

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 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 Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement for the year ended 30 June 1983.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council under the Forestry Act 1959-1982.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Government Expenditure on State Schools; Claims by Member for Chatsworth**

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing) (11.1 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday, in this House, the member for Chatsworth put forward a proposition that purported to show that there is discrimination between State Government spending on State schools in Labor electorates and those in non-Labor electorates. Once again, the member for Chatsworth has clearly displayed either that he does not know how to interpret figures or that he is deliberately out to mislead this House—or both. It is, in fact, another classic example of “Mac-ematics”, one in which the member has taken selected and irrelevant figures to reach a conclusion that suits his own convenience.

Because of the late hour at which I was furnished with a copy of the information on which he based his case, there has not been time to fully assess all aspects of it—which would, in fact, take some considerable time. But what is clear already is this: he has used two sets of figures; what he claims is being spent on Government-owned schools in Labor and non-Labor electorates, and the number of children in these electorates. He has done this for three particular years: 1980-81, 1981-82 and 1982-83.

To reach his conclusions, he has divided the number of children into the spending he cites. The exercise is both amateurish and slapdash. To begin with, he is using both dated and irrelevant information as far as the number of children is concerned. The figures he is using on the number of children concerned do not even relate to the years he pretends to analyse.

The figures he has used are based on the 1976 census, that is, at least four years prior to the earliest year he seeks to relate them to. This blatantly overlooks two important factors: the change in the number of children attending schools from year to year, and the demographic changes within the various areas of the State.

It is nonsense to suggest that populations have remained static in all areas of the State during these years. We have only got to look at the rapid growth in various areas of the State in recent years to see this. Opposition members do not like to admit it. Yet this static situation is clearly implied in the member's so-called analysis.

The third significant point is that the figures used by the member cannot be equated to the number of children in schools. The figures refer to children in the 0-15 years age group. In other words, they include children of infant age—children not yet going to school; and, at the upper end, they do not include older teenage children such as 16, 17 and 18-year-old youths who are attending high schools.

Fourthly, they do not relate to enrolments in State Government schools. They are total figures that would include thousands of children attending non-State schools.

The member for Chatsworth has made much play of the report that he said he received. He said that he referred to the Education Department report on capital works programs in high schools. However, he referred to a draft program prepared late in the calendar year, which has to be further considered before it can be implemented. The points that have to be considered are funds available and actual enrolments at schools as opposed to projected enrolments in the draft program.

The draft report to which the member for Chatsworth referred was one which would have been completed in late 1982. Since then a number of factors, including the priorities from within the Education Department itself, could have altered owing to changing circumstances. For instance, there could be higher than predicted or lower than predicted enrolments at various schools. Construction is now under way at the Moranbah High School to accommodate an additional 200 pupils in 1984. It was not possible, at the time when the draft report to which Mr Mackenroth referred was being compiled, to accurately forecast such a large increase.

I make it quite clear that the spending on schools in Queensland is done on a needs basis and within the funds available to the Works Department for these purposes. The member for Chatsworth is fond of talking about what has not been done in Labor electorates, but he will not mention the substantial spending in Labor electorates in which there has been growth.

Mr Bjelke-Petersen: He ought to go back to school.

Mr WHARTON: He should be back at school. I do not think that he could be taught very much because he is beyond that.

Take the Port Curtis electorate based on Gladstone. During the past three financial years a total of more than \$19m has been spent on education projects in the Port Curtis electorate. That is more than the amount that has been spent on education projects in any other electorate, Labor or non-Labor. Considerable growth has taken place in education facilities in other Labor electorates where needs have expanded.

The Woodridge electorate is the only electorate—and a Labor one at that—in which a new high school was commenced last year. That project follows many millions of dollars spent on new school projects in the same electorate.

In other electorates, such as Cairns, Cook, Mackay, Bundaberg and Ipswich West, considerable expansion of education facilities has occurred in recent years. During 1982-83 and this financial year, work will have begun on six new high schools. Three of them will be in Labor electorates—Mabel Park, Thursday Island and Woree at Cairns. That is hardly what could be called discrimination against Labor electorates.

The member referred to an overdue list of projects. I inform him that the priority for spending on school building projects is listed as follows—

- (1) The carrying on and completion of projects already initiated in the previous year;
- (2) The development of new schools and sites for new schools;
- (3) Catering for minimum requirements (that is, the number of class-rooms needed to cater for children at the start of a school year);
- (4) Development of toilet facilities;
- (5) Provision of new land for essential school purposes; and
- (6) The upgrading of schools.

The projects that the member for Chatsworth cited in his overdue list are, in the great majority of cases, in category (6) on the priority list. In other words, new and essential projects needed to cater for ongoing needs receive priority. The list of works shown as unscheduled works were, in fact, all minimum requirements approved by the Education Department for 1984.

I do not intend to table the draft document as called for by the member for Chatsworth. Nothing would be established by doing so. As I have already made clear, he referred to a draft working document that was prepared on a confidential basis—and from which the final program evolves—related to current circumstances and availability of funds.

As I said, it is a confidential document and the only way in which the member for Chatsworth could have obtained such a document was for it to be stolen from the State Government.

Coal Industry

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy) (11.8 a.m.), by leave: I wish to draw to the attention of this House a most serious situation that has arisen in the coal industry, an industry, I might add, that is very valuable to this State and to its people. As honourable members will be aware, Queensland has established itself as a major world coal exporter with its open-cut mines in the Bowen Basin supplying the vast majority of that trade. As open-cut mining technology has developed, Queensland has been able to reclaim 90 per cent and more of coal deposits. However, mining by the underground method recovers only about half that total.

For many years there has been open competition for overseas contracts between mines in this State and those in New South Wales. Although the Queensland mines are situated in the more remote areas and therefore are subject to higher transport and high infrastructure costs, Queensland has the advantage of using the more economical open-cut method and, with the development of major coal-handling and berthing facilities at Hay Point and Gladstone, the more efficient loading and shipping operations.

In an open, free-market situation, Queensland has been able to secure valuable exports to Japan, Korea, Europe and many other countries. To indicate the extent of the success, I shall cite two sets of figures. In the financial year 1978-79, Queensland earned \$815m from coal exports. Last year that figure had risen to \$1,562m. In other words, we have practically doubled our coal export earnings in four years.

In terms of actual production, our figures also have been most impressive. For the 40 weeks ended 2 October this year, Queensland mines had produced 22.4 million tonnes compared with 18.7 million tonnes in the same period last year. This result was achieved with the co-operation of Queensland coal mine employees and their unions, for which I have previously given due recognition. Furthermore—and I stress this point—during this time we employed an additional 222 men in the industry.

To add another perspective—in recent times the average national unemployment figure has been about 10 per cent. For the coal industry as a whole it has been about five per cent, but all in New South Wales. In Queensland, by contrast, there has been a net gain in employment in the coal-mining industry. This growing success of Queensland, in our free enterprise State, has obviously upset the southern-based Miners Federation so much that it has recently ordered a total ban on the employment of any further miners on new open-cut mines—not just a ban on any new employees entering the industry, but a ban even on their own union members being transferred to a new open cut.

Honourable members may well ask what their reasoning is. Well, it soon becomes very obvious when it is realised that here in Queensland we mine more than 80 per cent of our coal by the open-cut method, while in New South Wales the position is the reverse, with about 80 per cent underground; so, when the Miners Federation called for a national vote on the issue, the heavily outnumbered Queensland miners had no chance of protecting their local industry.

The mine most affected by this ban at the moment is Curragh, in central Queensland, which was developed to supply coal to the power industry and also for the export market. Following the signing of a contract three years ago to supply coal to the State Electricity Commission, the company was fortunate enough, after difficult negotiations, to secure a 1.5 million tonnes a year export market for its coal in Japan. In order to develop the mine to meet the steaming and coking coal contract, the company was required to employ 52 extra workers, 16 of them members of the Queensland Colliery Employees Union. The company, right from the start, has made every conceivable effort to work with the unions, and for the past two years and more has always had discussions with the unions on its manpower needs. In fact, the mining unions warmly welcomed the news of the Curragh mine when it was announced three years ago. However, the ban

by the mining unions on more employees in open-cut operations will now jeopardise the Japanese contract because, without the Colliery Employees Union members, the company cannot employ other unionists, whose unions, incidentally, have no such ban. So the union, by this action, is destroying job opportunities for its own members, as well as for other unionists.

Mr Speaker, what it boils down to is that the Miners Federation, with its powerful New South Wales base, is dictating the policies and restricting the development of the Queensland coal industry. A coal mine does not develop overnight. Its development takes many years. The Miners Federation is well aware that we have two other major open-cut mining operations ready to go—at Blair Athol and Newlands. Here again, their very existence has been threatened by this scurrilous and vindictive ban.

The Queensland Government, for its part, has always been prepared to discuss the problems of the coal industry with owners and unions and we have a representative on the Australian Coal Consultative Council. This council, set up by the Federal Minister for Resources and Energy, contains representatives of Government, owners and unions. In view of the intransigent attitude that the Miners Federation has taken against Queensland, I have withdrawn our representative from the national research group set up by that council and I am sure all Government members will support me in this action. I know Senator Walsh had high hopes for this council to solve any problems of the industry, but we will not be held to ransom by a group of militant unionists who want to see Queensland downgraded and deprived of its mineral wealth. Honourable members opposite will no doubt be gloating to see their socialist comrades in the south achieve this ban. I doubt if there are any who will stand up and be counted for Queensland.

But let them not gloat too much, because it will be the people of Queensland who will suffer in the long run and they will certainly take their retribution against the Labor Party and its union comrades when the opportunity arises. Also let them not express any astonishment or even surprise when the Premier and Treasurer advocates strong action to prevent such unions attempting to destroy our Queensland economy, which has taken this Government decades to build to its present excellent position.

Let me conclude by saying that I have it on good authority that coal-mining companies in both Canada and South Africa, our major competitors on the world market, believe that the best things they have going for them are the work bans by Australian mining unions.

Availability of Courts for Committal Proceedings

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (11.16 a.m.), by leave: Reports by some sections of the media yesterday and today in regard to a court allegedly not being available to hear charges by way of committal proceedings are incorrect and misleading. The reports refer to defendants Paul Carr and William Allan who were each charged with stealing, unlawfully wounding, unlawfully doing grievous bodily harm and unlawful assault.

They appeared before different magistrates on 2 August 1983 and were remanded by consent to a hearing on 6th October 1983. At that hearing they were both legally represented and the barrister for the defendants asked the prosecutor to supply a statement so that the matter could be dealt with by using a hand-up brief. As the statement was not available the defendants were both remanded to 13 December, again by consent of both parties.

An unusually large number of cases was listed for hearing on 13 December. However, contrary to the report in "The Courier-Mail", three magistrates were allocated for the hearing of these cases commencing at 10 a.m. and others became available later in the day. At no time were the defendants told that a court was not available. They were advised that a court would be available later in the morning at approximately 11.15 a.m., but neither party would wait for this court and a further remand was sought by the defendants.

The chief clerk is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Brisbane Magistrates Courts, which includes the allocation of cases to courts and magistrates. At no time was he consulted as to the availability of a court and he informs me that the first he knew about this matter was when he read about it in yesterday morning's newspaper. He assures me that there was a magistrate available for the hearing of these charges at 11.15 a.m.

I take this opportunity to comment on an attack made by the member for Salisbury under the guise of a matter of public interest yesterday. The ignorance of the honourable member (Mr Goss) in such matters was demonstrated by his objection to my appointment of members to the Legal Aid Commission when, in fact, the timing for those appointments was essential to comply with the Act and to enable the commission to continue its functions. I have concern that a statement by Mr Goss, which he subsequently withdrew at the request of the Chair, has been published by "The Courier-Mail" this morning.

Mr GOSS: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to yesterday's proceedings. The Minister did raise this matter and it was corrected. It is neither feasible nor proper for him to raise it again now. Furthermore, what credibility does this explanation have when it comes three months after the event?

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

Mr HARPER: For the honourable member's benefit, as his hearing is so bad, I will say it again. The ignorance of Mr Goss in such matters was demonstrated by his objection to my appointment of members of the Legal Aid Commission—

Mr GOSS: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is wrong. I made no reference to the Legal Aid Commission. The Minister referred to the Law Reform Commission. He is mistaken.

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

Mr HARPER: Mr Speaker—

Mr GOSS: I rise to another point of order. I was asking for the remark to be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I assure the honourable member that if he continues to defy the Chair's order I will name him—I will warn him, anyhow, under Standing Order 123A, and I will be doing that very shortly.

Mr WRIGHT: I rise to a point of order to ask for a ruling from you, Mr Speaker, because you have said that members must sit down the moment you stand. I make the point that a member rises to take a point of order and before the point of order is taken, you stand, Mr Speaker, and prevent him from saying anything. I suggest—

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr WRIGHT: Again it is happening.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the Leader of the Opposition wishes to take a point of order, I ask him to do so.

Mr WRIGHT: I ask for an explanation, Mr Speaker, on what your ruling will be. Will members be allowed to make their points of order without being interrupted by the Chair and being forced to sit down by you? I ask for an explanation.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition should know exactly what I have ruled in the first place—that is, that I want to listen to the point of order. I cannot listen to it if everybody is shouting at the Chair. I ask for the House to abide by the rule that I will ask the member who is taking a point of order to sit down; when I ask him to make his point of order, that is when he will do so, and not before. I have already ruled that the honourable member for Salisbury will not take another point of order.

Mr Mackenroth: He has asked for something to be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled that the honourable member will not take another point of order.

Mr WRIGHT: I rise to a point of order. I question your ruling, Mr Speaker, because I suggest that you cannot prevent any member from taking a point of order. I ask you to listen to me, Mr Speaker, because it is important to the way that the House works. A

member has the right to rise to a point of order at any time. It is then up to you, Mr Speaker, to tell him whether there is a point of order. You cannot prevent a member from at least trying to take a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I call the Minister.

Mr HARPER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am only too happy to repeat the paragraph as often as the member for Salisbury wishes.

Mr Wright interjected.

Mr GOSS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is quite out of order in—

Mr GOSS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the remark made by the Leader of the Opposition, namely that your ruling was disgusting. That is a reflection on the Chair, and I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw it.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has asked the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw a remark that he made. I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr WRIGHT: Mr Speaker, I do not believe that you can ask me to do that. Because I made no reference to the Premier, he therefore has no right to ask me to withdraw anything.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The point of order was that the Leader of the Opposition should withdraw the comment that was heard. I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr WRIGHT: I withdraw it, but I am fed up with the Rafferty rules here. I suggest that you start to do something about keeping to the rules of the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister.

Mr HARPER: The ignorance of Mr Goss in such matters was demonstrated by his objection to my appointment of members of the Legal Aid Commission when, in fact—

Mr GOSS: I rise to a further point of order. Those remarks are untrue. I find them offensive, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I made a ruling a minute ago that there was no point of order. I ask the honourable member to again state to me the point of order that he is taking in relation to the other side of the House.

Mr GOSS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My point of order was that the Minister's comments are untrue. I find them personally offensive. I seek their withdrawal. Very briefly, the Minister referred to my making comments about the Legal Aid Commission. That is untrue. He made reference to the Law Reform Commission. It is in the record of yesterday's debate. The Minister's remarks are offensive to me and I seek their withdrawal.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I call the Minister.

Mr HARPER: I have concern that a statement by Mr Goss, which he subsequently withdrew, has been published by "The Courier-Mail" this morning.

It is a matter for regret that such publication suggests credibility for the withdrawn statement in which Mr Goss inferred a similarity between appointments to the courts of this State and the market-place.

If this very small group of Labor Lawyers chooses to denigrate our courts through its president, so be it; but I will not tolerate that man's attempt to involve me in such conduct, to put into my mouth words which have never been spoken by me.

To those who have an understanding of the Opposition's tactics, although it is significant that the Opposition spokesman on Justice has not been used in this case—and perhaps the member for Wolston had better watch behind him—the Labor Lawyers are choosing their present timing in an attempt to create difficulties with pending appointments to the Supreme Court. They will not succeed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr GOSS (Salisbury) (11.26 a.m.), by leave: I repeat my earlier comments. The Minister for Justice and Attorney-General has made statements that are untrue. I find them personally offensive, and I sought to have them withdrawn. That has not been done, and I am disappointed. I shall briefly explain the point.

When I was speaking yesterday, the Minister interjected frequently. In his first interjection he made some reference to the fact that I had criticised him for making appointments to the Law Reform Commission. I had not done so. He mistook the Law Reform Commission for the Legal Aid Commission, and that was one of the points that I was seeking to make—his lack of understanding of what had happened.

I simply made reference to a "Sunday Mail" article referring to comments by him, which he subsequently complained about. I note now that he refers to those matters some three months later and seeks to correct the record. I still seek to have the personally offensive and untrue comments withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Deputy Clerk to read the list of petitions lodged.

Mr WRIGHT: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I ask again for your ruling as to when you will allow a member of Parliament to seek the withdrawal of a remark that is offensive to him. It has always been the procedure of this House that when a member feels that something is offensive to him, the member making the remark is bound to withdraw it. You, Mr Speaker, have refused on three occasions to have withdrawn matters that the member for Salisbury finds offensive. I ask for a ruling as to what will now be the procedure.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have made my ruling. Under the Standing Orders, a member may seek leave to make a personal explanation, as the member for Salisbury has done, and I believe that that is sufficient.

Mr WRIGHT: He is asking for them to be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: I have made my ruling, and that is the position.

PETITION

The Deputy Clerk announced the receipt of the following petition—

Road Cartage of Sugar; Cairns Bulk Sugar Terminal

From Mr De Lacy (4 889 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will not allow the cartage of sugar by road for next season and extend the rail facilities to the Bulk Sugar Terminal, Cairns.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice by members were answered as follows—

1. Proposed Road, Cape Tribulation National Park

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

With reference to the construction of the road from Cape Tribulation to Bloomfield—

(1) How much of the road under construction from Cape Tribulation to Bloomfield follows the designated road reserve?

(2) If it is proposed to deviate from the established road reserve, what is the maximum distance that the new road may deviate?

(3) Who authorised any deviation and how was such authorisation, if any, communicated to the Douglas Shire Council?

(4) How many hectares are to be directly affected by the impact of the bulldozers in the road construction?

(5) Has the National Parks and Wildlife Service imposed any conditions on road construction to minimise soil erosion, land slips and damage by fire and exposure and, if so, what are they and how are they being policed?

(6) What report, if any, has been filed regarding the meeting of such conditions?

(7) What National Parks and Wildlife Service officers have been on on-site inspections, what reports have been filed, to whom were they directed and have there been any indications that the Douglas Shire Council has not been meeting conditions imposed?

(8) Does the National Parks and Wildlife Service intend to take any action to prevent concerned members of the public protesting about the construction of the road by the Douglas Shire Council through the Cape Tribulation National Park and, if so, what action is being considered?

(9) What damage, if any, was caused by road construction to the recently constructed recreation facilities and walking trails using Commonwealth wages pause funds and what was the capital value of these facilities?

(10) How can the road construction be reconciled with the statement of the former Minister for National Parks (Mr Elliott) on 6 August 1981, on the declaration of the Cape Tribulation National Park, which said—

“There’s nothing to compare it with anywhere in Australia. 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. The area included some of the few remaining examples of undisturbed coastal rainforest in the world.

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.”?

Answer—

(1 to 10) The Director of National Parks and I authorised the Douglas Shire Council to build a road in the national park. The decision fulfilled a long-standing Government commitment, which was given to the Douglas shire prior to the gazettal of the park. The road will be to the benefit of the people of the Douglas shire and to the people of Queensland generally.

I am sorry that the leader of the Labor Party seems to have no confidence in the Douglas Shire Council, which is chaired by a former ALP candidate. He really should talk to the chairman of the Douglas shire before he continues to take up the time of this House asking 10 questions under the guise of one single question.

During the Matters of Public Interest debate yesterday the member for Cairns criticised certain Ministers. The Government has explained the situation and the facts are well documented.

It is interesting that the member for Cairns is concerned about this matter while the member for Mourilyan and the honourable member for Cook have had nothing to say about it. The member for Mourilyan understands what has happened because he was a timber worker. The member for Cairns is speaking on behalf of the people of Brisbane rather than those in his own electorate.

The Labor Party is divided over this issue. The member for Cairns belongs to a different faction within the Labor Party and the member for Mourilyan and the member for Cook are members of yet another faction. I think that the member for Cairns belongs to the socialist left faction but the member for Mourilyan does not.

A difference has arisen between what some parliamentary members of the ALP want and what both the chairman of the Douglas Shire Council and the people of far-north Queensland want. The member for Mourilyan and the member for Cook are not saying

anything because they know what the people of far-north Queensland want. But the member for Cairns has sold them out to the conservationists. The Leader of the Opposition, of course, has a foot in each camp and a foot in each bed.

2. Antiparasite Drug, Ivermectin

Mr Neal asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

With reference to the new antiparasite drug known as ivermectin, which is used for worm and fly control in sheep, heartworm in dogs, and internal parasites in cattle, horses and other livestock, but is not available in Australia—

(1) Is he aware that it is widely used in approximately 27 countries?

(2) Is he aware that it is used in New Zealand and that New Zealand lamb is consumed in this country?

(3) In view of the millions of dollars in savings to the livestock industry that will accrue from control of both internal and external parasites, will he make representations to his Federal counterpart with the view to having this drug released in Australia at an early stage?

Answer—

(1) I am aware that the broad spectrum antiparasite drug ivermectin is registered in several countries including New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America.

(2) In New Zealand, ivermectin is registered for use only in horses so that residues in New Zealand lamb are not a problem to Australian consumers.

(3) The efficacy of ivermectin is well documented and presents no problems to registering authorities in the States. However, the National Health and Medical Research Council is not satisfied with the chronic toxicity data supplied by the applicant company and has requested that two-year chronic toxicity experiments be conducted. It would appear that the council is concerned that food residues may be harmful to man in the long term. I understand that the manufacturer has refused to agree to the council's request. The drug has therefore not been cleared by the council or any of the State registering authorities of the States.

3. Noosa Woods Caravan Park

Mr Burns asked the Premier and Treasurer—

With reference to reports that the discredited and highly suspect operators behind the Noosa Resort Corporation that ripped off many Noosa workers and residents could be involved in a deal between the Noosa Shire Council, the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation and the Land Administration Commission to gain control of the Noosa Woods Caravan Park in a Noosa Woods/Noosa Spit land exchange deal—

(1) Who first proposed developing Noosa Woods Caravan Park or the Spit?

(2) Did the Noosa Shire Council or the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation chairman initiate the closed meeting of the Noosa council to discuss these developments?

(3) Was the council pressured to sell or give up the Spit for redevelopment?

(4) Was the council proposal to close the park for recreation a smoke-screen to cover up plans and discussions for its closure and sale to developers?

(5) How were holiday-makers who always use the Noosa Woods Caravan Park told of the proposed closure and how were they invited to protest or object?

(6) Were campers, residents and traders told at the time that the park would be permanently closed or that it would only be closed temporarily?

(7) Did the State Government propose to develop the Spit as stated by shire chairman, Cr Wansley?

(8) Were the councillors placed in a position where the Government's pressure to develop the Spit forced them to offer the Noosa Woods Caravan Park as an alternative to save the Spit?

(9) Who are the developers and what type of development is proposed?

(10) Are any members of the Noosa Resort group or its associates involved?

(11) Will the State Government seek the opinion of local communities, local authorities, conservation groups and businessmen in areas throughout the State where it intends to give valuable Crown land to the big business group, the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation?

(12) Has Cabinet approved such a scheme in secret or, if not, which groups has it consulted?

Answer—

(1 to 12) I am not aware of the source of the honourable member's information. The innuendoes and statements made by the honourable member are certainly not correct so far as the Land Administration Commission and the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation are concerned.

It is necessary to set out the facts relating to the Noosa Spit. Initially, the Noosa District Chamber of Commerce and Development, in September 1981, advised of a proposal to utilise a built-up and reclaimed area at the mouth of the Noosa River for a marina system.

In October 1981, the Noosa Shire Council advised that it intended to zone the land as open space. In November 1981, the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation requested that its proposals for the area be investigated.

A decision was taken in December 1981 that public submissions be invited concerning the level of development considered acceptable on proposed Park Reserve R.1361 (the hind dune area of land between the Noosa River entrance and Noosa Woods) and that public submissions be invited concerning a possible marina development that would involve construction of a new trained entrance across the existing beach and sand-dunes near Noosa Woods through an area designated R.1360, a reserve for local government (beach protection and car-parking) purposes.

Newspaper advertisements in accordance with such decision were published on behalf of the Land Administration Commission and the Department of Harbours and Marine in "The Australian", "The Courier-Mail" and the "Sunshine Coast Daily" on Saturday 16 January 1982 and in the "Noosa News" on Wednesday 20 January 1982.

Numerous submissions were received from interested parties in response to the newspaper advertisements.

The Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation prepared a conceptual plan, such plan making use of the existing trained entrance to the Noosa River and not involving a further trained entrance, in respect of the Noosa spit area. The plan was prepared in the very initial stage, and was adduced as a start upon which discussions might centre.

Representatives of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation and the Land Administration Commission attended a meeting with the Noosa Shire Council at Noosa in March 1983. At such meeting, the Tourist Corporation's conceptual plans in respect of the spit area were discussed. It was clearly indicated that any planning by the Tourist Corporation was in a very early stage, and the conceptual plan put forward was also in such a stage and was adduced as a start upon which discussions might centre.

The discussions with the Noosa Shire Council concluded on the basis that channels of communication would still remain open between the council, the Tourist and Travel Corporation and the Land Administration Commission.

To date, the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation has not had any further contact with, or representations from, the Noosa Shire Council. The Tourist and Travel Corporation has advised that, at this stage, no firm decision has been made to proceed with the development.

In October 1983 council representatives approached a representative of the Land Administration Commission and advised that, as a compromise to the Tourist and Travel Corporation's conceptual development, they would like to see the whole area

reserved for public purposes with the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation being offered instead the western part (about 8 000 square metres) of the present Noosa Woods camping reserve for development. The balance of Noosa Woods would become park and the camping area relocated to the spit for tent-camping only (no caravans). Council representatives were asked to put their proposal in writing. To date, the council has not put its proposal in writing.

The Land Administration Commission has no plan for any development of the Noosa Spit area.

No pressure has been applied to the council to sell or give up the spit for redevelopment.

4. Breaches of Clean Waters Act

Mr Vaughan asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—
With reference to the Clean Waters Act 1971—

(1) How many cases of alleged breaches of the Act have been handled by the Water Quality Council (a) since the Act was introduced and (b) in 1982-83?

(2) How many persons or companies have been prosecuted for alleged breaches of the Act (a) since the Act was introduced and (b) in 1982-83?

(3) How many prosecutions have been successful, which persons or companies were involved and what penalties were imposed?

(4) Can action be taken for a breach of the Act only if people responsible for dumping toxic wastes are actually found offending?

(5) Has the Water Quality Council recently been investigating the illegal dumping of thousands of litres of toxic liquid caustic waste in the Pinkenba and Nudgee areas?

(6) If so, what company or companies was or were involved in this illegal dumping and what action has been taken regarding this illegal dumping?

(7) What action is being taken to tighten up the provisions of the Act so that persons or companies who at present are blatantly breaching the Act can be apprehended and prosecuted?

Answer—

(1) (a) A considerable number of alleged breaches of the Clean Waters Act 1971-1982 have been dealt with by the Water Quality Council since its establishment in 1971. In every case, the problems have been satisfactorily resolved by co-operative action between the companies concerned and officers of the Department of Local Government.

(b) Most of the cases of alleged breaches of the Act which were dealt with by the Water Quality Council in 1982-83 were minor. Four, however, were of a more major nature but were satisfactorily resolved following discussions with the companies concerned, without recourse to litigation.

(2) (a) None.

(b) None.

The practice I have adopted where there is an alleged breach of the Clean Waters Act is to take the matter up with the company involved with a view to reaching a satisfactory solution. On a number of occasions I have personally been involved in these discussions and a satisfactory outcome has been reached.

(3) See (2).

(4) As is the case with other legislation, a breach of the Clean Waters Act has to be proved before a conviction can be obtained. The onus of proof, of course, rests with the complainant.

(5) Yes.

(6) Despite late-night and early-morning surveillance by a water quality inspector, dumping of toxic wastes was not actually observed.

(7) The purpose of the Clean Waters Act is to exercise control over potential water pollution problems, and I do not feel that any amendment of punitive provisions of the Act are necessary. As I have already stated, my practice has been to achieve

results by co-operation with companies involved. This has been successful up to the present time, as can be seen by the greatly improved condition of our rivers and watercourses.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr HINZE: Including the Tingalpa area.

Mr Burns: You are a total failure in the Tingalpa area.

Mr HINZE: Yes, because the honourable member represents it.

5. Tests for Drivers' Licences

Mrs Harvey asked the Minister for Transport—

With reference to complaints in the past about the delays of up to two months for a driving licence test in the Brisbane area—

What action has been taken to rectify these delays and what is the average waiting time for tests in the Brisbane area?

Answer—

In late November, six additional driver's licence testing officers were appointed to the Brisbane testing centres. Prior to their appointment, waiting-times of up to nine weeks were common.

Following the allocation of these additional officers, waiting-times have been reduced to under six weeks at present, and it is expected that further substantial reductions will occur in the new year.

6. Compensation for Asbestosis Sufferers

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

(1) Is he aware that the Western Australian Government has introduced a Bill to allow payment of compensation to people crippled by asbestosis?

