, I called my local town to get some shearers to crutch some sheep for me. I paid the local call rate to call the town. The shearer to whom I spoke said, "I will ring you back when I find a few mates." When he rang back he was charged for a metered call.

Subscribers in Ipswich can call Brisbane for the cost of a local call. It is unreasonable that people in country areas are not able to make a local call beyond the 32 km limit. In rural areas, the telephone is not a luxury; it is a necessity. In the final analysis, it is the Federal Government that has a responsibility to give subscribers, wherever they may live in this country, a local call rate.

Motion—That the Address in Reply be adopted (Mrs Chapman)—agreed to.

SUPPLY

Constitution of Committee

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

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty."

Motion agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS

Constitution of Committee

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

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty."

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Presentation

Mr SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I propose to present to His Excellency the Governor, at Government House, tomorrow morning at 9.30 o'clock, the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech agreed to on this day, and I shall be glad to be accompanied by the mover and the seconder and such other honourable members as care to be present.

ANZ EXECUTORS & TRUSTEE COMPANY BILL

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to supplement by legislation of the State of Queensland the ANZ Executors & Trustee Company Act 1983 of the State of Victoria which provides, inter alia, for the transfer to ANZ Executors & Trustee Company Limited of the trust business of The Trustees Executors and Agency Company Limited; to amend the Trustee Companies Act 1968-1980 in a certain particular; and for related purposes; and that so much of the Standing Orders relating to private Bills be suspended so as to enable the said Bill to be presented and passed through all its stages as if it were a public Bill.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (9.58 p.m.): I move—

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

Generations of Queenslanders have been served by the statutory trustee companies which have operated in this State since 1888. The Acts of Parliament which govern these companies have been amended by successive Parliaments with the intention of providing stability and security to an industry which provides a necessary service to the community.

The traditional role of the trustee company has been in the area of our succession laws. Advantage has been seen in having a corporation act as executor and administrator of deceased estates.

Some of the benefits which arise from the statutory creation of the companies were related to the fact that a company itself had perpetual succession. Thus, in cases where testators established continuing trusts there was certainty in their administration over an indefinite period.

Another advantage was that estates and trusts could be administered by a number of servants of the company, each with an expertise in a particular area of investment. In this way the testator or donor was not restricted in the types of investment which he authorised to be made on behalf of his beneficiaries.

Onerous responsibilities are placed on the shoulders of every trustee. The whole of the law relating to the administration of trusts depends upon the exercise of the utmost good faith by those entrusted with those duties and responsibilities. It is because of this emphasis upon personal responsibility that there would, in the absence of legislation, be no real place for a corporation in such a field.

Consequently, the failure of the Trustees Executors and Agency Company Limited, a company incorporated in Victoria and approved to act as a trustee company in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, has been viewed by the Queensland Government with grave concern. The company itself was a relatively new entrant into the trustee company area in Queensland, having been granted approval to commence business in 1977. In the southern States it was a well respected company that had operated as a statutory trustee company since 1878, being the first trustee company in Victoria.

The industry itself is one which is labour intensive and calls for the employment of specialists such as accountants, investment advisers and solicitors. In an attempt to increase profitability, and to provide increased returns to shareholders, trustee companies departed from what was the traditional area of operations and became involved in other fields of investment. Relying on the expertise of staff, most companies appear to have become involved in investments on the short-term money market, an area within their expertise.

In the case of TEA, however, the company moved into an area of significant involvement in property development. It was this development that apparently brought about the downfall of the company.

Funds for these high-risk investments came from the company funds, and in order to augment this limited area of capital, TEA, along with other companies, began taking unsecured borrowings from investor clients. Trading on the respectability gained by being afforded the privilege of using the word "trustee" in their corporate name, these borrowings gained a status they would not otherwise have been accorded. As a result, funds flowed into the company to be used in investments of a speculative nature.