(2) Is he aware that this Bill will override the Limitation of Actions Act and will allow common law actions for damages for asbestosis sufferers?

(3) Is he aware that a substantial number of workers affected by asbestosis have not been able to legally claim damages from negligent companies because of the Limitation of Actions Act?

(4) Will he, as a matter of urgency, introduce similar legislation in Queensland to that introduced in Western Australia to override the Limitation of Actions Act?

Answer—

(1 to 4) I am aware that the subject of asbestos-related illnesses has been given a considerable amount of media coverage in recent times. I am not able to say whether the Western Australian Bill to which the honourable member refers has the effect that he says it has.

The position in Queensland, however, is that there is already a provision in the Limitation of Actions Act enabling a court to extend the limitation period where a person, who claims to have a right of action that is out of time, can prove that there is evidence to establish the right of the action apart from a defence founded on the expiration of the period of limitation and that a material fact of a decisive character was not within his means of knowledge until a time within the last year of the limitation period.

As far as I am aware, the problem in those asbestosis cases that have come before Queensland courts is not a deficiency in the Limitation of Actions Act. It is the inability of the applicant to prove that, having regard to the state of knowledge of the risks of exposure to asbestos at the time when the exposure occurred, his employer was negligent in not taking precautions that might be taken nowadays. In the absence of proof of negligence, the plaintiff unfortunately would not be entitled to damages.

7. **BHP Report on Tendering Irregularities**

Mrs Chapman asked the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology—

With reference to an article in "The Courier-Mail" of 21 November in which he said he was seeking a report from BHP concerning possible tendering irregularities—

What were the results of that report?

Answer—

At my request, officers of my department made inquiries into the matters raised. It is now apparent that the problem arose from misinformation. BHP initially supplied information to an unsuccessful Queensland tenderer that it has discounted steel to Steel Mains for wharf piling. BHP subsequently corrected this information and said the rebate had applied to another onshore contract and not to wharf piling. However, in the interval, the Queensland firm had contacted me and, through me, my department announced that there were claims that BHP was engaging in unfair tendering practices. I said at the time that, as Minister, I would seek out both sides of the story. I accept BHP's assurance that a genuine mistake had been made. There was, in fact, no rebate granted concerning the offshore piling tenders involved.

8. **Introduction of .05 Blood Alcohol Limit**

Mrs Chapman asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) When was the 0.05 per cent maximum permissible blood alcohol limit introduced?

(2) Has it resulted in any noticeable change in the number of road fatalities?

(3) How many people have been detected so far this year for driving whilst under the influence of alcohol?

Answer—

(1 to 3) The reduction of the blood alcohol level from .08 to .05 came into effect on 20 December 1982. Since that time there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of breaches being detected, and this has been reflected in the reduction of the road toll, which to date is one hundred fewer than last year's figure.

I am sure that this substantial reduction in the road toll is attributable mainly to the Government's initiatives in reducing the blood alcohol limit. Since the introduction of .05 more than 10 360 breath tests have been performed and over 12 per cent of those registered a reading between .05 and .08.

Honourable members would be interested to know that the total number of breath tests undertaken last year was 21 305 and, as a result of this, 20 453 motorists were charged with driving with a blood alcohol reading above the legal limit. That represents a detection rate of over 96 per cent, and confirms the Government's view that specific target testing as carried out by the Queensland police is the most effective means of removing drink-drivers from the roads.

9. **Removal of Names from Electoral Rolls**

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

(1) What specific means are available to allow persons to be removed from the State electoral rolls?

(2) Are there any provisions for individual persons to recommend removal from the rolls and, if so, what are the names of such persons?

Answer—

(1) Sections 24, 31, 41 and 91 of the Elections Act 1983 allow the Principal Electoral Officer to remove names from the State electoral roll. These sections relate to disqualification, because the claimant or applicant is not living at the address shown in the claim or application, by way of objection or failing to vote at an election. Section 37 also provides for the striking off of names following notification of death.

(2) Section 38 of the Elections Act 1983 provides that any name on a roll may be objected to by—

- (a) An elector registered on the same roll or by a prescribed officer; or
- (b) The Principal Electoral Officer.

Notice of objection naming the objector is then posted to the elector at his abode or place of living. Following consideration of any response by the elector, the Principal Electoral Officer determines whether the objection is a valid objection and, if so, strikes the elector's name from the roll.

10. Check Egg Grader Regulations

Mr Lingard asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) What is the current situation regarding the implementation and enforcement of the Check Egg Grader Regulations which were recently approved by Cabinet?

(2) Is he aware that in excess of 30 000 dozen eggs per week have been marketed and are being marketed in Queensland from New South Wales?

(3) Is he aware that, because these eggs have not been quality tested by an approved check grader in the past, interstate operators have been able to avoid certain marketing costs, thereby competing unfairly with the Queensland industry by reducing prices to obtain business for a product which is not necessarily of the same quality as local eggs?

Answer—

(1) In order to ensure that consumers receive eggs of a high and consistent quality, the regulations issued under the Poultry Industry Act have been amended. The new regulations provide that eggs shall not be sold in areas of the State covered by Egg Marketing Boards unless they have been graded and tested for quality by—

- (i) The Egg Marketing Board; or
- (ii) The Central Queensland Egg Marketing Board; or
- (iii) A check egg grader.

Eggs that are not handled in this way are subject to seizure by inspectors acting under the Poultry Industry Act 1946-1979. The Government intends to ensure that the regulations are properly enforced to safeguard the interests of consumers.

(2) The movement of eggs from New South Wales to Queensland is probably somewhat below the figure stated by the honourable member.

(3) I agree with the honourable member that producers who have been moving eggs into Queensland under the protection of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution have gained a financial advantage. I consider this to be unfair and undesirable and I believe that it does not contribute to the maintenance of high quality egg standards.

11. Housing Commission Accommodation, Woodridge Area

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

(1) How many Queensland Housing Commission (a) houses and (b) units were built in the Woodridge area in 1980-81, 1981-82 and 1982-83?

(2) How many applications for housing in the various categories are current in Queensland?

(3) How many applications have Logan city area as their preference?

Answer—

(1) (a & b) Rental housing constructed and purchased in the Woodridge area only—

	Houses	Welfare Units	Pensioners Units
1980-81	—	—	—
1981-82	12	—	—
1982-83	45	8	—

(2) Rental applications—

Family (with priority)	2563
Family (without priority)	6377
Pensioner	1576

(3) All applicants are given the opportunity to choose three areas where they desire to be housed. Most do. However, there are others who exclude specific areas or nominate "anywhere" or north side or south side only. A considerable number of area preference combinations are possible. The list for rental housing in Logan city could include the same applicant listed for up to three separate areas within the city area. Others would not be listed because of an "anywhere" listing. The actual number of applicants listed in the Logan city area cannot be determined without examining the area preference of all metropolitan applicants. The Commission does not have the resources available for such an exercise.

12. School Libraries, Woodridge Electorate

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

When will libraries be completed at Shailer Park State High, Springwood Central and Springwood Road State Schools in the Woodridge electorate?

Answer—

Each of these schools has some library facilities at present. Funds are not available at this time to proceed with the provision of free-standing library blocks at these schools.

13. Suttons Foundry Pty Ltd, Ipswich

Mr Innes asked the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology—

(1) Prior to August 1982, did Suttons Foundry of Ipswich apply for or request Government financial assistance or guarantees?

(2) Was that application or request at that time refused and, if so, what were the reasons?

(3) In any event did the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development investigate the financial status and managerial efficiency of Suttons and, if so, what was the recommendation or opinion of the department at that time?

(4) Did the department look at the foundry industry in general in Queensland in 1982 and what did it find in relation to the number of foundries in Queensland, their location, their size and the level of capacity used at that time?

Answer—

(1) The first contact with the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development was during September 1982.

(2) Yes. The request was for a loan at subsidised interest rates.

(3) Yes. There was not sufficient equity for the proposed project.

(4) The department is aware of the capabilities, capacities and location of the foundry industry in Queensland. Because of the economic situation, there is excess capacity in the foundry industry in general in Queensland at this time. However, the Suttons/Kemp foundries specialise in water-supply valves and pipe fittings and the impact on that part of the industry in Queensland if these foundries stopped production would be substantial.

14. Antidumping Provisions, Nitrogenous Fertiliser

Mr Cahill asked the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology—

With reference to the Industries Assistance Commission inquiry into nitrogenous fertilisers and antidumping procedures applying to Australia—

(1) Has he or the State Government taken any action to ensure that the interests and opinions of this multimillion dollar industry in Queensland are made known to the inquiry?

(2) Will the Queensland Government support stronger antidumping provisions as proposed by some sections of the nitrogenous fertiliser industry or does the Government feel that existing provisions are adequate?

Answer—

(1) The nitrogenous fertiliser industry in Queensland has kept me informed of its submissions to the IAC Inquiry Into Certain Nitrogenous Fertilizers (Anti-Dumping). On 2 December 1983, I forwarded to the inquiry advice as to the effect on jobs in Queensland and the likely loss of revenue to the Queensland Government if the industry in Queensland was reduced in size because of the importation of nitrogenous fertilisers from overseas. A significant quantity of these fertilisers comes from the USSR.

The Queensland industry's sales are about \$125m per year. Direct manufacturing costs are about \$60m per year. Of this amount, about \$13m is paid to the State Government, local government and statutory authorities by way of taxes, charges, rates, etc. About \$47m is paid out for fuel, wages, etc. About 750 persons are employed in the industry in Queensland.

If the importation of nitrogenous fertilisers increased—and imports would increase if the present antidumping notices are not continued—local production would be curtailed. Because of the interconnection between the production of nitrogenous fertilisers and the related sulphuric and phosphatic fertilisers produced in the industry, these latter products would have to be reduced. The repercussions would be very severe.

(2) The problem with antidumping actions is that the complainant company has to supply a lot of information about prices, etc., of the goods in the country from which the imports originate. In the case of the communist countries, there is no free market price and the information is impossible to obtain. The existing provisions for antidumping actions are adequate if the initial information can be obtained.

15. Soot Emission, Tennyson Power Station

Mr Lee asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

(1) Is he aware of a feature article in a recent edition of "The Courier-Mail", namely "The Trendy left and the Fossils", together with a photograph of the Tennyson Power Station making its contribution to the "greenhouse effect"?

(2) How much money has been or is being spent on the elimination of soot emission from this power station in order to give my constituents the same living conditions as other residents of Brisbane?

Answer—

(1) Yes. However, the photograph used by "The Courier-Mail" was out of date.

(2) More than \$17m, to ensure that the station operates well within Air Pollution Council requirements.

16. Brisbane City Council Building Approvals

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

(1) Has he seen a report in "The Courier-Mail" in which the Queensland Master Builders Association executive director (Mr Des Hodgman) and the BLF secretary (Mr Vince Dobinson) said, "Because of the delay in receiving building approvals by the BCC at least 1 000 Queenslanders have become unemployed"?

(2) Will he give instructions to the BCC to reduce this approval delay so that Queensland business, large and small, can start urgent projects thus helping to decrease our unemployment problem?

Answer—

(1) Yes.

(2) I have had discussions with the Lord Mayor and representatives of the building industry in regard to this matter. My inquiries reveal that the Brisbane City Council

takes the following times, on average, for the processing of building applications: three weeks for dwelling houses, 10 days for swimming-pools, one month for simple commercial buildings, and six weeks for complex commercial buildings.

As a result of representations made to me I propose to introduce early in the new year an amendment of the Building Act to deal with undue delays in the granting of building approvals by local authorities. The amendment I have in mind will provide for the establishment of a tribunal to examine complaints that a local authority has not issued a building permit within the time prescribed by the Act. Where the tribunal is of the view that there has been undue delay it will be empowered to direct the local authority to make a decision on the application within the time allowed by the tribunal.

I stress that the tribunal will not be empowered to decide building applications, which will continue to be a function of local government.

17. Reductions in Export Coal Rail Freight Rates

Sir William Knox asked the Premier and Treasurer—

With reference to recent media reports which have attributed statements to him that the freight rates for export coal will be examined with a view to a suitable reduction—

As export coal operators are facing severe market competition and high costs, when will this review be completed and can an early announcement of rail freight reductions be expected?

Answer—

The Government's election policy statement on coal rail freight was—

"We will undertake a review of rail freights on coal to ensure the viability of existing mines and assist in the development of new projects."

The Government is committed to a review of rail freights to ensure that the mining industry's competitiveness is maintained and that its contribution, in terms of responsibility to the Queensland community, is balanced. The level of the rail freight rates on coal will be reviewed in accordance with these commitments.

I might add that it is scandalous that the Commonwealth Labor Government is still extracting a punitive and selective resources tax from some of our coal operations.

18. Race Traffic, Nudgee Road Level Crossing

Sir William Knox asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Have press reports been brought to his attention that when Saturday Doomben races are held, freight trains have held up race traffic at the Nudgee Road level crossing immediately prior to the first race?

(2) Has the closure of the Nudgee Road crossing gates occurred as has been suggested in the media report?

(3) If so, can some co-ordination between the Railway Department and the racing club be achieved to eliminate the alleged delays to traffic?

Answer—

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) There is co-ordination between the racing clubs and the Railway Department in that the department schedules its special race trains to conform with the starting time of the first race and completion of the last race, giving the train travellers ample time to get to the course before the first race and catch the train after the last race.

The running of freight trains is governed by traffic requirements and there will be occasions when a freight train might cross Nudgee Road at a time which would cause some inconvenience to motorists, including racegoers. This inconvenience would be limited to a few minutes.

Nudgee Road level crossing is one of 10 level crossings in the Brisbane area which have been listed for priority attention to eliminate conflict between road and rail traffic and this work will be carried out as quickly as funds can be made available. Honourable members will appreciate the enormous cost of eliminating 10 level crossings in highly developed areas of the city of Brisbane.

19. State Government Challenges in High Court

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

With reference to the Premier's recent comments concerning the Government's consideration of a High Court challenge in relation to Commonwealth Medicare funding—

(1) How many constitutional challenges (inter se questions) has Queensland initiated, or been a party to, in the High Court since 1972?

(2) How many of these High Court challenges has Queensland won and how many has Queensland lost?

(3) What is the cost to Queensland of a High Court action in an inter se question?

(4) What has been the total cost to Queensland tax-payers of these challenges in the High Court.

Answer—

(1 to 4) I am uncertain from the honourable member's question whether he has in mind challenges initiated against the Commonwealth by Queensland or whether he is also referring to cases in which Queensland has been sued or has intervened. Furthermore, I am unaware of just what cases are intended to fall within the honourable member's description of "inter se questions".

It has been the policy of the Queensland Government to take all necessary steps to safeguard Queensland's interests when constitutional questions arise and that will remain the Government's policy. The principal consideration is to put all arguments that can be put to the High Court in support of Queensland's rights. Where Queensland's interests are under threat, it is undoubtedly the Government's duty to seek to uphold them even though this may involve the expenditure of Government funds.

20. Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer

Mr Comben asked the Premier and Treasurer—

With reference to the Honourable W. A. M. Gunn, Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer—

(1) What are the ministerial responsibilities of the Minister?

(2) What Acts are administered by the Minister?

(3) What staff are under the control of the Minister?

(4) If the Minister is shown to have ministerial responsibilities, which responsibilities are supervised and which are unsupervised?

Answer—

(1 to 4) The administrative arrangements which apply to the Government are made pursuant to the Officials in Parliament Act 1896-1982 and are published from time to time in Queensland Government Gazettes Extraordinary. The last such publication setting out ministerial appointments and responsibilities was in the Queensland Government Gazette dated Monday, 7 November 1983. The honourable member, being new to this Parliament, may not be aware that he can obtain the necessary information from the reading of those publications, which are available to the public.

21. Dialysis Units

Mr Lickiss asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Is a four-bed kidney dialysis unit being provided at the Cairns Base Hospital?

(2) Is a kidney dialysis facility being provided at the Atherton Hospital?

(3) Will the Health Department provide small, fully staffed and independent dialysis facilities in base hospitals, for example, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Mackay and Mt Isa?

(4) Will the Health Department now provide individual hospital dialysis facilities including trained staff for individual patients in very small country hospitals and, if so, on what criteria will these decisions be based?

(5) Has there been a change in Government practice in providing the expansion of home dialysis training centres based on large existing dialysis units?

Answer—

(1) Yes.

(2) A Drake Willock is being installed.

(3) Other areas will progressively be investigated before any decisions are made on development of services.

(4) Each case will be considered on its merits.

(5) Recent approval was given for the expansion of the dialysis facilities at the Townsville Hospital to include home dialysis training. Other hospitals in the State will be considered when staff and funds become available.

22.

Videotape Recorders

Mr Lickiss asked the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs—

With reference to the article on page 16 of the "Daily Sun" of Wednesday 24 August headed "Video Deals—Con-artists ready to fleece gullible buyers" and as it is stated that the New South Wales Consumer Affairs Department "has just finished an investigation of the video industry" and further as a departmental spokesman is reported as saying, "Every fraud you can think of goes on in the video business"—

As the reference in the article appears to be to the activities of certain door-to-door salesmen, will he report on the situation here in Queensland and, if deemed necessary, issue advice to Queenslanders?

Answer—

The honourable member's question is timely, especially when I noted in "The Courier-Mail" on Tuesday, 13 December 1983, a statement that a recent survey found one in five Australians owned or rented a video recorder. Following complaints relating to door-to-door sales of video recorders, action was taken in June of this year to amend the Door-to-Door Sales Regulations of 1975 to cover video cassettes, video cassette recorders and accessories, television receivers and accessories, as well as the production of a video program and subscriptions to video libraries.

In addition, the Consumer Affairs Bureau has produced consumer notes on video recorders and video games, for the benefit of consumers, and these are issued free to anyone who contacts the bureau.

I have constantly issued warnings to consumers with respect to video purchases. Once again I urge any consumer contemplating the purchase of a video recorder to shop around for the best deal, and to understand that risks are involved if contracts are taken for a lengthy period.

I do not know how often statements have been issued warning people to be careful when they buy these things, but very often they still seem to fall into the same trap. I again issue a warning to everyone.

23.

Defensive Driving Courses

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Transport—

How many people have undertaken defensive driving courses so far in 1983?

Answer—

To date 5 852 persons have completed the Queensland Road Safety Council's defensive driving course.

Honourable members will be interested to know that since the course was first introduced in 1969, over 86 000 Queenslanders have completed the course, which makes it the most successful post-licence driving course in Australia.

24. **Soil Conservation**

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

With reference to the stated intention to redress the imbalance in the level of Government assistance to primary industries—

Will he give an assurance in relation to soil conservation that the provision of sufficient personnel to carry out both the ground survey work and co-ordinated planning required to finalise catchment plans for soil erosion control measures to be implemented will be given top priority to ensure that this State's most precious resource is preserved for future generations?

Answer—

An initial amount of \$125,000 has been provided in my department's budget for the commencement of a general upgrading of activities in the soil conservation area in 1983-84.

The Director-General is negotiating with the Public Service Board for the allocation of additional personnel to enable the Soil Conservation Branch to proceed with ground survey work and co-ordinated planning required to implement soil erosion control measures.

I assure the honourable member for Cunningham that every effort will be made to give the highest priority to this important activity.

25. **After-hours Sale of Alcohol in Night-clubs**

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

(1) Have (a) the World by Night Strip Club, Petrie Bight, (b) Pharaoh's Night Club, Adelaide Street, (c) Hollywood Disco, Elizabeth Street and (d) Cockatoo Bar, 667 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley, liquor licences?

(2) Are they permitted to trade after the hours authorised by these licences and, if not, are they "sly-grogging"?

(3) Has the Licensing Branch, in the last two years, had cause to raid these places for the sale of liquor after hours and, if so, what were the dates of the raids and what action was taken?

Answer—

(1) The issue of liquor licences is the responsibility of the Licensing Commission, which is administered by my colleague, the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General.

Inquiries show, however, that liquor licences are not held by the World by Nite Strip Club, Petrie Bight; Pharaoh's Nite Club, Adelaide Street; or the Hollywood Disco, Elizabeth Street. The Cockatoo Bar, 667 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley, is licensed as a restaurant.

(2) Premises not licensed or licensed premises trading in liquor after hours are illegally trading in liquor.

(3) Yes. I table a schedule of action taken by police during the last two years in relation to these premises. In the main, the offence detected on unlicensed premises was that of selling liquor without a licence.

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

26. Douglas Mervyn Dodd

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

(1) When does he propose to institute proceedings against Douglas Mervyn Dodd for perjury and attempting to pervert the course of justice in the trials and committal proceedings against suspended police officer, Lorelle Ann Saunders, in his capacity as senior law officer of the Crown?

(2) As Mr Justice Shepherdson ordered the Crown law office to carry out an investigation into this matter in August, and as four months have now elapsed, has this investigation been finalised?

(3) If so, what action is to be taken?

Answer—

(1 to 3) The honourable member is aware that the matter is in the hands of the police for investigation. I am advised that the investigation is well advanced but there are still some interviews to be conducted. When the investigation is complete, any appropriate action will be taken.

27. Proposed Road, Cape Tribulation National Park

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

(1) What engineering design has been submitted by the Douglas Shire Council for the road now under construction through the rain forest at Cape Tribulation?

(2) As the road now appears to encroach into the national park, who will win that section of the road within the national park?

(3) Was there any notification in the Government Gazette of the dedication of land for the said road to be built within the national park?

Answer—

(1 to 3) The honourable member should address his questions to the Douglas Shire Council, which has the responsibility for the engineering design of the said road.

Provision exists in law to gazette the realignment of the road through the national park. The road will remain the responsibility of the local authority.

There is no requirement to notify in the Government Gazette the approved deviation from the gazetted road until the road has been completed.

28. Proposed Road, Cape Tribulation National Park

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

(1) Was the road from Daintree to Cooktown costed at an estimated cost of \$80m in 1975-76?

(2) What would be the estimated cost of the road at today's costs?

Answer—

(1) No record can be found of a Main Roads estimate in 1975-76 for a Daintree-Cooktown link.

(2) Most of this road is under the control of the Douglas Shire Council, and it is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of cost at today's prices because sufficient survey and engineering information is not available. However, an indicative cost would be of the order of \$70m for a 6-metre-wide sealed pavement.

29. Play Area, Babinda High School

Mr Menzel asked the Minister for Education—

Will he give approval for a new covered play area to be constructed at Babinda State High School before the beginning of the 1984 school year?

Answer—

Approval of expenditure of funds for capital works projects is a responsibility of the Honourable C. A. Wharton, Minister for Works and Housing.

To date, approval for expenditure of \$75,745 has been granted for the provision of the new library and the old library conversion.

Although I understand that planning and documentation of the covered games area is well advanced at the present time, priority has been given to projects that involve class-room accommodation essential for the commencement of the 1984 school year.

30. **Letting of Government Contracts**

Mr White asked the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology—

With reference to the protectionist policy on Government contracts by the Wran Labor Government whereby, if a New South Wales firm does not win a Government contract, further submissions are invited exclusively from NSW firms to the exclusion of Queensland firms—

(1) What action will the Government take to place Queensland firms on a comparative competitive basis with firms in other States?

(2) As it is the Government's practice to give preference to Queensland firms for Government work, what action does he propose in light of the recent awarding by the Government's own electricity authority granting the contract for transformers to a NSW firm at the expense of a local firm, GEC at Rocklea, thus endangering the jobs of at least 30 people?

Answer—

(1) Since 8 September 1983, the State preference policy has included a provision that if a Queensland manufacturer's tender is not the lowest after preference loadings have been applied, negotiations must be held with the lowest Queensland manufacturer if his tender is less than the out-of-State tender plus preference loading, all multiplied by 1.15. The negotiations are to determine whether the Queensland tenderer can reduce the tendered price to below the out-of-State tender plus preference loadings. If the Queensland firm's tender cannot be reduced to the out-of-State tender plus preference, the matter is to be referred to Cabinet.

(2) The above preference policy was applied. In fact, Cabinet decided to split the contract and give some of the transformers to GEC even though its tender fell outside the guide-lines mentioned above.

31. **Kirwan Hospital**

Mr Wilson asked the Minister for Health—

(1) When will construction of the hospital at Kirwan be completed?

(2) When will the hospital receive patients?

(3) Will quarters for the nursing staff be built or are staff to be transported to and from the quarters at the general hospital?

(4) Will resident doctors be employed and domiciled on the premises?

(5) Will a doctor or doctors be on duty on a 24-hour daily roster or will a doctor be only on call?

Answer—

(1) The Kirwan maternity unit is expected to be completed in January 1985.

(2) As soon as practicable after completion.

(3) No.

(4) Various categories of full-time medical staff will be employed. Accommodation will be provided for medical staff on proximate call.

(5) The Townsville Hospitals Board has not advised its intentions regarding staffing of the hospital at this time.

32. Explosives Magazines, Brookhill

Mr Wilson asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

(1) Are the explosives magazines at Brookhill to close and, if so, when and where will the explosives be stored?

(2) Will they be readily available to people who require them for their work or business?

Answer—

(1) Yes. The appointment of Government explosives magazines at Brookhill was cancelled by notification published in the Government Gazette of 10 December 1983. Explosives, which are the property of other persons, are being transferred to Government magazines at Queerah (Cairns) or Bajool (Rockhampton) consequent upon the closure of Brookhill.

(2) Negotiations are proceeding with ICI Australia Operations Pty Ltd to lease part of the Brookhill magazine reserve. Persons in the Townsville area who require explosives for work or business will be able to obtain supplies from licensed retailers, from ICI at Brookhill, or from Queerah or Bajool.

33. Financial Assistance for Cane-growers

Mr Randell asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) Is he aware of the continuing downturn of the economic position of the sugar industry and that many growers are having difficulty in arranging carry-on finance?

(2) Will he investigate the possibility of relaxing guide-lines for assistance to growers through the RAS with a view to helping many needy families through a difficult period?

(3) Will he carefully monitor the level of Government funds available to the RAS to ensure that it will adequately cover the needs of the sugar industry?

Answer—

(1) I am very conscious of the depressed conditions in the sugar industry. Supplementary assistance is being provided under the sugar carry-on scheme, administered by the Rural Reconstruction Board, to eligible growers under the National Disaster Assistance Program through the Agricultural Bank.

Owing to the combined effects of low prices and high costs of production in handling a large crop with a low sugar content a significant proportion of growers will have a substantial operating deficiency in 1983-84. Over 200 growers have been approved carry-on loans exceeding \$5m this financial year through the Rural Reconstruction Board. A further \$6.6m was advanced to cane-growers by the board in 1982-83 for debt reconstruction and carry-on expenses before the introduction of the present carry-on scheme jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments.

With an approval rate for loan applications under the carry-on scheme round 95 per cent, cane-growers are not experiencing difficulty in arranging this finance through the board provided they are eligible for assistance and have reasonable prospects for viability in the long term.

(2) With the flexible approach being adopted by the Rural Reconstruction Board in administering the sugar carry-on scheme to meet cash operating deficiencies and limited debt refinancing, it is not considered necessary to relax the present guide-lines.

While the uptake of carry-on funds has been below expectations this cannot be attributed to existing guide-lines being too restrictive. Factors responsible for the limited demand for carry-on funds to date include the improved initial cash flow of growers through increasing the sugar delivery price from \$140 to \$180 per tonne, a significant improvement in the cane harvest and provision of cheaper disaster relief to eligible growers severely affected by drought in central and southern districts.

As trading banks and other financial institutions have had adequate funds available for lending this season, cane-growers have also received greater financial assistance than anticipated from commercial sources.

Applications being received by the board for carry-on assistance have escalated over the past month and this trend should continue. Good support is being provided by industry organisations in assisting growers to prepare loan applications for submission to the board.

(3) Cane-growers may be assured that I will continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure that adequate funds are available under the rural adjustment scheme to meet industry requirements.

Commonwealth support will be requested to carry over any unexpended balance of the \$15m remaining in the carry-on scheme into 1984-85 to ensure that all these funds are utilised for the benefit of cane-growers.

Additional rural adjustment funds are also available for debt reconstruction, farm build-up and improvement in the sugar industry. Should the board be unable to meet the demand for debt reconstruction because of the Commonwealth's insistence that not more than 40 per cent of the \$5.5m allocated to Queensland for rural adjustment in 1983-84 be utilised for this purpose, then approval will be requested to remove this restraint.

The need for continued financial assistance to the sugar industry will be taken into account when an increased allocation of Commonwealth funds is sought for rural adjustment in 1984-85.

34. **Shark-netting, Sarina Area Beaches**

Mr Randell asked the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services—

With reference to the popularity of beaches in the Sarina area for swimming and surfing not only by local people but also by increasing numbers of tourists—

(1) Will he investigate the possibility of extending the shark-netting operations to cover this section of the coast?

(2) If such an investigation proves that netting operations are possible, will he take action to implement them immediately?

Answer—

(1 & 2) Extensions of shark-netting operations to additional beaches have been arranged as funding has permitted. However, before permanent extensions are approved, it is necessary to carry out a detailed investigation to determine the specific type of equipment to suit the depth of water, type of bottom and range of tides and to avoid disturbance of habitats for desirable marine species. I will arrange for my officers to investigate the feasibility of shark-netting off selected beach areas in the Sarina sector in relation to the benefits to be gained and advise the honourable member of the results of such investigation.

35. **Gladstone Race-track**

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

With reference to his visit to Gladstone in April 1982 and consequently an application being lodged by the Gladstone Turf Club for a redesigned race-track—

What is the present position in relation to this application?

Answer—

An application has been made by the Gladstone Turf Club for an advance from the Racing Development Fund under the Racing and Betting Act of \$2m for redesigning the race-track, the provision of stables at the racecourse and the erection of a new administration building at the course.

It will be appreciated that the works proposed are of a substantial nature, and the club's application is presently under consideration in relation to the funds available for advances of this nature and having regard to other applications.

36. Contract for QEGB Houses, Nanango

Mr Prest asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

- (1) What was the name of the contractor constructing 20 houses at Nanango for QEGB?
- (2) Has that contractor gone into liquidation?
- (3) What was the total cost of that contract awarded to the contractor?
- (4) What percentage of the contract had been completed before his going into liquidation?
- (5) How much money has been paid to the contractor by QEGB?
- (6) Is any money held by QEGB on the work completed by the original contractor?
- (7) Has the remainder of the contract been let to any other contractor to complete?
- (8) What is the name of the contractor selected to complete the contract?
- (9) What is the anticipated cost of completing this work?

Answer—

- (1) Greg Cree Constructions Pty Ltd.
- (2) A provisional liquidator was appointed on 16 November 1983.
- (3) \$838,168.
- (4) Approximately 45 per cent.
- (5) \$324,894.60.
- (6) Yes, consisting of retention, \$36,099; security deposit, \$8,690; and work completed since last valuation, \$28,000 approximately.
- (7 & 8) J. P. Constructions Pty Ltd has been selected and will be advised today.
- (9) \$656,966.

37. Route of Power Line to Iwasaki Resort

Mr Hartwig asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

- (1) What action is being taken by the Capricornia Electricity Board or the SEC with regard to objections lodged by 23 land-holders north of Yeppoon whose property will be traversed by a 66 kV high voltage line to the Iwasaki resort?
- (2) Will the requests from land-holders who are seeking an alternative route for the construction of this power line to the Iwasaki resort be considered?

Answer—

(1 & 2) Although the route selected has been confirmed by inquiry at Government level and by independent consultants as that which is technically and environmentally the most suitable, I am fully investigating the alternative route proposal recently suggested to me by affected land-holders.

38. TAB Agency, Gracemere

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

Will he investigate the establishment of a TAB agency at Gracemere?

Answer—

Yes.

39. Transport Department Regional Offices, Toowoomba and Ipswich

Mr McPhie asked the Minister for Transport—

What progress has been made to date on the establishment of Transport Department regional offices at Toowoomba and Ipswich?

Answer—

Tenders for the construction of the two regional offices have been examined and the proposal submitted by Chard Roberts Construction Pty Ltd has now been accepted.

It is expected that construction will be completed by June 1984.

The estimated cost of the two offices is \$775,370, made up of \$378,370 for the Ipswich office and \$397,000 for the Toowoomba office.

40. Federal Funds for Job Creation Projects

Mr Eaton asked the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services—

(1) What is Queensland's share of the \$20m made available from Federal resources for job creation projects giving local authority access to funds for water projects that were not previously available?

(2) Has the Queensland Water Resources Commission met with the Federal Trade and Resources Department to work out amounts of money to be made available to Queensland, particularly for water projects?

(3) Will the Queensland Government match dollar for dollar Federal Government money to local authorities for town water supply schemes?

(4) If this meeting has not taken place, what is the reason and when does he expect the meeting to take place?

Answer—

Before attempting to answer the specific questions raised by the honourable member, I would point out that the Commonwealth's Country Towns Water Supply Improvement Scheme forms part of its overall Community Employment Program. This particular element is being handled by the Premier's Department in consultation with the Department of Local Government and the Commonwealth Department of Resources and Energy.

Against this general background, I would respond to the specific queries as follows—

(1) \$3.2m.

(2) Several meetings of State and Commonwealth officers have been held, and I am informed that several projects will be considered later this week by the consultative committee responsible for the making of recommendations on projects to be financed from the Community Employment Program.

(3) There is no requirement for matching State funds under the program. The program provides for the Commonwealth to meet 70 per cent of costs and the local authority the balance.

(4) See (2).

41. P A Australia Report on Railway Department

Mr Eaton asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) When will the Government make public the full text of the P A Australia report on Queensland Railways?

(2) Does he anticipate any closure of sections of rail lines in Queensland or the curtailment of rail services in any areas in Queensland?

Answer—

(1) The report prepared by P A Australia following its investigation of the operations of the Railway Department was tabled by me in this House on 3 August 1983 and has been available to the honourable member since that date. Copies have also been made available to interested parties, including railway unions.

(2) On the same day I also tabled a copy of the Queensland Railways Weekly Notice No. 27/83 in which there is printed an undertaking signed by me guaranteeing the future employment of railwaymen. Perhaps the honourable member was absent on that day. For the benefit of the honourable member, I repeat the guarantees—

No railway line, station or passenger service will be closed as a result of the implementation of the report.

No railway employee will be retrenched as a result of the implementation of the report.

The redundancy agreement reached with the unions in 1980 (which guarantees that no railway employee will be retrenched as a result of technological changes or operational changes) will be strictly adhered to.

These undertakings have been repeated on a number of occasions in a variety of circumstances. Honourable members will appreciate that the level of railway services provided in any area will depend on the volume of traffic to be handled.

Mr Casey: Can you guarantee that that report by P A Australia is a full report?

Mr LANE: Certainly.

Answer (contd)—

One of the principal aims of the implementation of the report's recommendations is to achieve a more effective and efficient service capable of competing with other modes of transport.

Obviously the honourable member for Mackay has still not read the report. I wish that he would do so in order to be able to brief his colleagues. If he did that, nonsense questions would not be asked every day.

42.

Radioactive Sand

Mr Milliner asked the Minister for Health—

With reference to the radioactive sand problem and to the many people still waiting to have their properties tested by the Health Department, and as this delay is causing considerable inconvenience and worry to the persons concerned because of the uncertainty as to whether or not they may be faced with substantial costs to have the sand removed if their properties are found to be radioactive—

(1) How many requests for tests of radioactivity has the Health Department received?

(2) How many properties have to date been tested?

(3) How many people are engaged in testing work?

(4) How long does it take to test each property?

(5) How many properties have been found to be affected?

(6) What action is being taken to ensure that radioactive sand is removed from those properties affected?

(7) Has any radioactive sand, which has been removed from properties, been disposed of?

(8) If so, what is the method of disposal?

Answer—

(1) A total of 1 333 requests have been received to date relating to the possible presence of mineral sand on properties. That does not mean that 1 333 properties need testing, because many requests deal with unrelated sources of supply.

(2) Tested to date, 812.

(3) All available physicists, with part-time assistance from the health inspectors.

(4) Mean time for survey per property including all preparation and report work is three hours.

(5) One hundred require corrective action.

(6) Records of all survey results and correspondence are retained. A follow-up inspection is made on completion of work.

(7) Remedial action has been taken on 34 properties to date. In these cases, all material has been transferred to a holding area on property owned by Consolidated Rutile at Meeandah.

(8) The ultimate disposal method is for the transfer of the material from Meeandah to Stradbroke Island, where it is mixed with sand, buried at the bottom of active mineral sand-mining pits and ultimately covered by about 10 metres of sand.

43. **Sunny Park Shopping Centre**

Mr Henderson asked the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology—

(1) Is he aware of the fact that the ALP-run Brisbane City Council has directed that a manproof fence be erected round the Sunny Park shopping centre at Sunnybank?

(2) Why does such a fence exist at all?

(3) What can the Queensland Government do to assist shopkeepers in Sunny Park who are slowly going broke as potential customers are fenced out by the BCC?

Answer—

(1 to 3) I am aware of the Sunny Park shopping centre. I know that it is fenced with a 1.7 metre high fence and that pedestrian access is therefore restricted. I am aware that the fencing of the shopping centre was required by the Brisbane City Council of the developer for pedestrian safety reasons. I am also aware that the Sunny Park shopping centre is relatively new and contains 28 speciality shops. It has to compete with the well-established shopping centre across Mains Road which has a K mart and 48 speciality shops. I assure the tenants of the Sunny Park shopping centre that I am aware of their problems.

However, the problem caused by the fence is a matter which relates to local government. The honourable member should refer the question to the Honourable the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing as the matter falls within his area of responsibility.

44. **Miners' Homestead Leases**

Mr Scott asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

(1) Has an instruction been promulgated through his department to issue no further miners' homestead leases?

(2) Does this instruction refer to the whole of the State?

(3) If an inquiry is to be conducted into the principle behind the taking up of those leases, how long is this inquiry likely to take and when is a resumption of lease issuing likely to occur?

Answer—

(1 & 2) No such instruction has been issued. In fact, three miners' homestead perpetual leases have been recommended to the Governor in Council for approval this week.

(3) The Department of Mines is presently reviewing all existing mining fields with a view to determining those areas for which it should accept responsibility. It is expected that this review will be completed in the first half of the new year. In the meantime, each application is considered on its merit.

45. **Police Stations, Edward River and Lockhart River Communities**

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

(1) When will Police Department officers be permanently established at Edward River and Lockhart River Communities?

(2) Is there provision in the current Budget for both these stations?

Answer—

(1) The establishment of permanent policing facilities at Edward River and Lockhart River Aboriginal communities is dependent upon the provision of suitable accommodation.

The Police Department is currently negotiating with the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement for temporary accommodation pending establishment of permanent facilities.

(2) No.

46. Road Safety Council Activities, Gold Coast

Mr Borbidge asked the Minister for Transport—

What are the Queensland Road Safety Council activities on the Gold Coast and what plans does the council have for future expansion?

Answer—

I advise the honourable member that Cabinet approval has recently been given for the appointment of a field officer from the Queensland Road Safety Council to be located at the Department of Transport's Gold Coast regional office at Bundall. That position is presently in the process of being advertised and I have pleasure in advising the honourable member that the appointment of the officer will permit an upgrading of the Queensland Road Safety Council's activities in the Gold Coast region. I thank the honourable member for his co-operation with the program.

I would also like to mention, of course, that the major public program presented by the Queensland Road Safety Council, the defensive driving course, has been presented since early 1982 by a group of volunteer instructors. These members of the general public have donated their time in the cause of road safety to the presentation of public defensive driving courses. Although the appointment of a full-time field officer to the Gold Coast region will assist in the further promotion of the defensive driving course and the other educational programs conducted by the Queensland Road Safety Council, I feel that I must acknowledge the excellent example set by the team of volunteer instructors on the Gold Coast who have demonstrated in a very practical way the commitment of many members of our community to road safety.

47. Trading Hours, Hairdressing Industry

Mr McLean asked the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs—

With reference to trading hours within the hairdressing industry—

(1) Is he aware of the unfair situation that exists between male and female hairdressers as far as trading hours are concerned?

(2) If so, what plans are in hand regarding changes that are being asked for by the hairdressers and when will these changes be undertaken?

(3) How many shops, both male and female, have been charged with trading hours breaches and which were they?

(4) Will he give assurances that inspectors will continue their surveillance until the changes are made?

Answer—

(1 to 4) I am aware of the present state of trading hours in the hairdressing industry. Any changes to the order "Hairdressers' Hours Brisbane" or "Hairdressers' Hours—State of Queensland (Excluding Brisbane)" is a matter for the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.

At a special general meeting of the Master Hairdressers Association Guild of Queensland held on 5 December 1983, it was unanimously resolved that an application be made to the Industrial Commission for a variation to the trading hours for all hairdressing establishments to allow such establishments to trade the same hours as non-exempted shops trading by retail. This would allow trading until 9 p.m. on

Thursday nights in suburban areas of Brisbane and to 9 p.m. on Friday nights in the city centre. To date, the application has not been lodged with the Industrial Commission.

Recent inspections have disclosed 23 contraventions of the order. Letters of warning have been addressed to each of these proprietors. All complaints received by the department relating to out-of-hours trading are investigated. I say to those people concerned about trading hours that they should lodge an application for variation. After the matter has been determined by the Commission, action will be taken if necessary.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Australian Olympic Federation, Queensland Grant

Mr WRIGHT: In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to the indication in this year's Budget that \$28,000 was given as a grant to the Australian Olympic Federation in 1982-83. Will he advise the House why the Government is appropriating this year only \$20,000 for 1983-84, a reduction of \$8,000, particularly when 1984 is an Olympic year?

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: There would be an obvious reason for that, but I would have to check with my officers. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to put the question on notice.

Mr WRIGHT: I do put it on notice.

Liquor Laws for Sporting Clubs

Mr WRIGHT: I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: In view of the wide public opposition to amendments to the liquor laws for sporting clubs, will he explain the introduction of a reduction in days and a variation in times, in view of his statement that no changes would be made to the liquor laws until a total package had been presented? Will he justify his actions and, moreover, act to reverse the position until full and proper consultations have been held with representatives of the sporting organisations that will be affected?

Mr HARPER: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I realise that he has personal knowledge of the matters to which he refers.

Licences and permits to sporting clubs are determined by the Licensing Commission after consideration of the merits of each application. At the week-end, the Leader of the Opposition suggested that there had been some interference and change. That is quite incorrect. The principle is that three permits are available to sporting clubs weekly for a period of three hours. A degree of flexibility is exercised by the Licensing Commission. When clubs can justify an extension of those hours—and any one of a number of reasons can be put forward in support of an extension or variation in the number issued—the Licensing Commission has in the past considered, and will continue to consider, on their merits the individual applications from clubs.

Mr Wright: Is it now 10.30 p.m.?

Mr HARPER: No, the restriction is not to 10.30 p.m.

Because of fixtures that cannot start until 8 o'clock, some clubs have asked for an extension to 11 o'clock, which has been granted. As I said, each application will be dealt with on its merits. Only the week before last, the Chairman of the Licensing Commission spent some time in discussion with representatives of sporting clubs.

For the benefit of those honourable members who may think that I am speaking about bowls clubs and golf clubs, I point out that I am not; I am speaking of squash clubs, indoor cricket clubs and the like that seek permits of this type. In the past, the Licensing Commission has taken part in discussions; it will continue to discuss any problems and keep me informed. With consultation, I will ensure that, within the present parameters of the Liquor Act, the best possible is done for those clubs.

Equipment for the Police Force

Mr GOSS: In asking a question of the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police, I refer to a report in the Brisbane "Telegraph" of last week which revealed that the Police Department could not afford sufficient portable blue identification lights for most unmarked police cars. I now ask the Minister to inform the House whether this year's Police Department budget will provide sufficient funds for that equipment. If the Government does not propose to provide funds for that basic equipment, is it true that the Minister is giving consideration to some substitute portable means of identification such as bright blue "hankies" that could be waved at the public by officers in unmarked cars?

Mr GLASSON: I understood the honourable member's question to be about the provision of finance for the purchase of equipment to aid in the apprehension of drug offenders. So that I can give the honourable member an accurate answer, I ask him to put the question on notice.

Mr GOSS: I will put the first part of the question on notice, but I would like an answer to the second part.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Southport.

Mr GOSS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr GOSS: The second part of my question remained without notice.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Southport.

Shopping Lease Legislation

Mr JENNINGS: I ask the Premier and Treasurer: Will he advise the House when the proposed shopping lease legislation will be introduced?

Mr BJELKE-PETERSEN: Perhaps that question should have been directed to the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern). However, I understand that the legislation will be introduced before Christmas.

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

Mr WRIGHT: I rise to a point of order that relates to Standing Order 119 and to a matter that occurred in the House this morning. Standing Order 119 states—

"A member shall not use unbecoming or offensive words in reference to another member of the House."

Mr Speaker, I also draw your attention to Standing Order 333, which states that when Standing Orders do not specifically cover a matter the House should abide by "Erskine May—Parliamentary Practice" and the practice in the House of Commons.

On page 430 of "Erskine May—Parliamentary Practice", the following appears—

"The House of Commons would insist upon all offensive words being withdrawn..."

In the light of that statement, Mr Speaker, will you review your previous decision and allow the honourable member for Salisbury to have the words that are offensive to him withdrawn by the Minister for Justice? I ask for your determination on that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have to rule on this matter. I will make a further ruling later, if the Leader of the Opposition will bear with me. I will say now that if a member takes objection to something said by another member in this House and it is considered to be personally offensive, I will require the member to clearly state the words personally offensive to him. I will require that procedure to be adopted in the future. If the words are clearly offensive to the member, I will require them to be withdrawn. If the words merely misrepresent what another member has said, leave may be sought to make a personal explanation, which is what I required this morning.

Mr WRIGHT: In view of that, Mr Speaker, will you now allow the member for Salisbury to ask that the words uttered by the Minister for Justice be withdrawn?

Mr SPEAKER: No.

Mr WRIGHT: In view of that, I give notice that I shall move that Mr Speaker's ruling given on Thursday, 15 December, in regard to a request by the member for Salisbury (Mr Goss) that offensive words used by the Minister for Justice be withdrawn, be dissented from.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1982-83

Mr SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor transmitting the Supplementary Estimates for the year 1982-83.

Estimates ordered to be printed, and referred to Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY

Committee—Financial Statement—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 14 December (see p. 675) on Mr Bjelke-Petersen's motion—

“That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1983-84, a sum not exceeding \$533,000 to defray Contingencies—His Excellency the Governor.”

Mr NEAL (Balonne) (12.33 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to support the Premier and Treasurer on the introduction of the Budget. Its presentation is a historical event, representing as it does the first National Party Budget to be brought down not only in Queensland but also in Australia. It is a milestone in the achievements of the National Party.

Queensland has enjoyed sound, stable Government for many years. The economy of the State has not been allowed to slide, as it has in some of the other States. Over the border in New South Wales, Mr Wran has had to raid a number of trust funds to stay afloat, to cream them off into his coffers to try to balance his Budget. In contrast, the Queensland Government has again introduced a balanced Budget. That can only be regarded as good housekeeping and living within our means. That is a far cry from the deceit and deception of Mr Hawke—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! I ask all honourable members to stop moving around the Chamber, to return to their seats or leave the Chamber, so that we may all hear the honourable member.

Mr NEAL: It is a far cry from the deceit and deception of Mr Hawke who claimed he had inherited a Budget from the previous Government that had blown out to about \$8,500m in deficit. He continually made that accusation, obviously working on the principle that if he repeated something often enough people would believe him. In reality, the true situation is that there certainly would have been a blow-out of the Federal Budget, but nowhere near the magnitude that Mr Hawke claimed. He himself then introduced a Budget with a deficit of \$9,000m. So Mr Hawke and his Government are responsible for that massive deficit.

Furthermore, in the Budget, Mr Hawke promised tax reductions, but they have not eventuated. In his policy speech he also promised tax reductions. He also promised a 3c a litre reduction in petrol prices. Instead, petrol prices have been increased, and in the future they will be indexed so that they increase automatically.

Tax incentives for primary producers have been wiped, meat inspection fees have been trebled and the National Water Resources Management Program has been abandoned. According to an article in yesterday's "Telegraph", the Federal Government is reviewing the question of the introduction of a capital gains tax.

The Queensland Budget outlines the proposed course of action that the Government will take in the next 12 months. It will ensure that Queensland remains the pace-setter in Australia. Under our free enterprise system, business has flourished and prospered, unlike the stagnation that has occurred in the Labor-controlled States, which suffer under the dead hand of socialism.

Of all the States, Queensland has experienced the highest percentage increase in the work-force. In the 12 months to June last, that increase was 3.6 per cent, compared with an increase of 1.7 per cent in the Australian labour force in the same period. Over the past five years, Queensland's rate of job creation has been almost five times greater than that of New South Wales, and figures from the Bureau of Statistics bear that out.

In the years 1979 to 1983, both inclusive, in New South Wales there was an increase of 56 300 or 2.7 per cent in the number of jobs in a work-force of some 2 million. In the same period, in this State there was an increase of 104 700 or 12.1 per cent in the number of jobs. Those figures cannot be denied and they tell their own story.

The rate of unemployment has dropped for the third month in a row. Figures from the Bureau of Statistics show that, at 8.8 per cent, the rate of unemployment in Queensland is the second lowest in Australia and compares more than favourably with the national average of 9.3 per cent. However, we are now faced with the problem of finding jobs for some 25 000 school-leavers. I urge all employers to do everything in their power to ensure that as many jobs as possible are made available for those young people. In this regard, employers have an obligation to the youth of our State.

The most important thing for a youngster is to get a bit of confidence, and he can do that only by holding down a job of some kind. In that regard, casual work plays an important role in giving the young job-seeker an opportunity to get experience in the work-force.

Queensland has by far the best record for employment in the 15-to-19 year age group. The rate of unemployment in that group is 19.9 per cent, compared with 28.2 per cent in New South Wales, 22.4 per cent in Victoria, 26.4 per cent in South Australia and 27.6 per cent in Western Australia. Even though figures for Queensland are the lowest in Australia, they are still far from satisfactory.

Queensland has to contend with a population influx from the other States. That is a fact of life which seems to stick in the gullets of members of the ALP who continually knock this State. The Government continues to provide the right climate for the development of new projects and for the creation of investment opportunities. It has also continued to direct funds into areas of job creation, as outlined in the Budget documents. That is why Queensland's population increased by 53 400, or 2.2 per cent, to 2 473 000 in the 12 months to 30 June 1983. In the same period, the population in the rest of Australia increased by 1.1 per cent. Net migration of people from interstate contributed 43 per cent to the increase. They are coming here because of Queensland's free enterprise system and its lower taxes and to invest, develop and work. These facts cannot be denied.

The Premier and Treasurer has given an undertaking that no new taxes will be introduced. In the Labor States there are financial institutions duties, petrol taxes and tobacco taxes. Queenslanders, who do not have to pay those imposts, pay the lowest taxes per head of population. Taxes amount to almost \$640 per head in NSW, \$632 per head in Victoria, and \$482 per head in Queensland.

The Premier and Treasurer indicated that significant concessions will be allowed in pay-roll tax, stamp duty and land tax. No pay-roll tax surcharges as are imposed in Victoria and New South Wales will be applied in Queensland.

Extracts from the Budget papers of the other States highlight the difference in the amount of pay-roll tax collected in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

State	Work-force	Pay-roll Tax \$
New South Wales ..	2 422 700	1,285,680,000
Victoria	1 856 900	969,700,000
Queensland ..	1 078 000	394,390,000

NSW collects over three times as much pay-roll tax as Queensland from a work-force that is just over twice the size. Victoria collects two and a half times as much as Queensland in pay-roll tax and has only one and a half times the work-force.

As indicated in the Budget, further pay-roll tax exemptions will apply in Queensland. The maximum exemption will be increased from \$204,000 to \$252,000 effective from 1 January 1984. The minimum exemption will increase from \$36,000 to \$39,000, also effective from 1 January 1984.

Another matter that highlights the good house-keeping of Queensland can be found in the Federal Government's Budget papers of 1981-82. The latest figures for Government securities on issue are as follows—

State	Securities on Issue per head	Annual Interest Payable per head
	\$	\$
New South Wales ..	935	84
Victoria	956	85
Queensland	877	72

Queensland enjoys a three-star rating in overseas borrowing. That means that the Government can borrow at very favourable interest rates. Queensland's interest and redemptions are only 6.5 per cent of consolidated revenue.

An industrial firm which comes to Queensland and employs about 200 people would pay about \$500,000 less in pay-roll tax and workers' compensation than it would in New South Wales and Victoria.

The land tax concession proposed in the Budget will have an annual cost in excess of \$6m. The concessions will be very welcome. The statutory deduction for residents will be increased from \$50,000 to \$60,000 effective from this year. The benefits of the present concession for principal places of residence will be extended to include home unit and building unit owners under certain defined conditions. The Premier and Treasurer indicated major new concessions for small companies and businesses. A complete exemption from land tax will apply from this year to companies owning land with a taxable value less than \$10,000. The proposal will benefit almost 2 000 companies or around 15 per cent of present company tax-payers.

The special deduction of up to \$30,000 from taxable land value will apply to qualifying small businesses in the corporate sector. Proposed reforms in land valuations for land tax purposes will be welcomed, and the phasing in of new valuations, which reflect huge increases over a maximum period of five land tax years, should go a long way to evening out the anomaly that has existed in the past.

The Government's initiatives in regard to stamp duty also are a step in the right direction. As they are clearly set out in the Budget papers, I do not intend to outline them. It is hoped that they will encourage more business through the Brisbane Stock Exchange and also enable Queensland to become a major capital market.

The concessions for home-buyers, particularly for first-home-buyers, will be well received.

The importance of mining to Queensland cannot be overstressed. It contributes greatly to the economy of this State, not only by directly creating jobs but also through the multiplier effect.

The Premier and Treasurer has indicated that revenues have been affected by the downturn in the Japanese coal market, but that the impact has been cushioned by additional revenue from new mines. Such a downturn was to be expected. These days, members of the Opposition are silent about the coal industry. At long last, they must recognise that, in order for Queensland to sell its coal, it must be able to compete and to meet market demands. Because of favourable shipping charges, other nations are able to compete very effectively against Queensland. Unfortunately, in the past, union demands have assisted to erode Queensland's competitiveness on world markets. It is significant, however, that over the past year or so the coal industry has enjoyed industrial harmony. Obviously the unions are waking up to the fact that Queensland was losing its competitiveness on world markets.

Mr Warburton: Coal industry leaders blame your freight charges.

Mr NEAL: The Minister for Mines and Energy has indicated what will happen in that regard.

Mr Casey interjected.

Mr NEAL: The honourable member can have his say, later.

I note that the Budget makes tentative provision for royalty payments of approximately \$1m from the Jackson oil pipeline. This raises a matter of concern to me, namely, the damage that is done to shire roads and other roads by the very large road tankers that

carry oil and condensate from the various fields in the Surat Basin and also some of the oil from the Jackson field. If the developers of the fields in the Surat Basin want to continue to produce gas, obviously they need to have the oil transported from the fields. I hope that the many companies operating in the Surat Basin will be able to plug into the Jackson-Moonie pipeline. If they are able to do so, a very heavy burden will be lifted from the roads and a major traffic hazard will be eliminated. The very large road tankers create problems on the road.

I am pleased to note that the estimated overall operating deficit of the Railway Department is only \$37.4m, compared with the \$138.1m budgeted for last year. It seems that all railway systems in Australia impose a very heavy burden on the tax-payers in the respective States. Queensland has the greatest length of rail track of any State and, at the same time, it is the most decentralised State. So we can be thankful that Queensland's railways do not incur the deficits that are incurred by the railways of New South Wales and Victoria.

I quote from a mid-year "IPA Review", which, under the title "The Railways: Haemorrhage of the Body Politic", highlights what is happening. It states—

"We do not ride upon the railroad, it rides upon us'. The need to fund the huge railway deficits in N.S.W. and Victoria are one of the main reasons why State Governments are finding it so difficult to contain state taxes. Each railway job is, on average, being subsidised by the taxpayer to the order of \$16,000 a year."

It further states—

"The Annual Report of VicRail in Victoria reveals a Government contribution to make up operating losses of about \$165m in 1980/81 and \$233m in 1981/82, which represent 65 percent and 88 percent respectively of total revenue receipts excluding the supplement. For 1981/82 this amounts to over \$11,100 per employee, which is generous to say the least. For 1982/83 the budgeted revenue is \$276m and expenditure \$589m but in February of this year the Victorian Treasurer conservatively estimated that revenue would be down by \$25m, making a taxpayer contribution towards the operating loss of VicRail of \$338m, which is a contribution of about 135 percent of revenue or \$16,177 per staff member."

That gives an indication of the problems that are experienced in other States. It is pleasing to note that it is not happening to that extent in Queensland.

I am also pleased to see the upgrading of worker accommodation. Many fitters' homes have left a lot to be desired. The Railway Department has provided many new homes of a very good standard. I thank the Minister for the homes that have been built in my electorate. They are certainly a step in the right direction, although attempts should be made to speed up the program.

Hospital funding has been increased by 14.3 per cent. That allows a modest gain in real money terms on last year's allocation. The allocation allows for the appointment during the year of 630 additional staff, including nurses, doctors and other employees. I am particularly pleased with the increases in those areas and with the progress of the new hospital at Mungindi, which has almost been completed at a cost of \$3.756m.

Plans are also under review for the proposed new hospital in Dirranbandi at a cost at this stage of approximately \$3m. I trust that the Minister will ensure that the views of the board are given due consideration in the overall planning of that hospital. I believe that it is important that local knowledge be contributed.

One matter that is of great concern to me, which should also be of concern to all Queenslanders, is the Hawke Government's abdication of its responsibilities to the sick and infirm of this State. It has abdicated its responsibilities for cheap political purposes by refusing to give Queensland its proper share of funding.

Queenslanders will pay the compulsory Medicare tax like other Australians. However, they will receive in return only \$29 per head compared with \$49.60 in the other States. As outlined in the Premier and Treasurer's Financial Statement, during the next five years that will amount to a loss to Queensland's hospital system of \$260m. Yet the ALP in this State supports the Hawke Government's discrimination against the sick. It supports Dr Blewett's discrimination against the people of this State. When Dr Blewett came to Queensland earlier this year and appeared on television with the Minister for Health (Mr Austin) he blew any chance of convincing the people of Queensland about the advantages of Medicare.

Primary industries continue to play a dominant role in the export-earning capacity of Queensland. This year has been one of extremes. Until April a drought was being experienced. Following that, a series of floods have occurred. I have forgotten the number of times that the Balonne River system has been in flood and flowing. As has been outlined in the Budget documents, expenditure on natural disaster relief arrangements is expected to be \$63.9m this year, with a major part of that assistance relating to restocking loans.