For some time, this new direction was financially rewarding; but with the slump in the property market and no diminution of interest rates, liquidity problems arose. What happened is now a matter of public record and was well covered by the daily and financial publications in May, June and July of this year. Receivers and managers were appointed by the Victorian Supreme Court on 13 May and the company was placed in liquidation by the court on 29 July.

Shortly after the appointment of the receivers and managers in May, the trustee business of the failed TEA was put up for sale. A number of tenders was received, with the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited being the successful tenderer.

After the announcement was made, legislation was introduced and passed in the Victorian Parliament to effect the transfer of the trust business and to reflect the detail of the contract entered into between the banking group and the provisional liquidators of TEA.

As a matter of urgency, and in order to protect the interests of Queenslanders, approval was given to the ANZ Executors and Trustee Company Limited to act as a trustee company within Queensland from 21 June 1983. This prompt action did much to restore public confidence and to ensure the continued employment of at least 20 Queenslanders.

Again as a matter of urgency, the Queensland Government took immediate steps to examine the role of trustee companies and the legislation which governs them in this State. An expert committee consisting of Mr G. L. Davies of Queen's Counsel, Mr A. R. Bottomer, a consultant with Hall, Chadwick and Company, chartered accountants, and Mr A. N. Murrell, the then general manager of the Bank of Queensland, was appointed.

The report of that committee has now been received by me, and it is now under detailed examination with a view to introducing legislation into this House next year to ensure that the public faith placed in statutory trustee companies is not again misplaced. As well as taking this approach within Queensland, an examination is presently being conducted by the National Companies and Securities Commission into the affairs of the failed company.

Mr Speaker, I mentioned earlier that the cause of the failure of TEA had been the losses sustained in the investment of company funds. Some difficulties did arise, however, in relation to some trust funds invested in Queensland common funds.

The principal difficulty in this area was the intermingling of trust funds with company funds during transmission from Brisbane to Melbourne. I might add that, although 20 staff members were employed in the Brisbane office of TEA, the company was effectively run in Melbourne for the purposes of investments.

In order to protect the interests of Queenslanders who invested in these common funds, instructions were given to the Solicitor-General to brief counsel to appear before the Supreme Court in Victoria in hearings relating to these funds.

Most of the difficulties in this area have now been resolved. Some matters, however, are yet to be finalised and proceedings are pending before the Supreme Court of Victoria in this regard.

I have examined in some detail the background to the failure of the trustee company as well as the many steps that have been taken to ensure, firstly, that the beneficiaries of trusts administered by TEA are protected and, secondly, that the future role of trustee companies is closely scrutinised. I have done this for two reasons: firstly, so that honourable members may be aware of the importance placed by this Government in protecting the beneficiaries of trusts; secondly, to allow this Bill to be considered in the light of recent events.

The purpose of this Bill is to supplement by legislation in this State the Victorian ANZ Executors and Trustee Company Act 1983 and to provide for the transfer of the trust business of TEA to the ANZ Executors and Trustee Company Limited.

Under the heads of agreement that were entered into between the ANZ Banking Group and TEA, the sum of \$3m was to be paid for the goodwill of the business in Victoria, \$1m for goodwill in the State of New South Wales and \$500,000 for goodwill in the State of Queensland. Provided that the buyer was able to purchase the trust business in all three States, an additional \$500,000 in goodwill was to be paid.

As I mentioned earlier, the Victorian Act passed all stages and was proclaimed on the 15 June 1983. Legislation was assented to in New South Wales on the 6 October 1983. Consequently, the passage of this legislation will ensure that the additional sum of \$1m is available to TEA.

Some doubt does exist as to the precise manner in which the proceeds from the sale of the trust business will be applied by the liquidators. A legal argument is open that the proceeds of the sale should be distributed to the beneficiaries of trusts held by TEA, as it is a well established principle of the law of trusts that a trustee must account to his beneficiaries for any profit which is made out of dealings with trust moneys. He is regarded as a constructive trustee of those moneys. How far that principle extends to the purchase of the trust business is, at this stage, somewhat uncertain.