Mr Casey: Will you tell us why the grain-growers went down?

Mr NEAL: Why the grain-growers went down?

Mr Casey: You're a grain-grower. Will you tell us that?

Mr NEAL: That is another question. I do not really know. I am not in possession of the facts or the reasons why the grain-growers went down, other than what I have read in the newspapers. It would be the same material that the honourable member for Mackay has read. It was reported that the difficulties resulted from currency dealings on the international market and investment in futures. It is a matter of public record that the Government has displayed its understanding of the problems associated with drought. However, the time in which an application for restocking loans may be lodged after the revocation of a drought declaration should be extended, because problems have arisen. On many occasions droughts do not break, so to speak. Partial relief rain might fall, but perhaps at the wrong time for the rejuvenation of pastures, and the drought declaration is lifted. In those circumstances the prudent manager will not restock; he will wait for his land to grass up properly. The time during which loans are available should be extended to meet those conditions.

Drought declaration should be based on prevailing conditions—that is, the availability of feed and water—and not on the criterion of the condition of stock having deteriorated. It is sensible to encourage sale for slaughter or movement to agistment while stock are in a saleable condition or are strong enough to be moved. By and large, however, Government assistance has been of great benefit not only to save many from financial ruin but also to preserve the breeding stock of our State.

The lot of the farmer in my area has not been easy. This year, after four bad years, the season looked promising. However, too much rain fell and that delayed or prevented the planting of large areas of winter cereals. Wheat planted late was further hit by rains during harvest. Huge losses have resulted not only from wheat not being harvested but also from downgrading and resultant dockages. Farmers are fortunate to have a Government that is sympathetic and understanding, and they have responded in the appropriate manner at the polling booths. They can certainly be forgiven for not wanting to have a bar of the ALP when considering its track record in the Commonwealth and the States of New South Wales and Victoria.

An article in this week's "Queensland Graingrower" reads—

"Growers in Victoria and N.S.W. are being exploited by their own governments according to the Q.G.G.A. general manager George Houen."

Mr Casey: It's not a very authoritative document when they can't even tell you what is happening in their own organisation in Queensland.

Mr NEAL: It is not up to that gentleman, as I understand it, to be in a position to do that. I am quoting an article in the paper. It was written by Mr Houen and in my opinion he is quite entitled to make those remarks. The article continues—

"He told State Council meeting growers in the south—particularly in Victoria and N.S.W.—were reeling under 'the ever-rising rail freights and government interference in grain handling'.

Mr Houen, one of the delegates to the half-yearly meeting of the Australian Wheatgrowers Federation—"

so the member for Mackay should not worry about it just being the grain-growers—

"reporting on the meeting said that, at the same time, efforts to achieve a co-ordinated approach to grain transport transcending the State borders of South Australia, Victoria and N.S.W., had ground to a halt because of the determination of individual State rail authorities to force all grain produced to be transported and shipped through their own facilities.

'Clearly the growers in Victoria and N.S.W. are being exploited by their governments', he said."

That is what is happening. That is a matter of record and cannot be denied.

If the member for Mackay wants to know a little of what is happening about the grain-growers and whether or not the Government knows what is going on, I can tell him but I point out that the Opposition spokesman on primary industries did not even know what was going on.

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

Mr NEAL: Because of an interjection from the honourable member for Mackay just prior to the luncheon recess, I did not finish quoting from "The Queensland Graingrower", which stated that the growers in Victoria and New South Wales are being exploited by their Governments. Mr Houen of the Queensland Graingrowers Association went on to say—

"The conference carried a resolution supporting the V.F.G.A. in its fight against the Victorian Government's new levy on public authorities which will bleed their Grain Elevators Board of its reserve funds and leave it at the mercy of the Loan Council to obtain approval to undertake new capital projects."

That is similar to what I was accusing Mr Wran of doing this morning. So it seems that Mr Cain is up to the same little act of creaming funds from these boards in Victoria.

When the collapse of the Queensland Graingrowers Association was announced, the honourable member for Murrumba (Mr Kruger), who is the Opposition spokesman on primary industries, displayed his total lack of understanding of the grain industry. On a current affairs program he made the incredible statement that Parliament had only recently passed legislation to set up the new Queensland Grain Handling Authority and the Queensland Graingrowers Association. The honourable member did not know the difference between the Grain Handling Authority and the Queensland Graingrowers Association. The Leader of the Opposition was no better informed.

Mr Burns: How much did you contribute to the Queensland Graingrowers Association?

Mr NEAL: I hit the bin. The honourable member should not worry about that. I do not have to divulge how much I contributed, just as the honourable member does not have to reveal how much the unions contribute to his party. What I do with my money is my business and I do not have to publicise it. I did hit the bin in that regard.

Mr HOOPER: I rise to a point of order. I have been listening to the erudite speech of the honourable member for Balonne. What does "hit the bin" mean? Is that parliamentary?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth) Order! There is no point of order.

Mr NEAL: Once again the member for Archerfield is being a smart Alec. The only bin he would hit would be the rubbish bin which, with some of the things he says in this Chamber, is where he belongs. The honourable member can wear that one!

As I was about to say, the Leader of the Opposition was going round the State and really getting stuck into the Queensland Graingrowers Association. It seemed to me that the Leader of the Opposition was confused between the Central Queensland Sorghum Marketing Board, the Queensland Graingrowers Association, the Grain Handling Authority and the State Wheat Board.

Mr Burns: Are you satisfied with the way the Queensland Graingrowers Association handled that particular matter?

Mr NEAL: As I said earlier, I consider that the Queensland Graingrowers Association is a very good association, but it certainly has some problems. I have yet to find out the full story. Nobody could be happy with what has happened. All I say is that in the past it was a very, very effective organisation. The only thing that I know so far is that the problems have been caused by one person, who, as I told the member for Mackay, was involved in currency dealings.

Mr Burns: It wouldn't have been only one.

Mr NEAL: It is not for me to make statements on that matter because I do not know, nor does the honourable member. A good deal of investigation will have to take place before the full facts are revealed.

The assistance given to the Queensland Livestock and Meat Authority to computerise its market advisory services has been very well received by primary producers, who are also pleased with the proposed establishment of an arid zone research institute at Longreach which, as outlined in the Budget, will have \$230,000 expended on it this year, with an eventual cost of approximately \$5m.

Although the \$125,000 allocated for the upgrading of activities in soil conservation is small, it is very welcome. Much remains to be done. Because other honourable members have highlighted the problems associated with soil conservation, I will not dwell on them.

The allocation for main roads has been increased by 26.3 per cent over actual expenditure last year to \$485.9m. That is a welcome increase. I would like greater progress to have been made in permanent works, but the excessively wet year in the south west of the State did not permit that to happen. Local councils and the Main Roads Department have been very busy on restoration, repair and maintenance work. The continuing permeation of water into the road foundations has caused a great deal of pot-holing and the breaking up of shoulders and pavements. Unfortunately, the councils and the Main Roads Department cannot do much about those problems until the roads dry out.

I do not intend to detail all the roads in my electorate that require work done on them, but I would like the missing links between St George and Surat on the Carnarvon Highway, and between St George, Noondoo and Dirranbandi on the Hebel Road, to be completed. During the floods this year Dirranbandi was isolated on a number of occasions for prolonged periods.

I should like the Main Roads Department and the Railway Department to inspect the section of the road east of the township where Policeman's Lagoon overflows and cuts off the town. The railway embankment is a major cause of the problem. It collects the water and diverts it under the railway bridge where it floods the road. I would like to see more permanent work done on the St George-Mitchell road as well as on the Meandarra-Bungunya road. I was pleased to note that the Minister had approved a bridge over the Moonie River on the Meandarra-Westmar road to replace the low-level crossing.

As in other areas, local government plays a very important role in my area. The shires are the largest employers of labour, and the Government has provided a constant flow of funds to maintain their ongoing programs. That is greatly appreciated.

The \$30m special assistance scheme, under which emphasis is placed on water supply and sewerage schemes, is very welcome. The Balonne Shire Council has applied for assistance under this scheme to provide treated water for the small townships of Thallon, Bollon and Hebel, all of which presently rely on untreated river water. I hope that the Treasurer will give the applications favourable consideration.

The proposed increase of \$144 in the maximum annual pensioner rate subsidy, effective from 1 January 1984, which is expected to require a total of \$12.9m, will certainly be appreciated.

This year, education is once again taking a sizeable chunk of the overall Budget, with an allocation of \$926.7m. That represents a 10.5 per cent increase over last year's allocation. The Budget is catering for the progressive appointment, in 1983-84, of 893 additional teachers to cater for the estimated enrolment growth and the reduction in class sizes in line with the Ahern committee recommendations and the Government's decision.

Allowances payable under the school conveyance schemes and schemes of assistance for children in remote areas are to be increased by about 8 per cent. However, the Budget does not spell out anything relative to school bus operators. I hope that they will attract the same flow-on.

Increases in text book allowances will cost over \$1m annually.

The increase in per capita grants to non-Government schools is very welcome. The grants are to be increased from \$303 to \$345 a year for primary students and from \$486 to \$522 a year for secondary students.

The term during which assistance is provided under the non-Government schools interest subsidy scheme for capital works is to be extended from 5 to 10 years. However, the interest subsidy rate will be reduced from the current bond rate to a maximum rate of 10 per cent.

The dramatic escalation in the cost of the scheme in recent years is proof positive that it is of great benefit to and is accepted by the non-Government schools. Non-Government schools certainly play a very important role. Not only do they give people the freedom to choose an education for their children; they also provide the only means of education for many children living in isolated areas.

Much more could be said in support of the Budget, but an agreement has been reached to curtail our speeches to less than 40 minutes. I will not be able to canvass a number of matters, but I shall conclude by contrasting the Queensland Budget with the Hawke Budget. On the one hand, the Queensland Government has a responsible, balanced Budget that will ensure that this State maintains its progress on a sound economic footing; on the other hand, the Federal Government has a deficit of massive proportions in a Budget that has been based not on sound economic principles but rather on wishful thinking and the hope that an upturn in the world economy will save the day. One cannot rob Peter to pay Paul. In the final analysis, someone has to pay the piper, and in this instance it will be the people of Australia.

I congratulate the Premier and Treasurer, and I have great pleasure in supporting the Budget.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate) (2.26 p.m.): Prior to dealing with some of the Budget documents in general, I intend to refer to some rather disturbing features related to the 1983-84 estimates of expenditure for a number of State Government departments.

The State Public Relations Bureau, which, as all honourable members are aware, churns out pro-Government propaganda and cost \$561,569 last financial year for salaries and contingencies alone, is now to become part of the Chief Office of the Premier's Department. It seems that no longer will we be able to identify the centre of expenditure of that propaganda machine; nor will we have easy access to the details of staffing levels. Obviously, that move has been made to keep the State Public Relations Bureau staffing levels and expenses under wraps, as happens now with the details of ministerial expenses in respect of which some embarrassing criticism has been levelled at the Government from time to time. The Government is now being seen to invoke its policy of "What the public does not know won't hurt them".

The Premier-cum-Treasurer has never shown a reluctance to boost staffing levels in the Premier's Department, and that is in spite of the disgraceful refusal to give a much-warranted increase in staff to departments such as the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs.

In 1982-83, the number of persons employed in the Chief Office of the Premier's Department totalled 60. If that figure is added to the 1982-83 staff numbers for the State Public Relations Bureau, and to the staff numbers for the Co-ordinator-General's Department, which is now included under the Chief Office of the Premier's Department, it means that a total of 154 persons were employed in the Premier's Department in the last financial year.

The staffing level for this financial year, 1983-84, is shown as 166, which is an increase of 12. Some people may consider that increase to be of little significance; but if similar treatment had been meted out to other departments that are unable to be as effective and efficient as they are expected to be, there might be some justification for the increased number of personnel now surrounding the Premier.

Two sections of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs are of extreme importance to the workers and industry of Queensland. I refer to the Division of Occupational Safety and to the Industry and Commerce Training Commission, which is responsible, in the main, for Queensland's apprenticeship training system. Nothing better displays the weak-kneed incompetence of the incumbent Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs than his inability to obtain the very necessary staffing level increases in these two very important areas.

The Division of Occupational Safety is stretched beyond its limits with insufficient numbers of inspectorial staff. Its staff numbers have not been increased; in fact, they have decreased. That has happened at a time when there is a greater need than ever before for surveillance and other work for public and worker safety. So much for the Government's and the Minister's pathetic pretence at being concerned about occupational health and safety!

To add insult to injury, the present staffing level in the Division of Occupational Safety is the same as it was 10 years ago, in 1974. Of course, the transfer in 1979-80 of the Weights and Measures Branch from the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs to the Consumer Affairs Bureau must be considered in that regard. Despite the dramatic increase in work-load during a decade of natural growth and activity, particularly in the construction industry, not one more person has been employed in the Division of Occupational Safety.

The Industry and Commerce Training Commission is facing almost identical difficulties. One more person has been added to the staff this financial year, which brings the total number of staff to 81. That is only five more than the commission had 10 years ago, when it was known as the Apprenticeship Office.

The failure to keep pace with staffing needs in those two very important divisions is an indictment on the Minister, who has shown himself to be completely out of touch with the industrial relations community and the urgent needs of his own department. The trade training system in Queensland suffers when, at question time, the Minister pontificates or bellows strident responses to the Opposition's criticisms of his failures and inabilities.

Major industry groups are as critical of the Queensland Government's attitude towards the training of the youth of Queensland as I have been. In a 1983 submission to the Queensland Government on the state of the metal industry, the Queensland branch of the Metal Trades Industry Association said—

“The activities and progress of the commission is being frustrated by the completely inadequate staffing levels.

In all these circumstances there exists a serious requirement for the Government to take immediate action to review the manning level of the Industry and Commerce Training Commission to enable it to properly carry out its charter and move into areas of training other than just apprenticeship.

Unless this action is taken the Commission will continue to wander along a well-trod path which involves reacting to circumstances or events after they have occurred, instead of looking outwardly at the training needs of the State ahead of the requirement and planning to match the need at the required time.”

Those statements by one of Queensland's major employer organisations are critical of the Minister's failure to provide what Queensland industry desperately requires.

On Tuesday last, the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs pathetically endeavoured to give support to his embracing of the sledge-hammer type industrial legislation by making a passing reference to man-hours lost in Australia—not in Queensland—because of industrial disputation. The Minister should tidy up his own back yard.

Anyone who is interested in industrial relations and who speaks with people from the industrial relations community knows that the level of industrial disputation in private industry is at an all-time low in Queensland. An analysis of the reasons for stoppages of work by employees in the private sector during the last 12 months reveals that any industrial stoppages have been caused mainly by redundancy problems or by safety problems on the job.

The bulk of industrial disputation in Queensland over the past 12 months took place not in the private sector but in the public sector. This Government and its Ministers have shown an abysmal lack of understanding of what good industrial relations is all about.

The Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) blatantly defied a recommendation of the State Industrial Commission. His action was unprecedented and all it did was damage the State's arbitration system. Such action has never been taken previously by a Minister of the Crown. Obviously he was supported at the time by the then National-Liberal Cabinet.

Never before in the railways, the electricity industry, the teaching profession and the nursing profession has this State witnessed such a disturbing break-down in public sector industrial relations as has occurred in recent times. At a time when the Premier and the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs support tougher industrial laws and big-stick or sledge-hammer legislation, the people of Queensland are being told—as appears in a recently published summary of the legislative program for 1982-83—that the industrial relations environment in Queensland is relatively good.

The Queensland Year Book for 1981 shows that working days lost as the result of industrial disputation numbered 465 800. In contrast, in the same year, the number of days lost owing to temporary disability as the result of industrial accidents stood at 1 497 060, or three times the number lost as the result of industrial disputes. I point out that the figure in relation to accidents relates only to compensated accidents.

Mr Lingard: What a stupid comparison.

Mr WARBURTON: It is not a stupid comparison; it is a logical comparison. While the Government has attempted to impose its will upon the workers in relation to industrial legislation, it has not applied itself to ensuring occupational health and safety.

Previously I made the point that in the 10 years since 1974 the Government failed to increase the number of officers in the Division of Occupational Safety. In this Budget it provides for a decrease in the number. Recently a spate of industrial accidents has occurred in Brisbane. Let the honourable member for Fassifern tell me how a reduced staff in the Division of Occupational Safety can properly police the activities of the people who are responsible for those accidents. It simply cannot. The fact that this situation has been allowed to develop is an indictment of the Queensland Government.

Industrial action by Queensland workers is not at a level that requires the Queensland Government to adopt other than a more conciliatory and consultative approach to its employees. However, the number of industrial health problems and industrial accidents in the work-force is steadily increasing. The records show conclusively that that number is rising at a time when the number of days lost owing to industrial strife or industrial disputation is declining. Where should the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs direct his efforts? Where should the Government direct its efforts? Obviously their efforts should be directed towards ensuring occupational health and safety. But the Government has done nothing about it. Obviously it intends to veer away from its responsibilities. The Government cannot properly carry out its job in the area of occupational safety if it reduces staff levels. I put that argument forward to honourable members today.

The failure of the Government and the Minister to boost the ability of the department to pay better attention to the problems that it confronts shows, as far as I am concerned, a callous disregard for the health and welfare of Queensland workers.

I refer now to the Budget in general. On numerous occasions I have been asked how I would summarise the Budget that was introduced by the Premier and Treasurer. I have thought about the matter and the best description that I could come up with is that it could reasonably be summarised as a presentation of largely incomprehensible and inadequate information for largely uncritical listeners and readers engineered to the specifications of a Government that is obsessed by evasiveness and secrecy. That is the best possible description for the Budget that has been introduced by the Government on this very late occasion.

The Budget papers in Queensland suffer from major omissions. They are full of inaccuracies, contradictions and wild assertions that are unsupported by evidence. In addition, they fail to provide any consolidated financial overview of Queensland's public bodies or quangos, as they are commonly known. There is also a complete failure to give anything like a true and accurate picture of the activities of Government departments.

In short, the Budget papers have been blatantly politicised to cover up for the Government. They are woefully inadequate in terms of providing either a true and accurate projection of the State's revenue and expenditure program or an evaluation of the State's economic performance, which is most important of all. The abysmal condition of the Queensland Budget papers is obvious if a comparison is made with the Budget papers of the other States of Australia.

Today I address some comments to the need for budgetary and parliamentary reform, the urgency for which cannot be shown better than by a perusal of the so-called Budget

papers for this financial year. The Premier and Treasurer likes to talk about good government and prudent financial management yet, almost in the same breath, he dismisses without thought the very mechanisms of control and accountability which alone are capable of permitting good government and prudent financial management.

It is generally accepted that, apart from the assumption of a competent and dedicated public service, there are four essential requirements for good government and sound, prudent financial management of tax-payers' moneys. They are—

- (1) A public accounts committee and other committees of the Parliament;
- (2) Uniform accounting and reporting procedures for the State's statutory authorities;
- (3) Program budgeting, which is sometimes called program priority budgeting; and
- (4) A Financial Administration and Audit Act.

Of those four essential requirements, Queensland has only a Financial Administration and Audit Act. It is interesting to note that the Government consistently likes to pat itself on the back and say how essential it is that Queensland have such an Act and at the same time dismiss the other three very important requirements.

The budgetary reform that has the most obvious relevant to the Budget papers is program budgeting. As in so many other cases, Queensland remains the only State not to introduce or begin to introduce program budgeting.

It is basic to modern financial management of the public sector that the Budget should report to Parliament on a program basis, that the goals for each program should be clearly stated and that performance should be assessed and evaluated regularly.

Queensland, in spite of what I believe to be the recommendations of the Auditor-General in favour of program budgeting, adheres to an archaic line-item structure that precludes analysis and precludes evaluation of departmental expenditure on a program basis.

Mr Gunn: They looked at this in 1973. The Under Treasurer went to America. He reckons they were in a mess over there. They have abandoned it since. All Labor States, I know, use program budgeting; but, when we looked at it in 1973, we rejected it.

Mr WARBURTON: I am compelled to say to the Deputy Premier that I find it odd that the Government will not adopt program budgeting. I feel constrained to say, knowing that the Deputy Premier will not agree, that I am firmly of the opinion, as a result of my experiences as a member of Parliament, that the only reason why this Government will not accept program budgeting is, as I said earlier, that it is content to hide behind the very simplistic and old-fashioned system that now operates.

Mr Gunn interjected.

Mr WARBURTON: I must take note of the people I regard as having a great deal of expertise in this field.

How do we find out from the State Budget with any degree of certainty just where the money goes? This might explain why I feel we need program budgeting and will probably answer the question for the Deputy Premier. To find out from the Budget with any degree of certainty just where the money goes and what activities are funded is almost an impossibility. The information provided in the Budget Speech and Financial Statement is of the most general kind. The appendix on capital works provides the most basic type of information and is full of inaccuracies. For example, as was stated by the Leader of the Opposition the other day, the appendix on capital works shows that \$241.4m is to be allocated for housing, presumably for capital works. However, when that is traced through to the Estimates, it is discovered that nothing like that amount is to be used for capital works in the field of housing. Only \$47.6m is allocated to the actual erection of houses—the bricks and mortar work—the remainder being taken up for salaries, interest, administrative costs and so on. Some members of the Government might say, "What is wrong with that? That is what we have been doing for the 27 years we have been the Government." I say that that is not the standard of budgetary recording that I as a parliamentarian expect. I expect some further details and I want to know exactly where the amounts allocated under the Estimates are to be directed.

Nowhere at all in the Budget papers does there appear a total of the capital works program of the Government. Anybody who relies on the appendix that lists the so-called capital works as being a true indication of funding to be made available for bricks and

mortar is sadly mistaken. He would be out by something like \$193.8m for housing alone. That is the point I make and it is why I very definitely support the proposal that program budgeting be introduced with the utmost expedition. Program budgeting is imperative, not only for the Opposition to be able to see exactly what the financial position is, but also for the Government to properly take the State into the twentieth century with its financial arrangements.

I suggest that this glossing over of the facts through the presentation of inadequate and misleading information has been deliberate. That is the point that I made previously to the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn). I also submit that the Government has no real idea of what its capital works program will finally be. It has some idea of what it expects it to be at this time, but it has no idea what it will finally be. The approach seems to be to use last year's Budget papers, add a further 10 per cent and ask the departments for a few expenditure highlights so that the Budget can be given a new look. Of course, the Government continues to say that it has been able to balance the Budget.

The extent to which line-item budgeting can permit the development of expenditure irregularities, illogicalities and inanities is richly illustrated. At the moment the Treasury seems to be endeavouring to keep the irregularities under control by having a bevy of financial and audit officers, working like some kind of internal secret service network, checking up on departments to see that Treasury requirements are met. I do not say that the job they do is not necessary; under the existing system, of course it is necessary. What I do say is that the internal control of expenditure and the monitoring of performance—I emphasise "performance"—can be better done by departments themselves under the program budgeting format. That is the basic difference between the two systems.

One reason why Treasury appears to me to be opposed to program budgeting is that it would restrict the power and the influence of that department and allow departments to be more autonomous and less bound by Treasury directions. I accept that what I have said could be seen by many as an exaggeration. However, when the New South Wales Department of Welfare Services introduced program budgeting, it discovered that it was not fulfilling approximately half of its allocated functions. The expenditure was OK but it was performing at only half pace.

The advantages of program budgeting are largely threefold. It encourages a more efficient administration by costing the output of a Government and not just the input. It gives a Government a better control over spending priorities by showing the cost of each function, program and activity instead of merely the departmental running costs. It also helps a Government to justify expenditure by highlighting the benefits and achievements of Government spending. However, the Opposition is aware that the Government has never really shown any concern for justifying expenditure. It would seem that the main reason the Government is apparently opposed to program budgeting is that it would provide too much information, from its point of view, for public consumption. Program budgeting would provide a marked improvement in accountability for expenditure of public moneys and, in Queensland, would be a first step towards open government.

I now wish to make a few comments about the necessity for a public accounts committee, an issue that is very basic to good government and good financial management. That matter will not go away, despite the hopes of some members of the National Party Government. The purpose of a public accounts committee is primarily twofold. It would scrutinise the actions and activities of the executive Government and would scrutinise and check the activities of public servants. It is that second role that many would regard as being pre-eminent. The real purpose of a public accounts committee is to get to the bottom of things through questioning public servants. Some people would argue that politicians have a natural ability to ask all sorts of curly questions.

Bureaucratic inertia is a common result of the absence of adequate parliamentary scrutiny. It is unlikely to be combated by Ministers. Without being too unfair, I should say that, more often than not, as was shown in the British television program "Yes, Minister", the Minister would be more likely to be brought under departmental control than to exercise his own authority.

One of the real problems is not necessarily related to impropriety or corruption, but more to what I refer to as the sludge that builds up at the bottom of the bureaucratic tank and goes unnoticed by Parliament and remains undisturbed by this Government that has been unchanged for 27 years. Only a public accounts committee can identify the sludge and the factors responsible for it. Because Ministers become part of the sludge-making process, they are certainly not aware of it.

Only a few weeks before the financial collapse of the Peanut Marketing Board the Auditor-General's report, which was tabled in Parliament, gave that board a clean bill of health. I am not criticising the Auditor-General because the system dictated that that would be so. I am criticising the system. The Auditor-General has a very small staff. That makes it impossible for him to thoroughly investigate the financial affairs of departments and quangos. More importantly, the Auditor-General can only certify that the requirements of the Financial Administration and Audit Act have been met. He cannot comment on whether the requirements are adequate or whether they fulfil any real purpose. As is the case with the Treasurer's instructions on ministerial expenses, the Auditor-General cannot and does not question Ministers on the propriety of their expenditure as long as the necessary chits or forms are authorised. In other words, the Auditor-General cannot ask any curly questions. He cannot insist on being told whether unwarranted expenditure has been incurred and he cannot insist that public servants justify the reasons for their decisions, but a public accounts committee could.

If anyone is responsible, it is the Minister. The Premier has often said that a public accounts committee is not needed because Ministers are completely capable of keeping their departments under control and ensuring that they are run efficiently. It was therefore very unfortunate that the former Minister for Primary Industries was completely unaware of the problems in the Peanut Marketing Board. If we are to believe what we were told, he was acquainted with the real situation only a short time prior to the board's collapse. It is a pity that the honourable member for Balonne did not give us the facts concerning the Peanut Marketing Board. He appeared to be reasonably au fait with all boards in Queensland except the Graingrowers' Association which, unfortunately, is in heaps of trouble.

When Ministers are fed information and are told by boards and bureaucrats only what they believe the Minister should be told and the Auditor-General is constrained by the provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, the only body capable of effectively scrutinising activities is a public accounts committee of this Parliament. The main reasons for the Premier's remaining opposed to the establishment of such a committee are the so-called lurks and perks of office and the expenses incurred by politicians in running round the State. That is what he tells us.

In response to an allegation of that type, I personally checked on the allowances or payments made to members of public accounts committees in the other States, and the information that I obtained completely refutes the Premier's argument. Members of the Public Accounts Committee in Western Australia are not paid. If a meeting is held on a non-sitting day, they are paid the cost of travelling to the meeting, but no other costs are paid. The committee rarely travels anywhere in the State.

The members of the Public Accounts Committee in South Australia are paid an allowance of \$308.30 a month, and the chairman receives \$440.08 a month, but no other expenses are met.

The members of the Public Accounts Committee in New South Wales receive \$60.50 for each day they attend a meeting when the House is not sitting. If the House is sitting, they do not receive any allowance.

The members of the Public Accounts Committee in Tasmania receive \$29 for each meeting, and the chairman receives \$44. In Victoria, a State that is often mentioned in this House, only the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee receives an allowance, and that amounts to 5 per cent of a back-bencher's basic salary.

I place on record now that the Opposition refuses to accept one of the reasons that the Premier continually puts forward for not setting up a public accounts committee in this Parliament, that is, that we are out to feather our own nests. I say on behalf of the Opposition members that we are prepared to take our place on any public accounts committee without any additional remuneration whatsoever. I place that on record to put to rest once and for all the comments that the Premier continually makes.

Given the cheapness of maintaining a public accounts committee, if I may put it that way, one can only come to other conclusions about the real bases of the Premier's objections to the setting up of such a committee in this Parliament. Really, a public accounts committee comes down to parliamentary scrutiny of the executive. It has the potential to unearth the skeletons in the Government's closet.

Perhaps the greatest justification for setting up a public accounts committee was unwittingly given by the Premier's own department when two public servants were dispatched to New South Wales to bring back the report on the accounting and reporting requirements for statutory authorities, which was produced by no less a body than the New South Wales Public Accounts Committee. How ironical it is that the Premier, who has constantly ranted and raved about the uselessness of a public accounts committee, should send two of his officers to New South Wales to pick up a copy of that report hot off the press, which, I understand, could be considered as the basis for legislation in Queensland covering statutory authorities. How ironical and how hypocritical!

If the Premier thinks that public accounts committees are useless, why did he send down for the latest report on uniform reporting and accounting procedures for quangos? If public accounts committees are useless, as the Premier says, why is he using the latest report of the New South Wales Public Accounts Committee as the basis for proposed legislation?

Dramatic changes are needed in the budgetary processes of this State. I hope that reconsideration of program budgeting will be one of the priority items of the new Government. As I see it, it is the Treasury's job to present accurately the financial position of Queensland and to describe correctly Queensland's economic position according to the facts. Treasury should not be an arm of the National Party's propaganda department. Urgent explanations are required if these Budget papers are to retain any credibility. If the Treasury has access to information that disproves or qualifies the figures provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which show that the Queensland economy declined by 2 per cent in 1982-83, that is the type of information that should be presented in this Chamber.

All members received a document called "Queensland Economy 1982-83". The first words in the introduction are—

"The State continued its economic growth in 1982-83."

The Australian Bureau of Statistics provides different information. On this occasion I believe the bureau.

The contradictory figures on the value of mineral production in Queensland need to be explained, as do the numerous other spongy, rubbery figures to which the Leader of the Opposition referred in this debate. Until such explanations are forthcoming from the Treasurer, the Budget papers as a whole remain suspect and the real economic and financial position of Queensland for the forthcoming year is uncertain. One must remember that the Treasurer said that if an additional \$21m is not received from the Federal Government for Medicare, and if the Southport bar, which is to cost \$32m, is to be funded, a substantial restructuring of the Budget will be required. It is unbelievable that major restructuring of the Budget may be needed if about \$50m is not forthcoming from as yet unknown sources.

Mr SIMPSON (Cooroora) (3.7 p.m.): It does not surprise me that members of the Opposition have not acknowledged what a wonderful Budget the Treasurer brought down and how well run Queensland is. The people who will weigh the pros and cons of the Budget will be those considering whether to lend their hard-earned cash for the development of Queensland. They will do so without the guffawing, inane questioning and pathetic arguments that members of the Opposition favour. Whether people are prepared to invest in Queensland is determined by whether they think it is a good risk. The Government of Queensland has come up trumps because Queensland has a better credit rating than any other State in the Commonwealth.

The ethos of the socialist Labor Party Opposition is that taxation should be used as a social tool to take money from the productive, energetic people in the community and give it to those who are less productive or to those in need. The Government believes in encouraging people to be productive, so that their production can be maximised for the good of everyone. People in need will be better cared for through the use and development of resources by this Government than they will be under the sick policies of the socialists.

The socialists suppress productivity. The other socialist States in Australia are broke, but Queensland is not. The other States are increasing taxes, as one would expect them to, in attempts to reduce their deficits and to give effect to their ethos of using taxation as a social tool. Taxation should not be used as a social tool. That highlights the shortsightedness and ineptitude of the socialist philosophy.

The Queensland Government's philosophy is not to reduce production or discourage business. Victoria and New South Wales have imposed a super-tax of 6 per cent, not 5 per cent, on pay-rolls above a certain amount. The Governments of those States, as is typical of socialist Governments, say to themselves, "Ah, we will get at the employers."

A very sad state of affairs exists in this country. Under the Commonwealth Constitution, the Federal Government is supposed to adopt an even-handed attitude to all people in Australia, no matter in which State they reside and no matter which Government controls that State.

An Opposition Member: You are doing too well; that is the problem.

Mr SIMPSON: Yes, Queensland has done too well. And because of that the Federal socialists are trying to discriminate against Queensland. The Queensland Government has shown what can be done by encouraging productivity.

Under Medicare, an additional tax of 1 per cent will be imposed on all incomes, no matter in which State those incomes are earned. However, the Commonwealth Government's reimbursements to the so-called general individuals in the various States on a per capita basis are not equal or even. Again the Commonwealth Government is discriminating against Queensland.

Originally, Queensland was offered absolutely nothing by the Federal Government. This State was expected to continue to conduct its free hospital system without any assistance whatever from the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth adopted that attitude because Queensland's free hospital system had been in existence previously. Of course, when the Queensland Government complained to the Federal Government about that, the Federal Government decided that it would reimburse Queensland to the extent of \$37.8m. On a per capita basis, that meant that Queensland would receive \$15.1 per head. In contrast, the average payment per head to the other States will be \$49.6. Where is the fairness in that?

Mr Vaughan: Tell them you do not want it.

Mr SIMPSON: A Labor socialist member now claims that that contribution from the Federal Government, small as it is, should be taken away.

The difference of \$34.5 per head relates to public patients and represents, in a full year, \$86.7m or, in this financial year, \$36m. That is the additional money that Queensland claims it is owed. It is known, of course, that following the Premier and Treasurer's insistence, and at a time prior to the State election, the Commonwealth offered an additional \$15m to Queensland. Besides being unequal, the Commonwealth's contribution to the various States was political. Labor thought that in the Queensland election campaign it would con the people of this State by offering an additional \$15m.

Even with the additional Commonwealth contribution, the payment to Queensland would have been \$29 per head, which is still far below the average of \$49 per head throughout Australia. In other words, in this financial year Queensland is still \$21m short, and in a full year it will be \$52m short. I presume that whatever the allocation to Queensland is in the future, it will still fall short of the contributions to other States by approximately \$50m or \$60m.

I turn now to the money supplied by the Commonwealth for sick aged people. Queensland has received an increase of \$2.65 per day. New South Wales will receive an increase of \$4.30 per day and Victoria will receive an increase of \$3.25 per day. When that allocation is added to the amount received per bed for sick aged persons, the total received in Queensland is \$26.65 compared with \$32.35 in New South Wales and \$45.15 in Victoria. That is an example of the discrimination that is being practised against Queensland and is in keeping with the sick philosophy of the socialists. If a person is a good doer or a good performer, he is penalised or pulled down; if he is not able to perform, he is assisted.

Mr Davis: When you were referring to socialists, were you referring to the Australian Labor Party, or what?

Mr SIMPSON: The Australian Socialist Labor Party.

An Opposition Member: There is no such thing.

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a point of order. I asked the member for Cooroora a question by way of interjection. He referred to the Australian Socialist Labor Party. I resent that, particularly when that statement is made by a member of the National Socialist Fascist Party.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept that point of order because the honourable member who is taking the point of order is as guilty as the honourable member to whom he refers. There is no point of order.

Mr SIMPSON: I realise that Opposition members appear at times to have thin skins. I heard the term "fascist".

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr Hooper: That is spot on where you are concerned.

Mr SIMPSON: That terminology, of course, is incorrect and the type of muck-raking terminology one expects from the Opposition.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The interjections will cease.

Mr SIMPSON: It is obvious that the Opposition does not want to hear my speech because it relates to comparisons with the socialist left Labor Party in other States.

A comparison of the taxes imposed in those socialist States and the taxes in Queensland shows that, per capita, New South Wales has a total of \$640.71, Victoria has a total of \$632.15, Western Australia has a total of \$491.51, Tasmania has a total of \$482.34, Queensland has a total of \$482.30, and South Australia, which does a little better than Queensland because of its small base, has a total of \$452.63, but honourable members should analyse the present cost basis of the Budget in South Australia. Per capita, Queensland really does better than any other State in Australia.

Mr Davis: Are we still a claimant State?

Mr SIMPSON: All States were claimant States—that is, they put in and took back.

Mr De Lacy: Who gets more out of it than they put into it?

Mr SIMPSON: The honourable member has asked a good question. Queensland has 20 per cent of the productivity of this country—

Mr De Lacy: I am talking about per head of population.

Mr SIMPSON: The honourable member asked, "Who puts the most in?" The only two States in this country that show a profit are Queensland and Western Australia.

Mr De Lacy: What do you mean? A profit on what?

Mr SIMPSON: A profit on productivity over the cost of running those States. It is virtually even steven or a balanced situation of productivity versus expenditure in Western Australia. On that basis Queensland is the only State that is profitable. It is carrying the rest of Australia.

Mr De Lacy: We are getting more per head of population.

Mr SIMPSON: I know that the Opposition members do not want to hear this.

That productivity—the taxation drawn from the productive people and companies in this State—is keeping this country alive.

I have a detailed table of per capita charges, such as gift, probate and succession duties, property taxes (land tax and local government rates), liquor taxes, and various forms of gambling taxes. The amounts differ from State to State. Not always is Queensland the lowest. Motor vehicle charges affect us all, particularly those involved in business, and are thus an interesting barometer of State attitudes. The document includes figures

on pay-roll tax and stamp duty, and on business franchise, petrol and tobacco taxes. It is a lengthy document. As I do not wish to bore the Committee by reading its details, I will table it at the end of my speech.

It has been established that Queensland has lower taxes than most other States. Queensland encourages productivity. That is the present state of affairs. What would have happened if we had not won the recent State election? The Opposition would have its favoured course of action—the imposition of higher taxes. Without a National Party Government—and Queensland is the last bastion of private enterprise on the mainland—Queensland would have death duties, probate duties and a capital gains tax.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Rubbish!

Mr SIMPSON: I know members opposite do not like hearing this.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: We don't mind hearing the facts, but we are being told blatant lies.

Mr SIMPSON: That is not something the Opposition would do?

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Blatant lies.

Mr SIMPSON: Mr Hawke says that it is a good idea. Any number of Federal Labor members are on record as saying that the imposition of a capital gains tax and probate tax is a good idea. Labor uses taxation as a socialist tool to take from the haves and give to the have-nots. No wonder members opposite do not like having their beliefs exposed. If the National Party had not won the last State election, that is what would have happened. I am not merely comparing Queensland with the rest of Australia; I am outlining the socialist philosophy and showing how taxes would escalate under Labor.

The member for Sandgate suggested that the Government is not budgeting correctly. He referred to program budgeting, public accounts committees and the whole host of other quangos that are supposed to be the be-all and end-all of financial management.

Those things do not help with the proper decision-making that selects sensible and profitable projects and programs. The only thing that a public accounts committee can do is monitor the expenditure on projects, not all of which are worthwhile, but which must go ahead after the Government has made its decision. A public accounts committee or program budgeting can in no way make an initial decision sensible. Unless a program makes sense for a State or country, it is worthless.

If honourable members think this is an exercise in semantics on hypotheses, then they should listen to the following comparison of States with public accounts committees and program budgeting with one that does not. One would think that the States with the special programs would be profitable, show a great deal of growth and have balanced Budgets, but that is not the case. In fact, the very opposite is the case because, for the last 12 months, Queensland balanced its Budget whereas New South Wales had a deficit of \$40.1m. Twelve months prior to that the New South Wales deficit was \$80m but, because that Government appropriated trust funds from the power industry, among others, it was able to reduce its deficit. As a result of that appropriation, New South Wales suffered black-outs when electrical generators broke down simply because it did not have the financial capacity to replace those generators. That is an example of the senseless programs overseen by a public accounts committee. There is no substitute for sensible, proper house-keeping.

To 30 June this year Victoria, another State with a public accounts committee, had a deficit of \$135.7m.

Mr Davis: Do you want to know why? It has taken that long to get over the rotten tory rule which those States had.

Mr SIMPSON: If that was the case, the deficit would have been worse when the conservative Governments were in power. But that is not the case.

Under the leadership of Mr Cain, Victoria not only has a deficit of \$135.7m but also in the two years of Mr Cain's Government, taxes in that State have increased by 40 per cent. No wonder people in industry are flocking to Queensland where they are welcomed, encouraged, and rewarded for their endeavours and enterprise.

South Australia, another State with a public accounts committee, is \$57.2m in the red and Western Australia is in the red to the extent of \$14m. So a parliamentary public accounts committee is irrelevant to a State's profitability.

I do not say that the State should not be careful with its finances, avoid duplication and prevent wastage. There is always room for improvement, but that comes about through good, basic logic and common sense in expenditure and programs.

The Budget provides for record expenditure but contains no new taxes, although some charges for conveyancing have been increased. Unfortunately that will have a depressing effect in certain areas. However, concessions are being given to first home-buyers. It is to be hoped that the depressing effect will be offset to some extent by those concessions.

The pay-roll exemption level, which is to be lifted from \$204,000 to \$252,000, will be the highest in Australia. The minimum exemption level—and not all States have this advantage—is to be increased from \$36,000 to \$39,000.

It is sad that the Government has to impose pay-roll tax because it bears no relationship to the ability of a company to pay. It is a direct disincentive to employment.

Mr Davis: Why don't you abolish it?

Mr SIMPSON: I advocate its abolition. Good book-keeping demands that the Budget be balanced. Expenditure and income must be prudently balanced. Therefore, a way must be found to live within our means if the Government abolishes pay-roll tax.

The Commonwealth Government could overcome the problem in Queensland and the other States tomorrow. If pay-roll tax was abolished in all States, the additional employment that would be created would result in a saving in dole payments in the Federal area.

Mr Davis: Unemployment benefits, if you don't mind.

Mr SIMPSON: Very well, unemployment benefits.

Mr Davis: Don't go denigrating the people who are out of work.

Mr SIMPSON: What did the honourable member say?

Mr Davis: You said "dole" That is the wrong term.

Mr SIMPSON: There is nothing discriminatory about the term "dole".

Mr Davis: It is not the correct term. It is unparliamentary.

Mr SIMPSON: It is not unparliamentary. That term is understood by the people but, as the honourable member suggests, the payment may be more correctly referred to as an unemployment benefit.

The savings in benefits should be given directly to the States so that more employment could be provided and the added productivity from the in-work situation would return more to the Commonwealth than it gave to the States. At the same time, the obvious disincentive to the employment of people would be removed.

I do not expect that that will happen because the philosophy of the Federal Government is much the same as that of the Victorian Labor Government, which increased pay-roll tax. That would make the position even more difficult. It would be useless to seek Federal co-operation on that matter.

The land tax concessions outlined in the Budget are long overdue. Land tax is levied according to capital investment in land. The increase in the exemption level from \$50,000 to \$60,000 is an improvement. Unfortunately, the people who use their resources prudently on farms and in small and big business have had to bear this load. They have been penalised. The Government has progressively increased the exemption for primary industry and for business and it is now increasing the exemption by \$10,000.

The land tax benefits for principal places of residence are to be extended to include home unit and building unit owners under certain conditions. That is a wise move. Again, in the matter of land tax, a special deduction of up to \$30,000 from taxable land value is to apply to qualifying small businesses in the corporate sector.

The Budget gives encouragement to business. The services that are being provided throughout the State support the view that the Government is not miserly. Adequate services are being provided. In my electorate, a new police station is being built at Noosa Heads and a new hospital is being built in Nambour. A new police station has been built at Coolumb. They are major undertakings. Those services are being provided for the growing number of people who are flocking to Queensland to get away from the cold, dead hand of socialism in the other States of Australia.

I support the Budget. It will result in this State achieving a record performance in the coming year. It will provide the people of Queensland with greater opportunities than will be provided anywhere else in Australia. This State welcomes enterprising people who are prepared to work and be productive. That is the only way to go in a private enterprise society. The other way leads to decadence.

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

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (3.37 p.m.): I support the remarks of the leader of my party in the Budget debate. I give him credit for exposing the Budget as being a Budget of deceit. As he said, it contains a calculation error of more than \$220m. He also pointed out that, although two weeks has elapsed since the Budget was presented, there has been no explanation, correction or adjustment of the figure. If the Government has made a mistake with one figure, how can we accept that the rest of the figures are correct? The Leader of the Opposition said that the Budget is particularly mean and stingy.

I thank the member for Chatsworth for his contribution, which exposed that the Government is spending most funds in non-Labor areas. Because of that contribution, the Minister for Works and Housing (Mr Wharton) was forced to make a ministerial statement in the House today. The Minister referred to the enormous amount of money that had been spent in Gladstone; in fact, in the Port Curtis region. He said that \$19m had been spent in that area. I am not denying that money has been spent in the area, but I have no way of proving that his figure is correct.

When development started in the Port Curtis region in the early 1960s, the population of Gladstone was 6 000. The Tannum Sands/Boyne Island region contained shacks which were used by people at week-ends. Now, more than 5 000 people live in that area. A magnificent aluminium smelter has been built there and it is contributing greatly to the economy of the State. In March 1976, the Premier had great pleasure in proclaiming Gladstone a city. At that time it had a population of 15 000; it is now almost 25 000.

In earlier years the people of the Tannum Sands and Boyne areas, particularly the school-children, had to put up with a heck of a lot. Only one child in 10 was able to attend a pre-school, and class-rooms in both the primary and secondary schools were overcrowded. Children were accommodated in demountable buildings. That was unacceptable to both the children and the Queensland Teachers Union. Virtually nothing was done in the years before I was elected as the member for Port Curtis. I was disgusted that bad conditions had been allowed to exist for so long. It was not until a couple of years after my election that this Government got its act together and started to make some improvements in the education facilities and other Government services in the region.

The Minister for Works and Housing said that the Government had done a wonderful job. I give credit to the Government for the amount of money that has been spent and the work that has been done in the past three or four years, but I condemn it for its lack of action in the early years which forced children to put up with overcrowded conditions in temporary class-rooms right through their school years. I also condemn the Government for its lack of action in providing health services and services in many other areas.

Although the Government has spent a fair amount of money in Port Curtis in the years since I became the member, it should not rest on its laurels. A number of promises were made by Government members and Ministers during the 1983 election campaign. The Minister for Works and Housing acknowledged that some schools in the electorate, such as the Boyne Island State School, still do not have a tuck-shop or a library. A new primary school was recently opened at Tannum Sands. During the campaign the Minister admitted that, although that new school caters for approximately 300 pupils, it still does not have a playground or recreation area. It was not until after the school was opened by the Minister for Education (Mr Powell) that Boyne Smelters made a donation of \$10,000 towards ground improvements. The p. and c. association is looking

after the interests of the pupils, and I believe that the Government has an obligation to adopt the same attitude as the parents and the companies in the area and get on with the job of providing the amenities that were promised during the election campaign. The amenities would have been provided if the National Party candidate had won the seat, but that was not to be. Both the Minister for Education and the National Party candidate acknowledged that many aspects of education in Port Curtis need some attention.

Although one has been promised for years there is no pre-school in the Mt Larcom area. The residents have been told that, owing to low pupil numbers, it has insufficient priority and will be on the waiting list for sometime.

To attend high school, each day, in excess of 300 children travel to Gladstone by bus from the Boyne Island/Tannum Sands area, so it is obvious that a high school should be provided in the Tannum Sands region for the commencement of the 1985 school year. As I said during the Address in Reply debate, the high school should be ready to enrol Year 8 students in 1985, with an additional class being provided each year so that facilities for students up to Year 12 will be available in 1990.

No doubt the Minister and the Government are pleased with what they have done in the Port Curtis region over the past three years. However, they should not rest on their laurels. Money that is expended in the future will not be wasted. It will be spent in an area that is expanding and is said to be one of the growth centres of Queensland. The Government must continue to accept its responsibilities and provide equal education opportunities to every child, not only in the Port Curtis area but throughout Queensland.

This morning I asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing a question concerning a promise that he made in April 1982 to the Gladstone Turf Club. That was approximately 20 months ago. The Minister promised that he would provide funds for the redesigning and upgrading of facilities at the Gladstone Turf Club. That would entail the construction by the Main Roads Department of a road to an industrial complex, with funds coming from the Gladstone City Council, the QEGB and the Department of Industrial Development. Further, sporting clubs in the area were to be allowed to obtain leases of land for development. On top of that, the Main Roads Department was to reconstruct the Dawson Highway, with a roundabout at its junction with Paterson Street. This morning, in his answer, the Minister said plans are on the drawing-board but that the allocation of funds depends on the state of the Racing Development Fund.

By not honouring the promise that he gave 20 months ago, the Minister is delaying those other projects that I have mentioned. They are considered necessary for the Gladstone area. The road to the industrial site could have been used in cases of emergency and, as well, it could have relieved the centre of the city of Gladstone of a good deal of traffic. Of course, the sporting clubs could have proceeded with their projects. So I ask the Minister to give priority to the allocation of funds to the Gladstone Turf Club. He has stated that he does not break promises. I sincerely hope that the promise that he made 20 months ago will not be the first one that he breaks.

My impression of the Budget is that it is a very disappointing Budget, especially at a time when Queensland has record unemployment levels and a large number of school-leavers seeking jobs. The National Party continually claims that Queensland is a wealthy State. I do not deny that it is. However, it is being poorly governed and its wealth is not spread among all sections of the State or distributed among all sections of the community.

The presentation of the Budget was boring. It was so boring that, as was shown by a photograph published in "The Courier-Mail" on Friday, 2 December, a certain Cabinet Minister was so uninterested that he either had fallen asleep or was about to doze off. But that was not the first occasion on which that Minister had shown a lack of interest or boredom. I recall that at the time when the Premier was delivering the National Party policy speech a photograph showed that same Minister asleep. The Budget is boring. It is as boring as most National Party members.

Members are like people who enter Lotto or the Pools and are waiting to become millionaires when their numbers come up. Like the vast majority of those people, members are disenchanted when they find that they have missed out again. All that remains is their hope that next time they will be more fortunate.

As half this financial year has already passed, the Budget is nothing more than a formality. Money has been spent in areas for political purposes, or, should I say, for political advantage. Now that the election is over, the Government will go back into its shell and forget about its wonderful election promises of full employment for all and give no more attention to the multimillion or billion dollar companies or projects that were going to set up in Queensland, providing thousands of jobs for the unemployed and for school-leavers, the apprentices of today and the tradesmen of tomorrow, or providing a stimulus for the State's economy, thus giving hope to all sections of the community, including the small businessman. All of those things have been forgotten. Not a word of those projects was mentioned in the Budget.

I wish to remind the Government about the multimillion-dollar projects about which honourable members hear so often. Early in the election campaign, mention of those projects gave false hope to the unemployed and to the struggling businessman. It also gave real estate sharks the opportunity to maintain the cost of land and housing at a very high level.

Young people, single or newly wed, have great difficulty in obtaining a block of land or a home at a reasonable price, and the Government and its Ministers have been part and parcel of the high rental racket. Agents have been acting in unethical, unscrupulous ways. In addition, the Government has put on land that it has offered for sale by auction a reserve price far higher than the true value of the land. While the Government acts in that manner, real estate agents and land subdividers will use Government reserve prices as a guide in setting prices for the property or land that they sell.

People generally believe that a Government, if it is honest, would not profiteer to the same extent as a private developer. If the Government genuinely desires to assist people in general, especially first home-buyers, it should make land available at a reasonable price. That is not being done.

On page 24 of the Budget Speech and Financial Statement, it is stated that the program of construction or purchase of rental housing will be increased in 1983-84. It is stated that up to 2 000 living units will be provided throughout Queensland.

In Queensland, more than 10 500 families have been waiting, in some cases for years, for adequate housing to be made available through the Queensland Housing Commission. What hope do families have in this State when 10 500 persons are on the waiting-list? That is not a true record, because people become disenchanted and do not fill in application forms for a house or a unit when they are told by the commission that the waiting-list is so long that it could be months or years before they obtain accommodation. Some people are told that their families are not large enough and that they should have more children if they wish to have priority. People walk away feeling disgusted and very disappointed.

One must be disappointed with the provision for housing in the Budget. The Government's record of achievement in housing is totally unacceptable. While honourable members listened to the garbage about the Government's achievements in this wealthy, progressive State, thousands of people were living in conditions that would be considered unacceptable in any underprivileged country.

Queenslanders are led to believe—and many people want to believe—that there is equal opportunity in this State. That is not the case. In Brisbane, Ipswich and Gladstone, people who have been tenants of the Queensland Housing Commission for years have an ambition, as have all other tenants, to one day buy their own home. For reasons that change from time to time, they are not given that opportunity. I am very concerned for the people in my electorate who wish to take a step forward and own their own home. While they have been in rented accommodation they have been led to believe that, at a time of their choosing when they can afford to purchase a home, arrangements will be made for them to purchase from the Queensland Housing Commission the house in which they are living. That opportunity has been denied to the people of Gladstone. In the belief that eventually they would be able to purchase a house, they have, in most cases, spent considerable time and money in upgrading and beautifying the property and its surrounds. However, when they have made application to the commission to purchase their home, they have been told that it is not for sale.

In answer to questions, and in correspondence with the Minister, various answers were given. On 20 August 1981 I asked—

“(1) As the Queensland Housing Commission no longer allows tenants to purchase houses they have rented for years and on which they have spent money on improvements, particularly landscaping, is this his Government’s practice or does it apply only to one particular area?

(2) Will he give a valid reason why this practice is applied?

(3) How long is this practice to be in force?

(4) Why cannot the Commission again give approval to purchase the house after a set number of years as tenant and yet still give serious consideration to all applications to purchase from tenants who are genuine home owners with fewer years of tenancy?”

In answer, the Minister said—

“(1) At present areas frozen from sale are the municipal areas of Brisbane and Ipswich (with some minor exceptions) and Gladstone.

(2) The main purpose is to preserve favourable locations for future tenants and/or to densify usage by medium density developments or redevelopments. Well-located land is a precious commodity and future generations have to be considered.

(3) In Brisbane and Ipswich the practice is likely to remain in force indefinitely, unless circumstances change.

In Gladstone the intention is a major review with the Gladstone City Council on zonings and future land usage.”

A year later, on 15 September 1982, I asked the Minister—

“With reference to my question to him on 20 August 1981 concerning the purchase of Queensland Housing Commission rental houses and his reply that a major review on zonings and future land usage was being undertaken with the Gladstone City Council—

(1) What have been the results of this review?

(2) In view of the decline in the real estate market in the Gladstone area, will the no-sale policy on houses be reversed and, if so, when?”

His answer was—

“I undertook in a previous answer to the honourable member to revise the no-sale policy once some decisions about the future are made. We have not completed the total review on future land usage but we are getting close to a position where we can define some areas where sales should not be restricted and may alter the policy piecemeal.

Recent events in Gladstone have given a totally different picture from that of 12 months ago, and the situation is one of rapid change.”

Twelve or thirteen months later, on 16 November 1983, the Minister wrote in the following terms in reply to a letter from me—

“While I actively encourage home ownership, I regret the demand for welfare housing in Gladstone makes it imperative for the Commission to retain existing housing for rental purposes until the situation stabilises and the demand eases.”

Why have I received three different answers? The first said that it was a matter of council policy, the second said it was the sale of land in Gladstone and the most recent said that there are too many people waiting for houses in Gladstone.

What is in this Budget for people in Gladstone who are either waiting for houses or who have been very good tenants of the Housing Commission for many years? Not a thing! This Government says proudly that thousands more people are coming to Queensland each month. I ask: Where are they to live? Where are they to work? Not one of the multinational companies that the Government promised at each election would come to Gladstone would, if it had arrived, have assisted with infrastructure. If thousands of people are to come to Queensland in the coming year and the Government is building only 2 000 living units, where are those people to be accommodated? Are we to believe that it will be those companies we have been hearing about who will come here to provide jobs for the unemployed? Are we to believe that they will assist to provide housing?

Let me mention projects that have been part of election-year propaganda since I was elected in 1976. We have heard so much about them. There was shale oil, the steelworks, the Alcan aluminium refinery, the petro-chemical refinery, the coke plant, the oilseed plant, the Occidental soda plant, which was to cost \$3.5 billion, the Audax caustic soda plant, which the Premier said was to be commenced before this Christmas, and expansion of the Boyne Island alumina smelter by the addition of the third and fourth pot lines. They are just a few of the industrial projects mentioned in Government election propaganda. However, so far they have proved to be nothing but election propaganda, which the people have believed to be genuine.

Mr Goleby: You did not poll so well this time in Port Curtis. Why do you think that was?

Mr PREST: I polled quite well.

Mr Goleby: You just got there.

Mr PREST: The closest candidate to me was 1 200 votes behind.

Mr Goleby: Less than 1 per cent.

Mr PREST: The Minister should worry about his own electorate, not Port Curtis. I will be here as long as I want to be. Tomorrow the Minister's Estimates will be debated and I will show the Chamber just how he is foxing. He claims to be concerned about safety on the water, but I will prove he could not give two hoots about it.

The promised projects that I was speaking about have given the business sector and the unemployed great hope that they are about to see light at the end of the tunnel and that progress, prosperity and full employment will again be available to all, even those unemployed hopefuls who have been flooding into Queensland. However, the Budget contains nothing to indicate that those projects will be commenced, let alone even one of them in the current financial year.

Confirmation of the fact that these projects were election propaganda is given by many press articles. One of them stated that the National Party would like to announce stage 2 of the Boyne smelter during the election campaign. Not to be outdone on 1 October the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) released a press statement claiming that a decision on the possible expansion of the third and fourth pot lines at the Boyne smelter was expected to be made the following week. As 2½ months have elapsed since that obvious political statement by the Minister, in fairness to all and to end speculation, he should reveal the truth of the matter.

Another major industrial and mining project that was bandied around during the Federal and State election campaigns by the National and Liberal parties was the Audax chemical soda plant. The many press releases about that \$300m project raised the hopes of the struggling business sector, the unemployed and proved a boon to unscrupulous real estate operators as it gave them a basis on which to sell property to gullible investors who eventually found that the projects were not to go ahead or, if they were to come to fruition, it would not be for many years.

Other press releases claimed that Israelis would be coming to Gladstone for the commencement of the new chemical plant, that the new caustic soda plant would be harmless. It was also claimed cheap water and power would be made available to the Israelis to ensure that the caustic soda plant was built. All of those claims were made prior to the Federal election. It was also suggested that the Israeli plant would be built in Queensland but that the caustic soda plant still had to be endorsed. However, after the Federal election it was revealed that the caustic soda plant might go elsewhere. Prior to the State election one of the reasons given was that Queensland might get a Labor Government, but the proposal supposedly was to remove the plant from what might become a Labor State to Western Australia which, ironically, was already a Labor State. It was announced on 9 December that the project had passed its deadline and the decision to build the \$327m soda plant in Gladstone had been delayed.

Another big proposal was the \$1.2 billion Lend Lease coke plant. A decision on that has been deferred until 1986 which, again ironically, is another election year.