The contrary argument to this proposition is that the money is not received by the trustee acting in its capacity as trustee but rather as the vendor of a business. This matter is, of course, essentially one of law, and the liquidator, Mr David Crawford, has indicated that he will seek the directions of the Victorian Supreme Court as to the manner in which these funds should be applied. It may well be that the beneficiaries of the many trusts administered by the company will benefit. If this is not the case, there will be significant benefits to the unsecured creditors of the company.

When the agreement was entered into between the banking group and the provisional liquidators, those parts of the trust business that were to be included in the sale were strictly defined. As far as they are relevant, these have been recognised in the Bill. Those particular items which were excluded from the transfer have again been expressly included.

Effectively, the legislation will provide for the appointment of the new trustee in all instances, save those that are specifically excluded, in place of the old trustee. Provisions relating to the transfer of land and other dealings are included.

Provision is also made for the amendment of the Trustee Companies Act 1968-1980 to reflect the change of the name of the Trustees Executors and Agency Company Limited to TEA (1983) Limited. This change of name was effected by the Victorian legislation.

In view of the special circumstances which exist in this case, it is proposed that no fees will be taken by the Registrar of Titles or Registrar of Dealings in respect of the vesting of any land in the new trustee. As the costs of such transfers would normally be borne by the trust or estate, I do not believe it appropriate that the beneficiaries should suffer in this regard.

The Bill will ensure the continued employment of a number of Queenslanders. It will effectively and cheaply transfer the trust business to the new trustee and it will assist in restoring public confidence in the continued operation of trustee companies. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr R. J. Gibbs, adjourned.

REGISTRATION OF PLANS (STAGE 2) (H.S.P. (NOMINEES) PTY. LIMITED) ENABLING BILL

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to provide for the registration of certain plans each in respect of part of a building on certain land in Surfers Paradise in the State of Queensland; and for related purposes; and that so much of the Standing Orders relating to private Bills be suspended so as to enable the said Bill to be presented and passed through all its stages as if it were a public Bill.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (10.14 p.m.): I move—

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

The Registration of Plans (H.S.P. (Nominees) Pty. Limited) Enabling Act was introduced in 1980 to provide for the separate registration in the Titles Office of plans of the commercial and residential areas of a specific complex, the Paradise Centre.

This complex is situated at the Gold Coast Highway, Cavill Avenue and Hanlan Street, Surfers Paradise. The complex consists of a controlled public car-park, a large shopping centre and a large family entertainment centre, all of which is topped by two tower blocks of residential units.

In 1981 provision was made by an Order in Council for lateral and diagonal easements in addition to the vertical easements provided in the Act.

When the legislation was introduced in 1980 it was indicated that it related only to the development of this particular complex and would be treated as a pilot scheme. Actually, the legislation applied to Stage 1 of the development. It was proposed that the legislation operate as a test for the need or desirability of some of its provisions having a more general application in appropriate legislation. The legislation was supported by both sides of the House. I am advised that the legislation has worked very well in practice and that no complaints have been received in respect of it.

Although no problems have arisen since the implementation of this legislation, it may be premature at this stage to extend similar provisions throughout the State. However, HSP (Nominees) Pty Limited now propose to complete the complex by constructing Stage 2 of the development. Stage 2 comprises a lower commercial area incorporating a shopping plaza, hotel bars and car-park. A 408-room accommodation hotel tower is proposed for the upper level of Stage 2. However, the company desires to have the option open to it to divide the upper level into lots to be sold as separate building units. To facilitate construction of Stage 2 of the complex, this Bill contains similar provisions to those contained in the 1980 Act to cover this further work.

The only additional provisions in this Bill are those relating to lateral and diagonal easements as well as vertical easements. This was the only defect found in the 1980 Act.

The commercial section of Stage 2 will comprise that part of the final building to be described as lower plan 3.