What is the Government doing to assist genuine companies that wish to establish in Queensland? Such companies would assist greatly in the employment of permanent staff with thousands more being employed during construction. That would have a multiplying effect in the business sector.

In 1980 the Parliament gave Southern Pacific Petroleum authority to proceed to produce oil from shale. That was to be one of Queensland's greatest projects, and a large employer. It was envisaged that 4 800 people would be employed on construction and that the project would have a work-force of 18 145 to operate and service it. What happened to it? I have here a press release of 21 November 1983, in these terms—

“U.S. oil shale projects attract more interest

Despite superior mineral deposits in the Central Queensland region, government financial support gave companies more incentive to invest in oil shale projects in the United States, according to Southern Pacific Petroleum general manager Mr John Turner.

Southern Pacific Petroleum appears to be going full steam ahead with its billion dollar Means oil shale project in Kentucky with local concerns Rundle, Stuart, Nagoorin and Lowmead still in the investigative stage.

‘If all things were equal we would not look further than our local projects because the oil shale deposits provide superior oil,’ Mr Turner said recently. He said American oil shale was less than one-third of the quality of the Australian reserves though government investment and tax relief schemes made U.S. projects attractive.

The State government in Kentucky supported the Means oil shale project, providing a one million dollar research grant, Mr Turner said. He said loans covering up to 75 per cent of capital cost could be secured through the government-based Synthetic Fuels Corporation.”

The Government should be concerned that companies see more advantage in investing in Kentucky, which has shale far inferior to that of Queensland.

What is the Government offering to get these companies off and running to create employment in major projects? The Budget is disappointing. The Government has shown that it is unworthy to hold the Treasury benches in Queensland. It has been uncreative in meeting the most urgent needs of the community today, namely, increased employment and increased expenditure in various areas to eliminate many of the social problems affecting the family unit.

The Government is too intent on presenting a balanced Budget. But for the increased Federal funding and the money provided by the wage pause program, a balanced Budget would not have been possible. The wage pause contribution has been substantial. Funds have been taken from the pockets of the workers who accepted the wage freeze in the interests of their fellow-workers who were unemployed. They thought that the wage freeze would involve a freeze on prices. The people have always been told that wage increases cause prices to rise. Although the unions and unionists played their part by accepting the wage freeze, the Government increased charges on all services.

The business sector also increased the price of thousands of items essential to the everyday living of families. When the wage increase of 4.3 per cent was granted in October, the fat cats maintained their margin. The worker received an increase of about \$8 a week, but the well-paid fat cats gained \$50 a week and more. That is a discriminatory system. The earnings of the highly paid fat cats and the workers should be brought much closer together, but that will not happen while percentage increases are granted.

Any benefits that flow from this Government are attributable only to its favourable treatment by the Federal Labor Government. The workers of Queensland played ball and heeded the wage pause. Their families accepted a lower standard of living. But the Government, the multinational food and clothing chains and local authorities did not heed the prices pause. Costs continued to rise. The Government led the way by granting wage increases to certain of the Premier's personal staff during the wages pause. At the same time it increased the cost of services and charges, which the worker had to accept. He had no option.

I am concerned about many other areas. I will mention briefly the Police Department. It was recognised during the election that the Police Department was 600 under strength. To assist the police to carry out their duties, the Budget provides for the appointment of an additional 105 police officers. However, that number is insufficient to allow the police to contain the increase in the number of crimes being committed in this State.

The Government continually expresses concern that crime of all types is increasing at an alarming rate. Drugs are being grown in Queensland and are readily available throughout the State. It has been stated that the hard drug, heroin, is now in greater supply simply because the Drug Squad has too few officers to cope with the problem. The squad is understaffed. Drugs are readily available in this State, and the lack of staff in the police force prevents the apprehension of the real villains, the drug-pushers.

I read recently about a raid in central Queensland. It was believed to be the biggest raid ever made. It was a resounding success. If the Government was really concerned about the increase in the crime rate, it would have provided, in the Budget, not only a greater increase in the manpower of the police force but also sufficient funds to ensure that police officers had enough motor vehicles to give adequate patrol coverage.

The greatest farce has been the Highway Patrol. Unfortunately, while the Government delays in doing something about road safety, lives are being lost unnecessarily on the roads. It was only after a report about a number of week-end road fatalities appeared in the press that we were told that police would be out in force to enforce the traffic rules. The rules should be enforced at all times and, for that reason, the Police Department must have a sufficient number of men to man patrols. After accidents have occurred, it is too late to say that prevention is better than cure.

I do not in any way blame police officers for what is happening with crime and drugs or with what is happening on the roads. With the limited manpower available, they can do only certain jobs. It was sad to read in the press that police officers had been told that they must not work overtime. We also read in the press that police officers have asked criminals to work normal office hours! They have said to criminals, "Don't start playing up or committing breakings and enterings and other crimes after hours. Do it during daylight hours while we are on duty."

Mr Tenni: Do you believe everything you read?

Mr PREST: I think that it is up to the Government to take action so that statements like that cannot be made. Police officers would not say those things if they were not true. They have been asked to cut out overtime.

We also read today that the Minister for Police has accused police officers of rigging the books so that they incur overtime. That is an awful accusation to make. The police should be given more wages and better working conditions. In my speech during the Address in Reply debate, I referred to the fact that the new extensions to the police station in Gladstone do not have air-conditioning or insect screens. Gladstone is in a tropical area and if police officers open the windows in summer they have to put up with beetles, bugs and everything else.

Because of the limited manpower in the police force, when an officer in a one-man station is on holidays the station is closed down. There are not sufficient men in the police force to relieve other officers when they go on holiday. I received a letter from some people in my electorate who pointed out that the police officer at Marmor is on leave and no relief has been provided, so the officer at Mt Larcom is required to work in the Mt Larcom area and also in the Marmor area. I ask the Minister to note what is happening in the police force and to do something about it. Adequate staff should be provided, and policemen should be given facilities so that they can carry out their duties in the most efficient manner.

As I said previously, this Budget relies on the past when the economy was sound and the State was developing because of a world demand for minerals, particularly coal.

The Government has not taken the initiative and that is why these problems have been created. While this situation continues, people will not be suitably housed. The Budget allocates funds for the construction of 2 000 units. That will not cater for those who are already waiting for housing, let alone the new demands that will be made.

Even though the railways are expected to be a paying proposition by 1985, the deficit for 1982-83 was massive. The Minister for Transport seems to think that if he attacks the wages and working conditions of railway workers, the deficit will be reduced. That attitude is disgraceful. Since the Government took office, the annual deficit has grown from \$11m to over \$200m. Over the years, productivity has increased dramatically, particularly in the locomotive and running sections. But all the Minister can do is attack the wages and conditions of the railway workers as an excuse for the deficit. Consideration is not given to the secret freight rate agreements between the Government and selected companies. Those agreements are the real cause of the financial problems within the Railway Department. A statement released by the Minister for Transport is headed "Railways to end deficit by 1985". The annual report says that the deficit for 1982 was \$157,075,064. It has grown to \$212,473,108 for the year ended June 1983. Those figures illustrate that the Minister has no idea what is happening in his own department. He has said that the deficit will be wiped out, but that has certainly not happened yet, and it is not likely to happen, because a great blunder was made when the plans that the Labor Government made in 1947 to electrify the railways were shelved by the Country-Liberal Government. The cost of the Labor Government's plan was \$5m. In July 1982, the cost of electrification of the railways was put at \$225m.

The Government said that no extra charges would be levied on railway services, but all fares and freight charges rose in the last three months. Country people are paying the piper; they are affected most by the higher charges for railway services.

I join with the Leader of the Opposition in saying that the Budget is mean and stingy and will do nothing to help the unemployed or the people in need.

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga) (4.18 p.m.): I congratulate the Premier and Treasurer on bringing down his first Budget. Because I did not have the opportunity to speak in the Address in Reply debate, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Governor on his excellent Opening Speech and to express my loyalty and that of my constituents to Her Majesty the Queen. My views are not like those of the republicans who sit on the Opposition benches.

Mr Hooper: Hear, Hear!

Mr LEE: That is right; I can hear the republicans. All they want to do is tear down the flag and replace it with the Eureka flag.

It was my pleasure to visit the schools in my electorate before they closed for the Christmas holidays. It gave me a sense of pride to see the schoolchildren standing at attention when "God Save the Queen" was played. I was proud also to see the flag raised and broken on each occasion. That is so different from what ALP members want to do. They want to break the flag all right—but in a different way. In spite of that attitude, every time ALP members are seen on television or in publicity photographs they have the Union Jack behind them. And that is the very flag that they want to get rid of and tear down!

As I was saying, the Budget is a good one. In reality, it was drawn up by the National-Liberal Party coalition. That does not mean that I am saying that future Budgets will not continue to be good. This Budget will prove to be a good and progressive Budget for Queensland.

I was somewhat disappointed to note the absence of tax relief for families who want to tidy up their estates. That is unfair.

Mr Hooper interjected.

Mr LEE: At least I earned a dollar in my day. I did not squander it or do it up against the wall, as the honourable member for Archerfield has done all his life. At least I was capable of earning a dollar. The honourable member has not earned one dollar decently in his life. If I was to say what I am thinking, you, Mr Booth, would get upset. However, the honourable member for Archerfield knows what I am thinking. He is not strictly on the square.

Mr Hooper: You are on the square.

Mr LEE: For sure I am on the square!

I do not envy the Premier, who is now both Premier and Treasurer. What that amounts to is this: he, as Premier, has to look in a mirror and say, "How do you do, Mr Treasurer?" and then he has to walk over to the other side of the room and, as Treasurer, say, "How do you do, Mr Premier?" He has a very difficult task ahead of him. No longer can he blame the Treasurer.

Mr FitzGerald: It cuts out arguments though, doesn't it?

Mr LEE: Sure it does. However, he has to be very selective in what he is doing and saying. He has a very difficult task ahead of him, but not for one moment would I claim that he is not capable of performing that task. Not at all! The Premier makes decisions and he does not run away from them.

What I do hope, though, is that the Premier does not unwisely demand money from himself as Treasurer. That is the thing that he has to watch. If he asks himself, "Can I have some money?" he has to make a wise decision. He is indeed in a very difficult position. In the past, Cabinet used to have some Ministers who were known as "mirror Ministers" The Premier is not like that; he makes decisions.

Mr Hooper interjected.

Mr LEE: That remark is typical of the member for Archerfield. I have to put up with him as an electoral neighbour. Actually, he is not a bad neighbour; he keeps out of my electorate. However, when he comes into the House he cannot help showing his true colours. Outside, he is a pretty good fellow; inside, he starts to get a bit rude.

Queensland has shown Australia that this State has been able to have balanced Budgets since 1957. In other words, for 26 years the Queensland Government has balanced its Budgets. As I have been in this Assembly for 20 years, I am very proud of that achievement. It has been a pleasure for me to listen to Treasurers bringing down balanced Budgets year after year.

A different situation exists in the southern States. After only two Budgets, both New South Wales and Victoria were flat broke. And you can bet your bottom dollar, Mr Booth, that after one more Budget each, South Australia and Western Australia will be flat broke, too. Both those States will be flat broke because, like Victoria and New South Wales, they have ALP Governments.

I urge the Premier not to allow Queensland to follow in the footsteps of the southern States. He cannot blame the Treasurer any longer; if something goes wrong, he has only himself to blame. So he must be careful. When he allocates money, he must do so wisely. He does not have a shoulder to lean on.

Let me refer now to the comrades of the ALP. I wish to refer to Senator Evans's reference to "fraternal comrade" I have in my possession a newspaper article that states—

"Now it's Dear Comrade. It's official—Federal Attorney-General Senator Gareth Evans wants Commonwealth public servants to include the terms 'Dear Comrade' and 'Yours Fraternaly' in all correspondence . . . The Attorney-General has directed whenever correspondence is prepared for his signature and addressed to an A.L.P. branch member, the salutation should commence 'Dear Comrade' and the closing should be 'Yours Fraternaly'. This should also apply to correspondence received from members of the Australian Labor Party who address Senator Evans as 'Dear Comrade'."

Opposition members should not forget that they will be out next week if they do not begin their letters, "Dear Comrade" When they write to anybody in my electorate, they should make sure that they begin their letters in the same way. The day that I see a letter addressed to me, or to any of my constituents, beginning, "Dear Comrade", they should look out.

Mr Hooper interjected.

Mr LEE: There is no "comrade" about me. I am as far removed from the honourable member's philosophy as one could be.

The dear old comrades on the Opposition side of the Chamber, as Senator Evans wants them to be called, are the ones who are saying to the Premier, "Don't attack the unions. Lay off the unions. We are good fellows now. We are really good boys." The unions will not cause industrial strife and unrest, because they will have no work if they do.

Mr Tenni: Don't you think that the next step will be that they will always have to be financial members of the Australian Communist Party?

Mr LEE: Has the honourable member ever seen anything more like Soviet Russia in his life? It is the first step to becoming a republic, and, from a republic, to becoming like Soviet Russia. It is disgusting.

The unions say that they are good boys now and that they will not cause industrial unrest. Do the people of Australia realise the contents of the unions' claim lodged in the Australian Arbitration Commission at present? Is it any wonder that GMH is packing up its troubles and going home? Why shouldn't it? I will read to honourable members some of the demands that have been made on the Queensland motor industry. They would make anybody pack up and go home. If the Premier thinks that, with the claims that have been lodged, he can encourage a motor vehicle manufacturer into Queensland, I feel sorry for him. If anybody from overseas comes to Queensland, he will see what the unions are claiming in their log of claims. A person from any country in the world would go home very quickly. He would not even ask for a feed; he would go home hungry. He would be afraid to commence business here.

I refer to a letter addressed to the Queensland Motor Industry Association about the redundancy payments test case. It states—

“The submission contains claims in respect to the following—

income maintenance for 12 months—i.e. the employer makes up the difference between wage prior to termination and unemployment benefits for 12 months.

A minimum termination notice of 3 months or payment in lieu.

A lump sum redundancy payment comprising:

- (a) 4 weeks pay plus
- (b) 4 weeks pay for each completed year of service plus
- (c) 1 weeks pay for each completed year of service when an employee was aged 35 years or over plus
- (d) an additional 2 weeks pay for each completed year of service in excess of 10 years service, if the employee is aged 45 years or over.”

The document continues—

“Pro-rata long service leave; full value of accrued sick leave; annual leave with loading to be paid on termination.

Where it is necessary for an employee to move to a new location in order to find new employment, the employer shall pay his/her relocation expenses.

The employer shall assist the employee to find suitable alternative work by paying a grant towards the costs and expenses connected with training and retraining.”

I will give the Committee, briefly, two examples of what the result of that claim would be. A redundant 45-year-old who had 20 years' service would acquire aggregate payments equal to 4½ years' wages. A 45-year-old employee with one year's service would be entitled to the equivalent of up to one year's wages on being made redundant. For one year's work, one year's additional wages. What a racket! I wish I could get into it.

Mrs Chapman: It isn't in, is it?

Mr LEE: An application is being made to have these conditions imposed.

Should the case be successful, the ramifications for the free-enterprise system throughout Australia would be horrendous. It should not be allowed to proceed. It is outrageous. The unions want the best of both worlds. They want it both ways. When there is plenty of work, all they want is pay rises. If they do not get them, they go on strike. It is difficult to get them to work. When there is plenty of work, the employer cannot make them work. However, as soon as the going gets tough and businesses encounter problems in meeting their commitments and redundancies are inevitable, the unions want it the other way. They want included in their awards obnoxious clauses such as the one that I have just read. It seems to me that some unions are making a blueprint for disaster—disaster for themselves.

I will read from another log of claims lodged by the ACTU.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr LEE: The bosses of the member for Brisbane Central—his “comrades”. The document reads—

“ACTU Job Protection Case

a

Blueprint for Disaster

ACTU Log of Claims currently before Sir John Moore and the Full Bench of the Arbitration Commission.

20 weeks notice of termination for each year of service or payment in lieu thereof.

That during the period of notice of termination an employee shall be allowed up to six weeks time off without loss of pay to seek other employment.

In cases of redundancy, the following will apply:—

At least two years’ notice of termination or payment in lieu thereof

Redundancy pay of twenty weeks’ pay for each year of service

Payment in full for all leave entitlements or potential entitlements

Income maintenance payments calculated by reference to the wage rate of the employee

Payment of all relocation expenses likely to be incurred by an employee in finding new employment

Assistance in finding suitable alternative work and training and retraining as part of this assistance.”

Let us consider the effects if those claims succeed. Businesses will close all over Australia.

Mr Davis: You’re a clown, Norm.

Mr LEE: There will be bankruptcies.

Mrs Chapman: They’re on their way now.

Mr LEE: That is what the clown at the other end of the Opposition benches does not understand. As a result of business closures, there will be further unemployment. That will be the result of such ridiculous demands by the unions. The ALP cannot see past its nose. The result of such demands will be to put unionists out of work.

What future would there be for the young people of Australia if these claims were granted? What right-minded businessman would employ anybody under those conditions? The granting of these claims would lead to the immediate collapse of the apprenticeship system, which is already in enough trouble without this added burden. Their introduction would cause great insecurity for those who are now employed. Nobody in Australia could consider that he had a safe job.

Mrs Chapman: Why employ anybody?

Mr LEE: That is precisely the point.

How could people contemplate long-term commitments? Our comrades in the Opposition do not seem to understand that those who remained in work would have to pay for the increase in wages, which would mean increased taxation. That is the crazy part about it. The Opposition does not seem to understand that it would be like a dog chasing its tail. It is not often that I feel sorry for members of the Opposition, but on this occasion I do.

I will now analyse some of these claims to see what they really mean. One of them is that during the period of notice of termination an employee shall be allowed up to six weeks’ time off without loss of pay.

A Government Member: That is ridiculous.

Mr LEE: Of course it is ridiculous, but it is fact.

As soon as an employer gave an employee a notice of termination—in other words, saying to him that he might be made redundant—the employee has the right to six weeks’ leave which he can spend having a great holiday at the coast. After that time the employee can tell his boss that he could not find another job and demand his six weeks’

pay. Out of half of the working year, 14 weeks remain, so he has to be employed for another 14 weeks, during which he can simply sit down and loaf and the employer can do nothing about it.

Another claim is for at least two years' notice of termination of employment or payment in lieu thereof. Under today's conditions, which business could look forward two years? Even our comrades in the ALP would agree that that is crazy.

Mr Hooper: What do you base that allegation on, comrade?

Mr LEE: Don't call me "comrade". In my opinion, the honourable member is a com. That word is objectionable and offensive to me, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! I do not think I can rule that it be withdrawn, because it has been used backwards and forwards across the Chamber.

Mr LEE: That is a very fair ruling. Ever since I met you, Mr Booth, you have been a fair man. However, I have made my point.

A business cannot look ahead two months, let alone two years. To ask employers to give two years' notice of termination of employment is ridiculous.

Another claim is for 20 weeks' redundancy pay for each year of service. That is almost half a year's work! Another claim is for the payment of all relocation expenses likely to be incurred by an employee in finding new employment.

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is quoting from a document. Will he table the document, because what he is saying is misleading? He knows that it is an ambit claim.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Is the honourable member quoting from a document or is he reading from notes?

Mr LEE: I am reading from notes.

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a further point of order. "Hansard" will prove that the honourable member is reading from a letter; he is quoting from a letter.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I did not hear the word "letter".

Mr DAVIS: The honourable member said that he was quoting something from the confederation. He is misleading the House if he says that he is quoting from notes. He is quoting from a statement.

I move—

"That the honourable member table the letter."

Mr LEE: If it makes the honourable comrade—I am sorry, the honourable member—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The stage has been reached where everyone had better refer to everyone else as an honourable member.

Mr LEE: I will adhere to your ruling, Mr Booth. I am quite happy to table the document. I knew that Opposition members would ask for it. I have about 50 copies here. I am prepared to table it.

In seeking employment, Queenslanders will go to Western Australia. The boss will have to give them a trip to Western Australia. That will be great! They will be able to go anywhere for a nice, long trip at the boss's expense.

The next claim reads—

"Assistance in finding suitable alternative work and training and retraining as part of this assistance."

I will examine that claim. When a labourer's employment is terminated he might want to become a doctor. Under this claim he would have to be retrained at the university for eight years, and the boss would have to pay for it. That demonstrates how ridiculous the claims are.

I now have some important matters to deal with concerning my electorate. The provision of the fly-over at the Yeerongpilly level crossing on Fairfield Road is very important. The Minister for Transport told me on two occasions—and this is entrenched in "Hansard"—that 10 fly-overs are to be constructed and that Yeerongpilly has No. 1 priority. I was also told that plans are being drawn up. I accept all that. The replacement of this level crossing should stay at No. 1 priority. Every day thousands of man-hours are lost when the traffic comes to a standstill. Each day, 20 coal trains use the crossing, which means that there are 40 coal-train crossings in all. Each crossing means a delay of 10 minutes. That means a loss of 400 minutes or six and a half hours. Other train traffic could quite easily result in the loss of a further three or four hours. Fairfield Road is closed to road traffic almost 12 hours a day. That is not good enough, and something must be done.

It was not my idea to put the port of Brisbane on the south side, and it was not my idea to bring coal down to the port. Those were the Government's ideas and, in my opinion, the Government must do something about this problem. If coal is to be taken through my electorate and over that crossing, I want that fly-over built. It was given No. 1 priority.

Recently I heard a rumour that consideration is being given to diverting the Tennyson/Graceville traffic via King Arthur Terrace, past the Tennyson Power House and the Animal Health Station, across Ortive Street and Paragon Street into Stevens Street, Feez Street, Days Avenue, Kingsley Parade, Hyde Road and Cansdale Street to Brisbane Corso. Of course, 10 houses will be knocked down and the life-style of hundreds of my constituents will be disturbed. I will not cop it; it is not on as far as I am concerned. That proposal was discussed by the Brisbane City Council years ago and it was knocked out by this Government. I know that the Brisbane City Council does not want to contribute its miserable share. It wants to do the job on the cheap. That is not good enough.

Mr Davis: For how long have you been the member?

Mr LEE: This road is the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council. The Government has been generous in the amount of money that it has provided. I do not want any duck-shoving. If the other route is used, it will be only a quarter of the job. Only a small proportion of the traffic goes through Graceville and Tennyson. The main traffic travels along Fairfield Road.

Mr Davis: You have been the member for how long?

Mr LEE: I bought land in Fairfield Road when I was married some 40-odd years ago. Even then I was not allowed to build my front fence on the correct alignment. I was told that Fairfield Road was being widened and a fly-over was being built.

I back up what my colleague the member for Ithaca said when he called for an inquiry into the letting of the Brisbane City Council garbage contract. It frightens me terribly when public bodies start fiddling with tenders. An amount of \$10m is involved, and that is not a bad fiddle.

Mr Miller: \$100m.

Mr LEE: That is for the contract. The price was increased by \$10m after tenders had closed. That is a pretty fair fiddle. Also, it is tax-payers' money that is involved. I object strongly to what has happened. I totally support everything that the member for Ithaca said the other day. There should be an inquiry.

Any Government, whether it be Federal, State or local, will fall once it starts fiddling with tenders. The honesty of any Government is built on the tender system. Once a Government fiddles with a tender, that is the first sign of corruption. What was done in this instance was corrupt. I sound a note of warning to this Government and to any other Government that it should not start fiddling with tenders. I will be happy to expose such corruption any time, the same as my colleague did in regard to the Brisbane City Council. As I say, I totally support him.

If the lowest tenderer does not conform to what is required, that tender must be put aside and the second lowest tender accepted. There should not be an auction under which the lowest tenderer, after he finds out the tender price of the second lowest tenderer, has

a little fiddle and makes his tender closer to that price. When I was contracting, I would have loved to tender under those conditions. I could have put in a low tender, entered into negotiations and increased my price to just below the price of the next lowest tenderer.

I am not very happy about the Government's letting contracts for hospital construction to five project managers prior to the election. That denies hundreds of contractors the opportunity to tender. They would all be just as capable as, if not more capable than, those project managers of doing the job. The Government has an obligation to call for tenders in the correct manner. If I was asked to build something to a price, I could do so; but something—quality, space, or parking areas—would suffer. I do not want to see that happen with the hospitals to which I have referred.

Under a private enterprise system, the tendering system should be upheld and a code of ethics for such a system should be adopted as common practice by any Government. The major portion of Government contracts should go to private enterprise, although a day-labour force should be retained for urgent work. No Government should allow a stop-start system of tendering to develop. Departments do not call tenders sufficiently early and, particularly towards the end of a financial year, they pay dearly for that error. The price of construction rises because overtime has to be paid to get a job finished on time. Therefore, if the Government is to effect cost savings, it is essential that it eliminate the stop-start system of contract tendering.

The majority of main roads work should be given to private contractors. I believe that although it is not necessary, local authorities should have the right to tender. The tendering system is a healthy one, and I would like to see local authorities participate. After all, they have a pretty good start on private enterprise.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr LEE: I would not deny local authorities the right to tender in competition with private enterprise. As I said, they have a reasonable start, because they pay no company tax, sales tax on plant or pay-roll tax. They therefore start at least 50 per cent in front of private firms. I say good luck to them if they can win a contract under a fair tendering system. They should be able to utilise their plant. But the system should be fair, with no additional kick-backs given to local authorities if they win a job.

Prior to the election, announcements were made of many millions of dollars worth of projected roadworks in country areas. I do not knock that. I want to see better roads in country areas, because the people deserve them. But I want to know whether that work will be done by day labour or by contractors operating under the free enterprise system—the very thing that this Government talks about every day of the week. It says that it is a free enterprise Government—

Mr Littleproud: The extensions to the Warrego Highway are being done by contractors this year.

Mr LEE: That is good.

Mr Littleproud: It will be done by contract.

Mr LEE: Good luck to the firm that won the contract. If a local authority had won the contract, I would say good luck to it, too. But I am worried about a willy-nilly system under which construction ends up being carried out by day labour. I do not want to see that; I want to see a system of fair tendering. Certainly, certain types of work can be carried out only by day labour employed by a local shire council. If such work was let out on contract, the cost would be too high.

I would have liked to speak for somewhat longer, but I promised I would curtail my remarks. Before I close, however, I want to say something about the proposed referendum. It was a stop/go referendum. The Commonwealth Government was going to thieve—I say "thieve", and I wish it could be underlined in "Hansard"—\$1.25m of the tax-payers' money to put the ALP's case. How rough can it get? A blue cattle dog would not be as rough as that. If the Federal Government was prepared to spend \$1.25m on putting one case, it should have been prepared to spend \$1.25m on putting the other case.

It has given me great pleasure to support the Budget.

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

Mr SCOTT (Cook) (4.56 p.m.): I am determined to have included in "Hansard" an interjection that my colleague the honourable member for Archerfield made during the speech of the honourable member for Yeronga, because I do not think that the interjection was picked up by the Hansard reporter. As my colleague said, the speech that honourable members heard from the honourable member for Yeronga gave a very clear indication of the reasons why the Liberal Party was decimated at the recent State election and why its members now sit on the cross benches. They cannot even make up their minds on where they stand on policy matters. I can see the smiles of appreciation on the faces of the National Party members. I would not claim that the National Party members are gleeful about this situation, but certainly they appreciate what has happened to the Liberals.

An Opposition Member: If Mr Lee is one of the Liberals who won, what must the rest be like?

Mr SCOTT: The mind boggles! As the honourable member for Yeronga won, goodness knows what those Liberals who lost their seats were like. I do not know what could be said of the Liberal Party candidates who were not formerly members of Parliament.

The other day, in this Chamber, the honourable member for Yeronga could not make up his mind whether he should cross the floor. He got out his beads, talked to them for a short time, and then made up his mind to put his tail between his legs and cross the floor.

I would be much kinder to the honourable member for Yeronga if it was not for his total dishonesty in making his speech. His contribution was not only puerile but also dishonest. He tried to make a point about award claims. The document to which he was referring was an ambit claim. He simply would not understand what that means. He would not have the faintest idea of the bargaining that is necessary and goes on these days in the industrial world. I am not saying that ambit claims are good; I would rather see something that I can read and understand. Mostly, I can. However, the honourable member for Yeronga certainly cannot. The document to which he referred had him totally bamboozled.

It is a shame that the document has only been tabled. I would not want it to be incorporated in "Hansard", but its tabling does not give anyone who read "Hansard" any idea of its contents. The nonsense that the honourable member uttered in relation to what he regards as outrageous claims will not appeal to anyone who knows anything at all about industrial relations.

An Opposition Member: Private enterprise does not bargain.

Mr SCOTT: That is right. If private enterprise has a big enough hammer, it does not worry very much about bargaining.

I want to comment on the puerile references made by the honourable member for Yeronga to the funding of referendums. If he had spent only a few minutes listening to informed media comment, he would have understood the reasons why funding was not offered for the "No" case.

I shall sum up the position very briefly. Those items that were to be included in the referendum questions had been agreed to, almost in toto, at the various constitutional conventions that had been held. In other words, a consensus had been reached on those questions.

If the Commonwealth Government had funded the "No" case, that case would have been given a political standing that it simply did not warrant. There are many people who considered that they were able to put forward the "No" case quite adequately, so I am not concerned about the lack of an offer to fund the "No" case. The arrangement that was arrived at was quite a fair one.

Of course, Opposition members are aware how much honesty prevails in the dissemination of information by the Government and Government members. I am not trying to raise the hackles of Government members, but I must comment on their constant use, as an epithet, of the socialist term "comrade". They bandy it round the Chamber, and the honourable member for Yeronga tried to imply that it was the very nadir of degeneracy.

I could refer to National Party members in that way. Occasionally the words "Country Party" are allowed to slip out. That is only a way of pandering to some of my older friends on the Government side. In the old days Country Party members had a great deal more principle than the members have under the nationalist flag. I shall refer to the political parties in this Chamber by their proper names. That might be one way of establishing some harmony.

I wish to make a brief comment on the Budget. I do not believe in spending too much time on Budgets because those documents are rarely honest. They are glossy documents produced for public comment.

There is no similarity between what is contained in the Budget papers and what happens during the ensuing 12 months of government. It is like the National Party policy and electoral promises. One can go from heaven, which is the National Party's promises before the election or what it would like to think is heaven, to the Budget, which outlines what the Government will do, or what it is "gunner" do. Earlier I heard mention of "artillery people". Of course, the National Party members are "gunners" in that sense.

When it comes down to political realities, we are told what is contained in the Budget. However, during the year the Government does not put that Budget into practice in so many areas. During my contribution I wish to mention some examples of that.

I am concerned about educational matters in the Cook electorate. The standard of performance by the Government troubles me greatly. I took note of the remarkable speech made by the member for Chatsworth. He went to a great deal of trouble to present figures that showed how dishonest the Government's performance was in terms of funding in two specific electorates. The effort by the Minister for Works and Housing to rebut his claims was childish. He did not get to the heart of the matter. He did not contest the figures put forward by the member for Chatsworth. He simply said that they were not true and that the situation was totally different. That is the type of argument that the Premier and Treasurer puts forward in public debates. Again, it is a clear indication why politics in Queensland have reached such a low level. There is no honesty in the statements that come from the Government benches. The Government has kidded the people for long enough. It cannot go on like that. Its day will come; there is no doubt about that!

I must comment on the city National Party rump. Its members will be oncers. They should make the most of their three years because they will not be here after that. The two ex-Liberals who are now members of the National Party will go. The people of Queensland have a political voice that will be heard. I respect their wisdom. They might have been fooled last time, but they will not be fooled next time.

It is true that the Government is spending most money in National Party electorates. I was quite taken by the fact that very minor projects are given a high priority rating in National Party electorates while major items in Labor-held electorates are not given priority. It is not for the lack of fighting. The electorate of Cook does fairly well, and I am not unhappy about that.

Mr Kaus: Do you make representations about those matters in your electorate?

Mr SCOTT: Yes; I make constant representations. I will give the honourable member an example. In the Cook electorate there is a small town called Irvinebank. It is an extremely pleasant town in which many good people live. Although I have told this story in this Chamber before, I will repeat it. A couple of years ago I discovered that the school in that town lacked first-class carpets on its floors. The principal made a proper representation to me about that. Through the Works Department I made an inquiry. I was told that a report had been furnished and that the request had been rejected by the powers that be. I have experienced similar instances, sometimes with success. One might call it the bleeding hearts campaign. A member contacts the Minister's office and tells his officers about how cold it is in winter and about the need for such comforts. Previously I have had some success in impressing this upon senior officers of the Works Department. However, they have rejected that item. I have had some wins. However, this time my ploy certainly did not work. I wrote letters about it. I used the bleeding heart technique—to no avail. The children attending the school at Irvinebank still have their little feet pattering on the cold floor which has splits and cracks and nails and goodness knows what in it. The Minister for Works and Housing does not care. His staff do not care.

I will give other examples. A new high school is promised in the Budget for Thursday Island. Do Government members know when the school was destroyed by fire? 1979! One of our previous spokespersons on education told me that from the time of a major fire to replacement was, on average, four years. That is deplorable. Allowing for the time it takes for the wheels to turn, it has been five years—and it is still only an item in the Budget. Certainly, the department has called tenders. However, it is not unknown for the Works Department to claim that the contract price is too high. The job then slips out backwards. That has happened so many times. I do not want to see that happen to the Thursday Island school. I am quite certain that by the time the children get back into the school six years will have elapsed from the date of the fire.

The Dimbulah school has been on and off the development program many times. It is given a priority and then suddenly loses it. It is not because there has not been effective representation.

On the matter of education, I come to a bit of sheer politicking that occurred during the recent election campaign. The Minister for Education was certainly good enough to go into Cooktown.

Mr Wharton interjected.

Mr SCOTT: I am very pleased that the Minister for Works and Housing is in the Chamber. If I can get him to nod his head at the right time, I will appreciate it greatly.

Mr Wharton interjected.

Mr SCOTT: I appreciate that the Minister has come into the Chamber. I am quite happy to look him in the eye when I make my claims. They are not outrageous. They are quite honest, and he knows they are.

I will leave the cold feet of Irvinebank for the moment and turn to Cooktown. I hope that its secondary department will become a fact of life. I understand that one demountable, which will probably provide two teaching spaces, is to go to Cooktown. I read the statement in "The Cairns Post" about the good things that would happen to education in Cooktown. I shuddered when I read all the subjects that were to be taught. How are they to be taught in two teaching spaces, particularly in a demountable building that would certainly have been moved round for a number of years? I hope the ceiling is carefully inspected before the building goes to Cooktown, or I might have to recommend that the parents take out special insurance.

I appreciate what has been done in the Cook electorate. My job, as the Minister realises, is to ensure that we continue to get that service. However, I hope that he does not pull the trick of taking things out of the Cook electorate and putting them into National Party seats. That will not do the Government any good. The Labor Party will start knocking those seats over one by one. It will then be spoils to the victor and we will have all of the goodies. However, I would prefer to come by them honestly.

Because my electorate has small schools, it is principally small things that I am concerned about getting from the Works Department and the Education Department. However, my requests are not small to the people who send their children to those schools; they are most important. For example, there is the request for a covered play area at Chillagoe. I have made representations to have it provided. The Minister for Works and Housing would not go to Chillagoe in the summer. I doubt whether his complexion would stand the hot sun.

I heard the very well put case by the honourable member for Mt Isa about the need for air-conditioning in Mt Isa schools. There was nothing but laughter on the faces of members on the other side, from the Minister down. The display by the Minister for Education when the member for Mt Isa was speaking was quite disgusting. It was indeed shocking.

Another request is for storage space at Almaden. I will certainly be writing to the Minister about that.

Covered walkways are required at the Weipa school. The Government provides nothing in Weipa. I have said that many times.

Those have been only brief comments on education needs in my electorate.

Because the fishing industry is a very important industry in the Cook electorate, I will make some brief comments on it. That industry is suffering enormously from lack of research. Before the Government finally took action, the industry had almost reached a stage of total collapse. I know that some of those involved in the fishing industry will admit that they must accept much of the blame, but a great deal of the blame also must be accepted by the Government.

I can understand that the fishermen were to blame, because they are a group of individuals with very individualistic approaches. It is not easy for them to pull together and work together to get what is needed for the industry. But why did the Government allow such a valuable industry, which brings valuable resources to the State, to reach a stage of near-collapse before doing something about it?

Much still needs to be done. At a recent meeting that I attended, the fishermen were talking about the very important difference between a six-inch mesh net and a six-and-a-half-inch mesh net. That may not sound very much of a difference to the lay person, but it is of vital importance to the fishermen. In addition, the gauge of the netting is important. I was present when a biologist from the department said that his research into whether the industry should use six-and-a-half-inch nets would not be finished for a couple of years. That is scandalous! It is no reflection on the biologist; it is a great reflection on a Government that does not provide the resources.

The otter-board trawlers are doing a great deal of damage to the fisheries of the Torres Strait. The Minister for the Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services should be the last one to shake his head. He knows that that is true, and he knows the damage that is being done. He is continuing to shake his head, so perhaps he does not know. If he wants to demonstrate his limited capacities, then let him.

The former Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Ahern) was nearly crying when he was trying to tell the fishermen of the Cairns area just how expensive research was and why it was not possible to give them the resources that they need. Again I cry: why let the industry degenerate so far before something is done?

Mr Tenni: The Government looks after your people.

Mr SCOTT: The last time I tried to make a speech in this Chamber the Minister attempted to make it for me. I certainly do not need his help.

The crayfish diving industry of the Torres Strait is under severe threat because the Government will not undertake the necessary research. The fishermen constantly ask me to take action. I take action by drawing it to the attention of the relevant Minister. But what happens? Nothing!

In like manner, the pearling industry is being destroyed by the otter-board trawlers. How long has the Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act and Another Act Amendment Bill been before this Assembly? That simple piece of legislation still has not been passed in this Chamber. It has taken years, and the legislation has not even been finalised. What a dreadful legislative record the Government has. Honourable members opposite should hang their heads in shame.

The Budget has provided for a major increase in spending in national parks, and I believe that 60 new officers will be employed.

Mr Tenni: Are you supporting the construction of the road in the national park for your people?

Mr SCOTT: If it will shut the Minister's mouth, I will come to that road in a minute. Let me speak about national parks.

Mr Tenni: Are you supporting the construction of the road in the national park?

Mr SCOTT: No, I am not supporting the construction of that road. I shall tell the Minister why.

Mr Tenni: What a lovely thing to say!

Mr SCOTT: Would the Minister care to direct his remarks through the Chair?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! I ask honourable members to stop the cross-firing in the Chamber and direct their remarks through the Chair.

Mr Tenni: I got that out of you.

Mr SCOTT: No, the Minister did not get that out of me, because in a few minutes I will deal with that at great length. For goodness' sake, can the Minister keep his mouth shut for a moment and give me a go?

The Lakefield National Park suffers from a lack of staffing. I oppose the Government's intention to excise a prime piece of the national park to give to private enterprise to develop as a holiday resort. Once again, the Minister shakes his head because he knows nothing about that.

Mr Tenni interjected.

Mr SCOTT: Of course it has been on the go for years; but it takes years and years for members on the Government side to get off the back-burner and get to the front of the stove, where the heat of the action is.

It is all very well for the Minister to say that it has been on the go for years and that nothing can be done about it. I am worried because the Government sought an expression of opinion from developers in that prime area. If the developers genuinely need development, why not assist them with some of the private land around the national park? Let them do some developing that they pay for themselves, even if the Government makes them an advance. The Government will not do that.

Honourable members are told that an additional 60 national parks officers are to be recruited. How will they be recruited, accommodated, and fitted out with tools, equipment, vehicles and other gear? Although they are badly needed, it is just not possible to recruit 60 people in one year and place them up there.

The national park at Chillagoe has been crying out for additional staff. The national parks people have done a wonderful job in trying to build up and expand the park against the greatest of odds. In Queensland, that means the Government, which is against progress.

The Government is not opposed to mining. I note that a fairly large part of the national park around Chillagoe is to be degazetted at the behest of a mining company. A company named Amoco apparently gave to the good people of Chillagoe about 20 hectares of land in Chillagoe that was part of its mining lease. That land was not fenced or developed in any way. I wonder how long it will be before the newly acquired land is developed. The bitter pill is in the small print, wherein Amoco has applied for the degazettal of a fairly large parcel of the national park. It will be a crime against the people of Queensland if the degazettal is allowed. I do not know what can be done to prevent it. I have done everything I can to prevent it; I intend to continue doing so.

I ask the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services not to leave the Chamber. He is spending \$100,000 on utter destruction. The honourable member for Cairns did a remarkably good job in documenting the whole story yesterday in the Matters of Public Interest debate. He was given great credit in "The Cairns Post" for the strong action he took in highlighting what is happening.

The road has not even been surveyed. The bulldozers are wandering up hill and down dale knocking down trees. Nothing is being done to build a decent road.

Mr Tenni interjected.

Mr SCOTT: The Minister knows that it costs roughly \$100,000 to bring a kilometre of road up to a reasonable standard, and that does not include sealing it. On the basis of 40 kilometres of road—

Mr Tenni: It is 28 kilometres.

Mr SCOTT: Different lengths are quoted in every publication.

I will stick to 40 kilometres. At \$100,000 a kilometre, that means the expenditure of \$4m. When will the Government allocate \$4m for that road? It will not be done for years.

Mr Hamill: The Minister for Main Roads estimated in the Chamber this morning that it would cost \$70m.

Mr SCOTT: The \$4m I am speaking about would provide a basic track with drainage and a little gravel on it. The Government will never find that sum of money.

It has been a slow process to get the bitumen extended towards Cooktown, along the Mulligan Highway. In my 10 years in that area, and in my six years as an active member, I have seen it creep slowly, kilometre by kilometre, towards Cooktown. It is still a long way from Cooktown. However, it is progressing nicely and keeping the people of Cooktown quite happy.

Mr Tenni: You said a while ago that National Party electorates get all the funding. In that event, we will have that road fixed in no time.

Mr SCOTT: I am sure that the people in the rest of Queensland will be delighted to hear that. That is nothing but skiting, and it is typical of the Minister and the way he carries on. I do not think people will take any notice of that at all.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr SCOTT: I would say that he is a blow-hard, and I think that that ties in with the comparison that the honourable member made. That is just what the Minister is, and the people in north Queensland know that.

I do not think that that road will ever be properly developed. The Minister's mate Mr Simms is going to use it to take timber out of the area. The fact that the roads have been put in by Mr Simms's own bulldozer has been documented. He is getting paid to build his own snigging track. That is all it will be, and that is a shame.

I turn to northern development. I know that the member for Barron River is not the Minister for Northern Development.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr SCOTT: Mr Gayler told him which side was up with those fishy terms.

There is a Minister for Northern Development, but I wonder why there is. I ask honourable members to look through the Budget papers to see how northern development is listed. I ask them to try to tell me how many officers are employed by the Department of Northern Development. There is no such department. There is an office in Townsville staffed by one officer. He would be executive level. He is a very nice man.

Mr Tenni: Two.

Mr SCOTT: Yes, he has an offsider, and there would probably be a clerk in the office.

In the Cairns office there is nobody other than a clerk-typist. That is the Department of Northern Development. I have been able to identify a staff of about four people. Unfortunately, in the Budget papers, the department is all mixed up with Aboriginal Affairs. It is deplorable to have Northern Development and Aboriginal Affairs under the one portfolio. It is bad enough to have one Minister for two important departments; but it is another thing altogether to have the relevant financial information all tied up under the one heading. One cannot gain any idea of what is happening in northern development.

I sought some information about what was happening. I have here about 60 wonderful press statements by Mr Bird, who was the Minister for Northern Development for the last nine months. I have never seen such a waste of paper in my life. I shall read just a few of the headings. They are: "Rail Link Sought to Open up North"; "Mareeba Land to be Auctioned"; "Busy Schedule in Far North for Minister"; and "Bright Prospects for North Queensland Industry Development". There is no substance or honesty in the press releases. There is not one fact.

I must say that Mr Bird was one of the least honest Ministers in this Parliament. He said that he would bring down prices in far north Queensland. He had a wonderful scheme which was to depend on the good nature of the manufacturers, wholesalers and suppliers. He was going to try to get them to implement a scheme under which the cost of goods to southern people would be increased slightly to allow prices to be reduced in far north Queensland. It was total nonsense. There was not a practical aspect to it. What happened about it? Nothing, except that Mr Bird is no longer with us.

I return to this wonderful portfolio of wasted press releases. I wonder whether a timber industry is to be established in far north Queensland. Many trees have bitten the dust to provide the paper on which this nonsense was printed. A press release headed "Grain Growing Potential to be Investigated" reads—

"The Department of Primary Industries is to carry out a limited field reconnaissance investigation this month of the potential for development of a grain growing industry in the Etheridge Shire, in Far North Queensland.

It is expected that a report will be available by early October.

Announcing this today, the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs, Mr. Val Bird, said the study would cover selected areas of the Gilberton Plateau region, with special reference to the Gorge Creek Pastoral Holding and the Dulthara block."

I do not know how long we will need to wait for that to happen, but I certainly will not be holding my breath. That is the type of nonsense that goes on in the embryonic Department of Northern Development. Unfortunately, it means that tax-payers' funds are being wasted.

I can recall being told by a publican in that far northern area that the bill for the hotel accommodation for the people involved in that little investigatory jaunt was paid with a cheque drawn on the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. That is sheer and utter dishonesty.

Public funds are being misused when another department's debts are being paid out of the funds of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. The Department of Northern Development should be funded separately. All I could find out about the Department of Northern Development was 60-odd press releases from Mr Bird, yet when he was Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs he had a whale of a time traipsing round the far north.

I must mention the Police Department. One hundred more police officers are to be employed. I doubt that they will be recruited because recruitment is a very slow process.

Last Tuesday an article appeared in "The Cairns Post" about the shortage of police in that area. The shortage was exacerbated by the number of police who were taken to the Cape Tribulation area. During their absence, police coverage of the Cairns area suffered. That happens quite often.

I have written to the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police about the police situation in Cooktown. I hope the Minister is fair dinkum about his intention to recruit more police. Even if the Police Department is unable to recruit 100 officers, more police will be recruited and Cooktown will eventually get the extra police and vehicles that it needs.

I turn now to Aboriginal affairs. The Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs (Mr Katter) will not need to be very good to be better than the former Minister (Mr Bird). He has taken some small steps in the right direction. The week before last he went to the Edward River Community on his own. The Director of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement did not accompany him; presumably the director was working in Brisbane, although I doubt that he was. He has probably forgotten that he was not successful in the election and is still going on his merry way playing politics.

Mr FitzGerald: You never give up, do you?

Mr SCOTT: No. I have good reason for not giving up.

The director misspent tax-payers' money so I have no intention of giving up. I have documented my allegation fully. I said nothing that was untrue and I outlined where there was ample evidence to show what the director had done. I wrote to the chairman of the Public Service Board asking that appropriate action be taken. For the benefit of members I will read the appropriate paragraph of the letter that I received from the chairman in reply to my request—

"After considering these documents—"

I presume the documents were the unrevised proofs of my speech—

"the Acting Solicitor-General has advised that there are serious difficulties in considering adequately your allegations in their present form, as they have been made in the main in general terms, without supporting evidence, and under the special conditions pertaining to Parliamentary Debate."

I do not deny the last phrase in that paragraph because I did make those statements in this Assembly under privilege. I stand by that. I will not take the chance of being hauled before a court by the director, although he would not be game to do it—

Mr FitzGerald: You didn't back it up.

Mr SCOTT: I did back it up. I had a telegram, written on Government paper, which was sent out over the Government radio in Torres Strait. I produced the document. The chairman of the Public Service Board knows that because he apparently read my speech very closely. I read the contents of the telegram to the Assembly. The chairman is quite welcome to have the telegram. I wonder whether he will ask the Director of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement to pay the cost of the transmission of that telegram.

I do not hate the director. Last night when I was standing in Alice Street seeing some people off a young man who had been dining with one of the National Party members shouted out to me, as he was driving off, "Killoran hater" He must have had good eyesight to recognise me standing on the footpath. The comment did not particularly worry me but I did not take kindly to it. There must have been talk in the parliamentary dining-room and he must have been very elevated. I have no particular feelings for the director, but I would like to see him lose his job.

The director has let down the Aboriginal and Islander people of Queensland. They have known that for a long time, and they certainly showed their feelings at the last election.

I now want to cite some examples of problems that need to be rectified. One of the many bad aspects of life in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander areas is the lack of water. That problem is particularly bad in the Torres Strait area, where very few communities have decent water supplies. I have visited those communities on many occasions. Most of the National Party members who visit the area travel on the "Melbidir" and do not worry a great deal about going ashore at the various islands. They are able to shower, wash and do their laundry on the "Melbidir"

The situation is totally different for those people who live on the islands. Their source of water may be a hollowed-out area of ground or a turkey's nest dam, which may or may not have pumps that work. On very few of the islands are there high tanks to provide adequate pressure so that water can be reticulated to the houses. I have spent many weeks on the outer islands and I have washed in the way that the local people wash—by getting a dipper and pouring water over myself from a tub that has been filled from a 44-gallon drum. That situation has prevailed for too long.

The situation on Darnley Island almost reached danger point. The whole community of 400 to 500 people was getting barely four or five 44-gallon drums of water a day, and those drums were filled laboriously.

At that time the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs was Mr Bird. Those were the days before he departed immediately after the election and the new Minister was appointed. I tried to contact him, but I was not able to. I spoke to one of his ministerial staff, not an officer of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement, who said, "Oh, we have been trying to find something to do in regard to that, but I do not think there is anything we can do. After the wet season it will all turn out all right." The DAIA did nothing to augment the water supply for the people on Darnley Island.

The whole matter had to be taken up through the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs and it was handled very efficiently and effectively by it through its officer on Thursday Island. He contacted his Minister, who was able to bring Commonwealth resources to bear so that water could be supplied to the people of Darnley Island. I shudder to think what would have happened if the DAIA had not been there to do that.

The whole record of the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement in providing water facilities on the Torres Strait islands is deplorable. I have a note to the effect that, fortunately, it has been raining on the islands off and on for a few weeks. So, once again, the people have been saved. However, the problem will raise its head again next year unless something definite is done in the meantime.

I urge the new Minister to extend his visit beyond Edward River. I was surprised to learn that he saw fit to go no farther than Edward River. However, I do not doubt that after the House rises for Christmas he will go farther. I urge him to do so. I have asked him to ensure that when he does visit the Torres Strait area, instead of wearing rose-coloured glasses, he relies on his own keen eyesight when examining the problems. I urge him not to take the director with him; he should get rid of the man and call for proper action to be taken within his department.

Aboriginal people have also been let down in regard to their land. I understand that in the near future some legislation concerning Aboriginal land will be introduced. All of us have been waiting for it but, as is typical of the Government's legislative program, that legislation is in disarray. From day to day honourable members have no idea what legislation is being brought forward.

I quote from the 1981-82 annual report of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement as follows—

“The year under review has seen a number of developments:

A form of communal inalienable title based upon freehold principles has been made possible for Aboriginal and Islander Communities. Although some criticisms have been levelled at this proposal, there is no doubt that it is a more honest title than those granted in the States and Territories of Australia purporting to be the nebulous ‘inalienable freehold title’.”

The report is signed, of course, by P. J. Killoran, Director. He used the term “form of communal inalienable title” which, he states, has been made possible. I ask the members of the Minister's committee: Where are the deeds of grant? That extract was taken from the 1981-82 annual report. When will Aboriginal and Islander people see what sort of tenure they are being given?

The legislation referring to deeds of grant in trust was brought forward in March this year, but so far not one single deed of grant has been seen. I understand that, in spite of that, the legislation is to be amended. How in the name of goodness can the Government convince the Aboriginal people that it is fair dinkum and genuine? It is treating them terribly. And all of this can be blamed on the lack of effort on the part of the director of the department. On many occasions in this Chamber I have spelt out the need for housing, jobs, health services and diet. I have summed them up in simple words so that honourable members opposite know what they mean.

What happened at Edward River recently was blown up out of all proportion by the press. I deplore the fact that the press make statements before investigating a matter themselves. The people of the Edward River community will suffer because of the publicity that they received.

There is not just one problem pertaining to Aboriginal communities; there are many. The demon drink was blamed at Edward River. There is more to it than that. The police departmental officer went into the chairman's house and arrested him for drinking.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member to make some reference to Supply. We are discussing Supply, not the police force.

Mr Casey interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the honourable member for Mackay take a point of order on behalf of the honourable member?

Mr Casey: If you wish that I take a point of order, Mr Row.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Mackay cannot take a point of order on behalf of the honourable member for Cook.

Mr CASEY: I take a point of order on behalf of myself.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Cook is entitled to take his own point of order. I do not take any point of order. The honourable member for Cook will refer to Supply and not to the various items to which he has referred.

Mr SCOTT: I will do that.

I am referring to the failings of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement in regard to its funding of Aboriginal communities. If you like, Mr Row, I will interleave every second sentence with the fact that I am talking about Supply and that Supply is not going to those places. I deplore that situation. It is a terrible state of affairs. I am pleased that the Chairman is nodding his head in agreement.

I am pleased, too, that the Chairman has reminded me that I must refer to Supply. I shall refer to a question that I asked today. This morning I asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police—

“When will Police Department officers be permanently established at Edward River and Lockhart River communities?”

There has been a lot of waffle, talk and public statements about police officers being permanently established at those communities.

I received the following answer—

“The establishment of permanent policing facilities at Edward River and Lockhart River Aboriginal communities is dependent upon the provision of suitable accommodation.

“The Police Department is currently negotiating with the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement for temporary accommodation pending establishment of permanent facilities.”

In answer to the question, “Is there provision in the current Budget for both these stations?”, I received the reply, “No.”

I am trying to point out the failings of the Government and the failings of the Budget. I wish to highlight my initial remarks in which I said that the Budget is a sham. I said that it is a dishonest document. I have shown the way in which it is a dishonest document. There are many things to which I could refer, one of which is the funding of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement.

I shall quote from the various annual reports. I might make a comment on the director's literary style as much as anything else. He stated—

“In 1982-83, the Department referred more matters of policy and decision-making to the Council and, as a result, the main thrust of economic and social welfare development is now through the locally elected body.”

That is in a departmental annual report. It is an utter farrago of nonsense. That is not the situation at Edward River or at any of the other communities. What will happen in terms of budgetary expenditure will be determined, firstly, by the director and, secondly, by the DAIA manager on site.

The document is totally misleading. It is a document that is produced for public consumption at great expense. No doubt, somewhere in the Budget papers, there is an item covering advertising, expenditure on printing, and things such as that. That is why I repeat my statement that the Budget is dishonest. It is not a correct statement about the decision-making process in the communities. It certainly does not show where the thrust of economic and social welfare goes.

I recognise the swan-song of the director of the department. I had marked various passages to which I wish to refer, but I will not worry about them. However, I will quote the last paragraph of the report. The director says—

“The rewards are even richer when I consider the loyalty and service from my fellow officers who have at times served under difficult circumstances and in remote and isolated regions. Their support, co-operation advice and effort has been invaluable to the Department's activities and to me personally. My heartfelt congratulations and thanks is extended to all.”

I certainly hope that that is the man's swan-song so that there will be a change in thinking in the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and so that, when the Budget papers are being considered next year, honourable members might be able to see that there has been a change of direction.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (5.40 p.m.): The Committee has just heard a tirade from the honourable member for Cook. It was the worst display of ranting and raving that I have witnessed in this Chamber. However, his speech is typical of what Government members have come to expect from the Opposition. Honourable members opposite

never stop knocking Queensland; they do not say one word in appreciation of what the Government is doing. Queensland is a wonderful State. It has been developed successfully under this Government's policies.

Mr Casey interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Mackay is interjecting from other than his usual seat. If he wishes to interject, I suggest that he return to his seat.

Mr CASEY: Mr Row, I am acting as Leader of Business in the House for the Opposition, who occupies this position.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Mackay is not occupying the position of leader.

Mr CASEY: The Leader of Business in the House for the Opposition.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the member to return to the seat usually occupied by the Leader in the House.

Mr CASEY: This is it. The member for Brisbane Central (Mr Davis) is the Leader of Business in the House for the Opposition.

The CHAIRMAN: I accept that explanation.

Mr RANDELL: Mr Row, it is refreshing to see the way in which you control proceedings. I congratulate you on your elevation to the position of Chairman of Committees.

I repeat that the ALP continually knocks Queensland. It is a wonderful State that has been developed under wise policies—policies that have been recognised by the people of Queensland, who have returned a National Party Government to govern the State once more. If the ALP continues with its policies and the Government continues with its policies, the ALP will be in Opposition for much longer.

It gives me great pleasure to support the Premier and Treasurer in the presentation of this Budget, which is the first ever National Party Budget. Once again Queensland has shown the rest of Australia the way to go, in presenting a responsible and sensible Budget that will assist the citizens of Queensland in every walk of life, maintain our style of steady development and steady spending and avoid the stupidity and lack of thought and planning that is evident in several other States of Australia governed by the ALP. I include the Federal Government in that, too. It is showing what it is made of; it is going the wrong way.

There is no doubt that the depth and strength of industry and natural resources in Queensland are the envy of all other States. But no matter what resources are available they still require careful and prudent planning, as in the management of any business. The State of Queensland is big business in any language, and I compliment the Treasurer on his good management. I know that his Budget once again provides the blueprint for responsible and steady growth, and ensures progress under a free enterprise system.

The National Party Government's planning includes massive expenditure on railway links, roadworks, water supply, housing and health, and increased help to many other departments and programs and major concessions and encouragement to business. The Budget will give a significant boost to the development of Queensland and, in particular, to the region that I represent—a region which makes a major contribution to the economy of this State and the nation.

The economy of the Mackay region, which is, in the main, based on my electorate of Mirani, is diversified through five soundly based industries, namely, coal, sugar, beef, grain and tourism. As the member for Mackay should know, the population, taking the census figures in 1961 of 46 887 and those in 1981, 20 years later, of 90 630, has increased by 93.29 per cent.

Mr Casey: I have done my share of it, too.

Mr RANDELL: It has progressed in spite of the member for Mackay.

By 1985, 10 coal mines will be operating in the Mackay region, eight open-cut and two underground, all exporting through the Hay Point and Dalrymple Bay facilities, both of which are in my electorate. The export tonnage is projected to be 43.3 million tonnes by 1985. When the new mines that have been projected for development come on stream by the end of the century, the Mackay region will become the largest coal-producing area in the world.

From 1971 to 1982, the coal industry of the region I represent benefited the Federal Treasury by nearly \$1,600m and the State Treasury by nearly \$960m, a total of nearly \$2,500m.

Mr Lester: Do you agree that the ALP has done everything it possibly can to frustrate the coal industry?