This section will contain an extension of the existing shopping centre through to the Gold Coast Highway and Cavill Avenue, replacements for all of the facilities in the old Surfers Paradise Hotel and convention facilities for approximately 500 people.

The commercial section is being constructed prior to the company's finalising arrangements for development funding for the accommodation tower which will ultimately form upper plan 3.

The Bill will have no application unless the accommodation section is completed before 1 January 2004 and the upper and lower plans registered before that date.

It is essential that the Bill be passed now to enable the developer to confidently invest between \$2m to \$3m in additional foundations and other building components which must be built into the commercial section in anticipation of their being required for the completion of the accommodation section at a future date.

I am advised that there will be some 460 man-years of employment created between now and December 1984 in the construction of the Stage 2 commercial section of Paradise Centre.

When the accommodation tower is able to proceed, at an estimated cost of approximately \$30m, approximately 750 man-years of employment will be created on site on that part of the project.

Of the \$16.5m worth of materials to be used in the accommodation tower, at least one-third will represent wages and salaries. This represents an additional 310 man-years of employment in indirect labour.

Hence, the combined employment benefits of the accommodation tower alone will be the creation of approximately 1 060 man-years of employment, mostly in Queensland. Spread over a two-year construction period, this represents an average of more than 500 jobs being made available for the whole of the two-year period.

Once completed it is anticipated that the commercial section will create approximately 200 permanent new jobs. If the proposed hotel is constructed, it will create a further 400 permanent new jobs. The proposed Stage 2 of the Paradise Centre is a worthwhile project.

Experience to date suggests that the 1980 Act is sound and there appears to be no reason why similar provision should not be introduced to cover Stage 2 of this particular development. I would also add that this legislation appears to be a solid foundation on which to base future legislation having a general application to similar developments throughout the State.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr R. J. Gibbs, adjourned.

BAIL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Bail Act 1980-1982 in a certain particular.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (10.20 p.m.): I move—

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

One of the tasks which was assigned to the Law Reform Commission in the late 1970s was an examination of the law relating to bail.

The draft Bill which was prepared by the Law Reform Commission was considered by the various branches of the profession, judiciary and government before the Bail Bill was introduced into this House in 1980.

Although some new approaches to the question of bail were developed as a result of this examination the vast majority of the principles relating to bail were not altered.

The most significant effect of the legislation was to consolidate into the one statute all of the law relating to bail whereas previously the law had been contained in the Criminal Code, the Justices Act and in other statutes.

The Bail Act was assented to in May 1980 and the changes brought about by that legislation have been in effect for some two and a-half years.

The object of the earlier legislation was both to up-date and consolidate this area of law ensuring that bail was available in proper cases and that the attendance at court of accused persons was facilitated.

It has long been a principle which governs criminal law that no court fees should be taken in relation to criminal cases.

Such a principle ensures ready access to the courts of primary jurisdiction and also to the courts of appellate jurisdiction in order to ensure that justice is open to all Queenslanders. Indeed, the principle was included in the Criminal Code drafted by Sir Samuel Griffiths about 90 years ago.

Section 704 of the Criminal Code provides—

“No fees can be taken in any Court of criminal jurisdiction or before any justice from any person who is charged with an indictable offence for any proceeding had or taken in the Court or before the justice with respect to the charge”

Unfortunately, the protection of section 704 has been removed as a result of the enactment of the Bail Act but only with respect to applications for bail brought pursuant to section 13 of the Bail Act. The protection remains for all applications of bail which are heard in open court.

Those applications which are brought pursuant to section 13 of the Act are heard before a judge of the Supreme Court sitting in chambers, and relate to applications for bail for serious offences.

Apparently fees are presently being charged on this type of application as a result of the interpretation of the Rules of the Supreme Court. The purpose of this amending legislation is to prohibit the charging of court fees for applications brought under section 13 of the Bail Act, thus continuing the principle which has governed the criminal law for many years.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr R. J. Gibbs, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 10.24 p.m.