Mr RANDELL: There is no doubt about that. I can remember how, when the industry first commenced, the ALP knocked it and, from the speech of the member for Cook, it is still knocking it. In spite of that, the industry is still going ahead.

The Mackay region produces one-third of the total national sugar crop. Because of the EEC policies and stockpiling and the fall in overseas prices, the industry is passing through a difficult period. The value of sugar produced in my area rose from just over \$32m in 1961 to \$354m in 1980, and then dropped to \$278m in 1981 and \$136m in 1982. The drop in value in those two years reflects the impact of EEC policies, the drought and lower prices.

Exports from the Mackay region for the year ended June 1982 broke the billion dollar mark with exports totalling \$1.3 billion. Since 1962, that is 20 years, the value of exports has increased twentyfold. The figures I have just cited enable me to say that few areas in Australia today can look forward to the future with as much confidence as the Mackay region. I know the Premier and Treasurer of Queensland has referred to the Mackay region as one of the most exciting development areas in Australia today.

For the year 1983-84 the capital works program for the Department of Harbours and Marine will be of the order of \$200m. The major part of that expenditure, \$55m, will be on the coal export terminal under construction at Dalrymple Bay. The first stage of the terminal will provide for an export capacity of 15 million tonnes of coal per annum. Additional facilities, which will double that handling capacity, can be constructed when required. I understand that, in Dalrymple Bay and Hay Point, Queensland has the largest coal exporting facility in the world. I am pleased that the expansion will include the construction of a tugboat harbour, at an estimated cost of \$14m. The harbour is expected to be in operation in 1984 but, of course, total construction will occur over a much longer term.

I hope that the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services takes note of my previous representations and provides for the construction of facilities to cater for small craft, both for pleasure and fishing. That would be a tremendous asset not only for the local people but also for the increasing number of tourists passing through Sarina. Now is the time to plan for such a facility. It is one time that the Government should take advantage of progress and development that is a major benefit to the State to reduce the cost of providing recreational benefits to citizens in some way inconvenienced by that progress. Citizens in the region of these developments should share fully in the benefits, and I intend to keep pressing the Minister strongly for that facility.

The Budget provides for a real increase in road funding, \$101.2m over the previous year's expenditure of \$485.9m, an increase of 23.6 per cent. That is a record amount of funding but, with the amount of development taking place in Queensland and the way it is leading other States, it could certainly use much more finance. I have no doubt that the State's roads are steadily improving, but the Federal Government has to come to the party and recognise the special problems of Queensland, particularly those caused by the wet season, which have certainly been brought to the forefront this year.

Mr Casey: Expenditure has increased by almost 50 per cent this year and a hell of a lot of it is going into your electorate.

Mr RANDELL: That is only making up for the bad neglect in the past. More and more will be done. Let us get the money and see what has to be done before the honourable member for Mackay talks as he does. He should be helping us in our area, but he is knocking the State in the same way as his colleagues. It is time that he helped us instead of knocking all the time.

The other day, the honourable member for Mulgrave agreed with me that we have special conditions and that the Federal Government should recognise them.

Mr Casey interjected.

Mr RANDELL: I ask the honourable member for Mackay not to knock us all the time. I do not want to listen to him because my time is limited. He knows that, in my area, big semi-trailers are coming through to develop the State, and he knows that they are carrying heavy loads.

Mr Casey interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Chair will not tolerate a continual exchange between the member on his feet and the member for Mackay, who is interjecting from other than his usual seat. There is nothing in the Standing Orders to cover the member for Mackay interjecting from other than his usual seat. If he continues to do so, I will insist on Standing Orders being observed.

Mr RANDELL: The heavy loads are being carried to develop our area. The member for Mackay knows that the development is going on. He also knows that many roads are breaking up and need constant repair. Our bitumen roads have to be built to a higher standard to cater for our unique conditions and to cope with the ever-increasing number of heavily loaded transports.

Another matter that has to be watched very closely is the letting of contracts for roadworks. Some time ago the honourable member for Yeronga spoke about this matter. Sometimes contracts are let for a very low figure. As a result, the contractor gets into financial trouble, the subcontractors do not get paid, men lose stable jobs and, in the end, it costs a great deal more to do the job. More consideration should be given to firms in the area where tenders are called. That would give consideration to local knowledge and know-how and would provide a source of work and job security in the small towns throughout Queensland. If tenders were called in conjunction with day labour, many small areas could maintain a secure work-force and provide security for workers and their families throughout the State. ALP members are not worried about that.

More money should be spent on roads in my region because of the development that is taking place there. Extra money must be spent on access roads to coal ports and mining towns. Dysart, Middlemount and Glenden, three new mining towns in my area, were built with materials brought over the roads by trucks with heavy trailers. The roads were broken up and, as shire chairman, I know that the shire experienced much trouble in trying to keep the roads up to scratch. When people from all over Australia come to these towns they expect decent roads, and we must provide them.

Much the same can be said about Hay Point and Dalrymple Bay. The Government's policies have led to the building there of the largest facilities in the world. Opposition members should be proud of them, rather than knock them. The facilities were built thanks to the roads that were provided. More money should be coming into the area because, without doubt, huge sums of money are earned there. Surely we are in the right in asking for some of it back.

When members talk about transport they are inclined to overlook the importance of the rail system to our economy and the part it plays in developing the State. The rail system is certainly playing a major role. It is tremendously important. The region I represent is one of the few in Queensland that pays its way and returns very good profits. Recently, the Minister for Transport opened a new railway administration building in Mackay. The member for Mackay was there. He knows that some good results are being achieved, but he does not give credit for them. The Commissioner for Railways (Mr Mendoza) said that the railway system carrying coal from the Bowen Basin to Hay Point, which passes right through my electorate, provides 23 per cent of the railways total annual revenue. Nearly a quarter of the total receipts from the railway system come

from coal alone. When the cartage of sugar, grain and beef is taken into account, it can well be understood why the central region is the only area consistently making a profit—and that profit has grown consistently over the years. In 1967-68 the profit made in the area was just over \$6m. In 1981-82 the profit was \$122m. That is quite a substantial increase.

It is pleasing that the Minister for Transport has announced that the Government intends to proceed with the electrification of the major central Queensland coal lines at an estimated cost of \$584m. I see the member for Peak Downs in the Chamber. There is no doubt that he will be very proud of that. The representations that he and I made have certainly helped to have those coal lines electrified. The work is to be undertaken in two stages and it could be completed in eight years. The first stage will see the Blackwater-Gladstone line completed. Stage 2 is Goonyella-Hay Point rail line. Prospective tenderers have been asked to apply to register for the supply of 146 electric locomotives worth perhaps \$250m. Seventy-six of them will be used on the Hay Point-Goonyella section.

Once again, positive Government policies and action will mean more jobs, more security and a better way of life for the people of Queensland and, in particular, the people in the electorate of Mirani. Of course, we will get a spin-off in the transport of grain and beef. We will be supplying not only the energy needs of Queensland and Australia but also the food needs of many nations.

The sugar industry is very important to north Queensland. I note that \$20m will be provided jointly by the Commonwealth and State to assist the sugar industry with carry-on finance in the form of loans to overcome the problems of drought and low prices. Those problems, of course, have been aggravated by the ruthless marketing methods of the European Economic Community, which is operating outside the International Sugar Agreement and heavily subsidising its beet sugar production. But I believe that the Queensland industry, with its fine reputation for efficiency and research, will hang in there and weather the storm until the market situation returns to normal. However, we have to get some assistance in the short term to do just that and the member for Mulgrave, who is sitting beside me, will certainly back me up in saying that. The jobs of thousands of people in many towns along the seaboard of eastern Queensland depend on the survival of a prosperous sugar industry. People in the small towns in my area, such as Sarina, Carmila, Koumala and others in the Pioneer Valley, such as Finch Hatton, Mirani, and Walkerston, depend on the sugar industry.

Mr Menzel: What has the Labor Government in Canberra done for it?

Mr RANDELL: That Government has done nothing for the sugar industry. It should be putting its money where its mouth is; but I will get to that Government later.

I believe that the guide-lines for providing assistance to growers have to be relaxed somewhat. Forms could be made simpler. A farmer receives reams of complicated forms to fill in and he has to go to his accountant, bank manager or someone else to get some help. In some cases the processing of the applications takes up to two months.

Mr Casey: Why did your Government bring those forms out only in October of this year?

Mr RANDELL: I do not know about that.

As I was saying, sometimes the applications take up to two months to process. I am not being critical of the staff concerned. They are working to their full capacity. I wish to pay a particular tribute to the staff of the Mackay District Canegrowers Executive, who are certainly courteous and helpful. They have done a lot of good.

I think that some of the guide-lines have to be relaxed to alleviate a lot of hardship and heartbreak for many cane-growers and their families. If need be, we will have to provide more finance to keep this industry going. After all, considering the enormous contribution that the sugar industry has made to the economy of this State and nation, it is only fair that some funding should be provided as an insurance to keep it going.

I understand that the number of applications for RAS funding is starting to increase and there is no reason to believe that the number will not continue to increase as growers come out of a disastrously bad sugar harvest with low tonnages and low c.c.s. I am talking now about the central region, which I represent.

On top of everything else, we are faced with the task of finding a solution to counter the problems with Fiji disease. The honourable members for Mackay and Mulgrave will know what I am talking about when I refer to the enormous task of finding varieties of cane that will withstand that disease. They know what is involved with susceptible varieties, such as NCo.

Mr Casey: It is very hard to convince growers that it is in their interests.

Mr RANDELL: I think that growers know what they have to do. They are co-operating as much as possible. The officials concerned deserve every commendation for what they are doing to combat that disease.

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

Mr RANDELL: Before the recess I was speaking about the assistance that is available to cane-growers in Queensland. In November, 51 applications were approved to bring to \$5m the amount approved under part B of the scheme. By 30 June, it is expected that about \$15m will have been allocated and the remaining funds will be needed in the first half of the 1984 season to satisfy those applications which were not able to be brought before the Rural Reconstruction Board any earlier because of the physical restraints to which I referred earlier.

The sugar industry also faces the problem of the apparent reluctance of the Federal Government to finalise arrangements to renew the Commonwealth-Queensland sugar agreement.

The industry is seeking a conventional agreement with arrangements for—

- (1) A term of five years;
- (2) Retention of the embargo;
- (3) An administered price principally reflecting costs; and
- (4) An effective formula for review of price each six months.

There is no certainty that an effective agreement will be arrived at, because of the apparent determination of the Federal Government to bring other matters, which normally would not form part of the deal, into the negotiations.

Mr Casey: Such as?

Mr RANDELL: But there is no doubt in my mind that the matter of the commercial long-term arrangements for the sale of refined sugar throughout Australia is an entirely different issue from the matters of need and a scheme of underwriting at times of income collapse. The honourable member for Mackay should recognise that.

I call on the Commonwealth Government to finalise domestic sugar arrangements as soon as possible, bearing in mind that the sugar industry will not accept an agreement if the price expected of the industry is too high, or if it tries to force on the industry, as part of the agreement, conditions that are totally unacceptable.

I remind honourable members that the sugar industry has not been a burden on the community but, rather, over many years has made an enormous contribution to the economy and well-being of this State and nation. All it is asking for now is a fair crack of the whip.

One other matter I would like to comment on briefly is the IAC report. Suffice to say that the Federal Government would be misleading the sugar industry unless it immediately rejected the Industries Assistance Commission's final report on the sugar industry. It is almost identical to the draft report, which the Federal Government said it would reject. The Government should immediately reject this final report and tell the sugar industry precisely what it intends to do to ensure its future viability. Now is the time for the Federal Government to put its money where its mouth is and get on with the job of assisting the industry.

The Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and the Primary Industry Minister (Mr John Kerin) rejected the draft report when it was released on the eve of the Queensland election. Mr Kerin said the draft recommendations were disastrous, but he has had a change of heart since the Labor Party was destroyed in the Queensland election. There are no substantial changes in the final report.

The one area in which there had been minor change in the underwriting scheme for the industry did not go nearly far enough. There is no substantial reason at all why the Government should not immediately announce that it will not accept this final report. If the Government is not prepared to do this, it has grossly misled the sugar industry even further.

That is the sort of treatment that the people in the sugar industry have come to expect from the Federal Government. Before the Federal election Mr Kerin and Mr Hawke travelled throughout north Queensland making promises. They promised an underwriting scheme for the industry, but nothing has been done. Mr Kerin was sent here on a public relations exercise to keep the farmers happy. The Federal Government delayed the issue further with the IAC inquiry. The sugar industry shamed the Federal Government into giving it \$10m. To give the impression that it was giving \$30m, Mr Kerin and Mr Hawke announced at three different places the Federal Government was granting \$10m to the industry.

Anyone who knows anything about the land is aware that the Government's taxation policies are designed to knock rural people. Members from western areas of the State have been saying that. The workers in the field, in the sugar mills and in the harvesting crews and the business people in small towns will not forget the Federal Government's broken promises.

I now mention briefly other features of the Budget.

As to education, this year the Budget allocation is \$926.7m, which is an increase of 10.5 per cent on the amount provided in 1982-83. The Budget provides for the progressive appointment in 1983-84 of 893 additional teachers to cater for the estimated growth in enrolments. A further 115 teachers will be appointed to the TAFE sector to meet additional needs in that area. It is good to see that allowances payable under school conveyance schemes and schemes of assistance for children in remote areas will be increased by approximately 8 per cent.

Textbook allowances, too, will be increased in 1984, at an annual cost in excess of \$1m. Funds have been provided to implement a scheme of traffic wardens at 400 school crossings throughout the State. The annual cost of that scheme is estimated to be \$800,000.

I turn now to hospitals. The Government's commitment to the maintenance of the free hospital system remains unchanged. The contribution this year to the Hospital Administration Trust Fund is \$595.2m, which is an increase of 14.3 per cent on the amount that was provided in 1982-83. The allocation allows for the appointment during the year of 630 additional nurses, doctors and other hospital staff.

This year an amount of \$1.2m has been provided by the Commonwealth Government for expenditure on aids for the disabled. This will supplement existing expenditures by the State.

Another pleasing feature of the Budget is the increase in per capita grants to non-Government schools from \$303 to \$345 per annum for primary students and from \$486 to \$552 per annum for secondary students. The new rates will provide a real increase of 4 per cent and the estimated cost is \$6m.

A special assistance scheme is being provided to help local authorities. An amount of \$30m has been committed for the scheme to assist local authorities with significant works of a capital nature that would not otherwise be undertaken. The funds are additional to those that are available to councils from normal sources.

The projects are to have a significant labour content, with preference being given to projects in areas of high unemployment. That is very good to see.

As well, it is proposed that projects undertaken under the scheme will be funded 75 per cent by way of a cash grant, with the balance of 25 per cent being met either directly by the council or, if required, by Treasury loan.

Loans and subsidies to local authorities under the existing Capital Works Subsidy Scheme are estimated to exceed \$52m this year, which is only a little less than the amount that was expended in 1982-83.

Local government is also expected to play a major part in the new Commonwealth Community Employment Program. In the first year, Queensland's share of funds under the program is expected to be in excess of \$41m, of which approximately half will be available for local authority projects. It is to be hoped that the Commonwealth recognises

some of the problems confronting local authorities in trying to come within its guidelines. I know that many councils are confronted with problems, so I hope that the Commonwealth widens the guide-lines to suit the councils.

It is pleasing to me to see that the pensioner rate subsidies will be retained. The Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme, which is administered by local authorities, has provided much-needed assistance to pensioners in the community. This year, total assistance is expected to be \$12.9m.

The Budget provides for special additional assistance for tourism, recreation and culture. The sum of \$500,000 has been allocated to the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation for a special overseas promotion campaign. Further, \$250,000 has been allocated to assist with the establishment of a centre for tourism research at the University of Queensland. Subsidies to regional tourist bureaus will be increased by 40 per cent to \$45,000 per annum.

Mr Casey: Will recreational and sporting facilities be provided in the Hay Point boat harbour?

Mr RANDELL: If the honourable member had been in the Chamber earlier tonight, he would have heard me deal with that.

Mr Casey: I was here.

Mr RANDELL: If the honourable member was here, he must not have been listening. However, he is listening now. I could repeat what I said, but instead I will advise him later of what I had said.

The sum of \$250,000, as part of a special allocation to sport and youth activities of \$2m over the next two years, will be made available to supplement existing subsidies for coaching and capital works.

I turn now to national parks. My area contains three national parks. I am sure that the honourable member for Mackay is aware of the wonderful scenic views that can be had from the national park at Eungella. It has been likened to some national parks in America. I am sure that if it was in America it would have been substantially upgraded.

This year, the allocation for the National Parks and Wildlife Service is \$11.3m, which represents an increase of \$3.4m, or 42.6 per cent, on the amount that was provided last year.

Mr Casey: They need a few improved facilities up there, though.

Mr RANDELL: Yes, and they will be provided. I hope that the honourable member for Mackay will back me up when I apply for them.

As to housing, in 1983-84 the Queensland Housing Commission will have available for housing purposes a total of \$241.4m, which is an increase of \$38.1m, or 18.7 per cent, on the amount that was expended in 1982-83.

More money should be spent on water resources. Water resources should be as important to us as roads. A great deal of money will be needed from the Federal Government for expenditure on water resources. I spoke to the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services, who told me that he cannot obtain any information from the Federal Government. It seems that the Federal Government might be concentrating on the provision of urban water supplies rather than rural water supplies.

The Queensland Water Resources Commission expects to have available \$101.5m for its capital works program in 1983-84. An amount of \$2.3m will also be made available under the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Scheme to provide advances to land-holders for on-farm works. That is certainly on avenue of valuable assistance to land-holders, and should be encouraged. The worth of on-farm storage has certainly been proved during the recent drought.

I am very disappointed with the allocation of only \$125,000 for soil conservation. However, as is pointed out in the Financial Statement, it provides only for the commencement of a general upgrading. There is no doubt in my mind that all honourable members will agree with me when I say that we must protect our soil. We should be protecting that heritage for our children and future generations. As the old saying goes, they are not making any more of it.

I congratulate the Premier and Treasurer on his Budget. It is the best Budget that has been delivered in this nation this year.

Mr McLEAN (Bulimba) (7.27 p.m.): I welcome the opportunity to speak during the Budget debate. Government speakers have consistently patted one another on the back, so I should probably point out what has happened because of Liberal and National Party mismanagement at the State and Federal levels. Many Government members seem to have a very short memory.

I wish to refer to some of the things from which Australians suffer as a result of the seven years during which the Liberal-National Party Fraser Federal Government was in office. Reference should be made to the disastrous seven years of Fraser Government, because it has scarcely been mentioned in this debate. The Hawke Government has inherited a deplorable situation.

The Fraser Government was a record-breaking outfit. I wish to refer to some of the records that it broke during its seven years of office. During that period there was higher unemployment than during the 1930 depression years. Interest rates were the highest in Australia's history—41 per cent higher than when the National-Liberal Party Government was elected in 1975. It imposed higher taxes than any Government in Australia's history. PAYE tax increased by 25 per cent. Almost \$7,500m was ripped off the Government by bottom-of-the-harbour and other tax-dodgers. That issue was kept very quiet by the Premier and other Government members.

Jobs have been exported because of reduced tariff protection to allow cheap, foreign goods to flood the Australian market. Medibank has been destroyed. It had created the highest health costs that Australia has ever seen. It was a scheme that was organised to everyone, no matter what his standing in the community, a chance to enjoy health care. Australian business developed to a stage at which it was more than 60 per cent owned or dominated by foreign interests. The Australian wage indexation scheme was destroyed and massive cuts were made in social welfare. The wage freeze was introduced, and that provided an open slather for price increases. I could go on and on about the failings of that Government. It was certainly a record performance.

I turn now to the Hawke Government and shall point out its contribution to this Budget. We have not heard very much about that.

I feel sure that the recent Federal Budget will provide a much needed stimulus to the private sector through its expanded capital works program. The results of that stimulus are beginning to be seen in most areas, including unemployment. Unemployment is probably the most pressing problem facing Australia today, and it is heartening to see the trend being reversed after seven years of Liberal-National Country Party mismanagement.

What has been the Federal Budget's contribution to Queensland this year? Funds to Queensland have increased by \$500m, making the total for 1983-84 \$3,200m. Road-funding has risen by 46 per cent to \$262.4m.

Mr Neal: Do you say we are not entitled to a return of our taxation?

Mr McLEAN: Of course we are, but Queensland is receiving much more under this Government than it did under Fraser.

Funds for public housing have increased by 52 per cent to \$63m. In addition, \$27.7m has been allocated for Government office blocks in Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Cairns and Thursday Island. Job-creation initiatives include \$13m for Stage 1 of the Burdekin Dam, \$4m for the Bundaberg irrigation project and \$19m for a new domestic terminal at the Townsville airport. The Queensland Government should thank the Federal Government for its contribution to the State's budgetary position this year. It is a shame that due credit for that is not being given by the Premier.

I touch now on a matter that will wreak havoc in this State—the Government's attitude to industrial affairs. In particular, I refer to the Premier's outburst following his recent overseas trip.

The Premier's union-bashing instincts once again are coming to the fore. His provocative and inflammatory remarks about combining the Essential Services Act with sections of the British Employment Act show just how out of touch the Premier is. It would be remiss of me not to ask, on behalf of the people of Queensland, that the Premier limit his overseas trips. Every time he leaves the State, he returns with some new scatter-brained

idea. The Premier is desperately in need of contact with his advisers. His latest proposal to introduce British law into Queensland is one of his most outlandish efforts. Of course, he has a long and consistent track record in that field.

A press report of 14 March this year refers to a statement by the Premier in Kingaroy following a promotional tour to South East Asia. He said that he could not, and would not, allow trade unions to dictate terms either to his Government or to employers. He asked building industry employers what they were going to do about an industrial dispute at that time. He asked them if they were going to sit there like doves and cop it. He continued on with his usual provocative union-bashing.

It was incredible to read such a statement by a man who had just returned from South East Asia, an area in which workers face extremes in poverty. They receive a pittance in wages, working conditions are disgraceful and worker exploitation is rife. Living conditions are pitiful. The Premier must think that Queenslanders should be brought back to such levels. Certainly, some of his recent statements lead one to believe that.

To call the British Employment Act harsh is an understatement. As a blueprint for the changes to the State's already ridiculously oppressive industrial laws, it is very provocative and has been proven to be unsuccessful. I am amazed that the Premier and Treasurer, after such a short period out of the State when he went to France to negotiate for Expo '88, could make a statement of such magnitude and importance with so little consultation with the responsible Minister, the Cabinet or the National Party. His statement has made it quite clear that he is a one-man band.

The former Minister for Employment and Labour Relations, who is now the leader of the Liberal Party on the back bench of this Chamber, criticised the Premier's statements. When the honourable member for Nundah was a Minister, many remarks were made about his capacity in that portfolio; but I am happy to say that I agree with his comments on this occasion.

Last Tuesday, in answer to a question from the member for Nudgee, the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) showed that he was quite upset at any suggestion that he was not consulted before the Premier made the statement. He claimed that the Premier had spoken to him on the telephone for 20 minutes. I could not care less whether that 20-minute conversation occurred before or after the Premier made his statement; it is a slur on the Parliament, the Government and the Minister. I am amazed that it took the Premier only 20 minutes, during a phone call from Paris or England, to announce such drastic proposals for changes to the industrial laws of the State. That is indicative of the importance that the Government places on industrial relations.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the honourable member that the subject under debate is Supply and the Budget. So far I have not heard much of relevance to that subject in the honourable member's remarks. I ask him to return to the question of Supply.

Mr Prest: Don't you think industrial relations have an effect on the economy?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am in the chair and I am addressing the member on his feet. I ask him to come back to the question of Supply.

Mr McLEAN: I take the point, but I would like to continue in the same vein—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have asked the honourable member not to.

Mr Alison: What you mean is that you have nothing else to say.

Mr McLEAN: The honourable member will soon find out.

The Premier's contempt for the industrial laws of Queensland will cost the State a great deal. I am sure that the Ministers of the Government have been embarrassed by the Premier's contempt for them, and I am surprised they are prepared to accept that sort of treatment without objection. If a Minister is not prepared, or is not permitted, to carry out his responsibilities, he should resign his Ministry to the Premier, which would save the State an enormous amount of money. By remaining in office, the Ministers are showing that they are merely rubber stamps or puppets. It comes as no surprise to me or to the Opposition that the Premier has advanced these union-bashing proposals.

Although it may be said that the present industrial relations climate in Queensland is the best in Queensland and Australia for many years, I say without fear of contradiction that the actions of the trade union movement in the recent harsh economic climate have been more responsible than at any time in the past. The Unions have recognised the problems confronting the nation. The Federal Government's policy of consensus has achieved remarkable results. The endorsement of the prices and incomes accord by the ACTU has resulted in considerable industrial peace. That statement is backed by many newspaper editorials throughout Australia. I will not dwell on them because I am sure all honourable members have noted them.

I come now to time lost through strikes in Queensland and the other States. The number of days lost in Queensland fell, but the reduction was the lowest of all States. The Bureau of Statistics figures reveal that strikes cost 1 900 000 working days or the equivalent of 289 working days lost for each thousand employees throughout Australia. The number of days lost for each thousand employees dropped by 4 per cent in Queensland. In South Australia, the decrease was 44 per cent; in Western Australia, 38 per cent; in New South Wales, 64 per cent, and in Tasmania, 32 per cent. In Victoria it was a massive 70 per cent.

The Queensland Government's industrial relations attitude leaves a little to be desired but, in all honesty, the stoppage which caused the high figure related to the 38-hour-week railway stoppage in September last year.

Mr Casey: One of the big stoppages related to the miners' taxation dispute, which Mr Lester supported.

Mr McLEAN: Exactly so. He made a contribution to the strike fund, but that is getting away from the point.

I am coming to the statement that the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs made, which is very important to my argument. In relation to the figures presented, he said they "highlighted the need for effective and harmonious industrial climate", and continued—

"I am hoping that this can be partially achieved by the establishment of industrial affairs advisory units in my department.

It will be helped by a more effective liaison between trade union leaders, employers and government in the future."

That is a very important point because the British industrial law, or the part which, supposedly, is to be introduced to Queensland, is provocative, to say the least and it runs completely contrary to the Minister's statement. I will accept at face value what the Minister had to say. He probably meant what he said. Obviously he has been overruled.

The Premier and the Government have not learned much over the years. It has taken many years in many countries for many Governments and industries to learn that industrial harmony cannot be legislated for. Industrial relations can be settled between the parties only by consultation and conciliation. The foreshadowed legislation will not do that. The days of confrontation and conflict should be over. All industry is aware of that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the honourable member once again that the Committee is debating Supply, not an industrial Bill. I ask him to confine his remarks to Supply, or I will have to consider not allowing him to continue his speech. I ask him to please come back to the subject under discussion.

Mr Alison: Give him another go.

Mr McLEAN: I will handle it myself.

Mr WRIGHT: I rise to a point of order. This morning, the Minister for Mines and Energy made a statement to the House in which he went on, at some length, relating industrial problems that were affecting the production and potential of this State. All the way through his speech he stressed the financial disadvantages that accrue because of some alleged industrial problems. I suggest to you, Mr Row, that, because of the financial relationship, the points being made by the member for Bulimba are relevant to this debate.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order. I require the honourable member for Bulimba to make a speech that is reasonably related to Supply. He has not discussed Supply, and that is my point. I am not trying to make it difficult for the member. I am drawing his attention to the fact that, under Standing Orders, he is obliged to discuss the matter under debate.

Mr McLEAN: Mr Row, I take your point. I shall continue with my speech because I wish to touch on a number of other important matters in the short time available to me. I was referring to the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs, and I was of the opinion that that was within the ambit of the Budget. If this proposed action of the Premier backfires, it will cause a lot of hardship in the Treasury of this State.

I shall conclude the point that I was making. It appears that a concerted and very determined attack is being made on the workers of Queensland. The Minister, in his own inimitable way, has shown his inexperience, firstly, by attacking compulsory unionism for members of the State Public Service, which has existed for some 50 years, and, secondly, by making a somewhat clumsy attack on the penalty rates that are paid to workers in the tourist industry. It is evident that if either of those two areas is to be altered by the Government, to its satisfaction, it will be only a matter of time before attempts are made to introduce similar provisions into other industries. Probably that is when the trouble will start. I feel sure that it will. Then the Government, with its present anti-union, big-stick approach, will need to have at its disposal extremist machinery to attack the stronger union organisation with which it will certainly come into conflict.

I turn now to the proposals that are set out in the recommendations, and refer, first, to the blueprint of the British Employment Act. That Act is described in the media as the toughest legislation in Europe. It provides for a total ban on sympathy strikes even within the same union, a ban on picketing, hefty fines for unions and the right for employers to sack strikers. As all members would know, the British Employment Act is presently at the centre of a dispute in the printing industry in England. It is the first major dispute since the Act was introduced, and it has led to some of the most violent clashes between picketers and the police that have been seen in Britain for many years. Thousands of picketers and other unionists are objecting very strongly to the Act.

The main point that I make is that employers and industrial experts in England have strongly criticised the law and have publicly stated that the legislation can only delay the solving of stoppages and disputes. It is creating impossible situations that are complicating the dispute-settling procedures. It has created a confrontationalist attitude. It is interfering with reasonable and accepted employer/employee relationships. In no way can it lead to the solving of disputes. Those opinions have been expressed by people on both sides of the industrial fence in England.

Mr CAHILL: I rise to a point of order. I do not want to interrupt the flow of the member for Bulimba, but I would really like to know what industrial disputes in the printing industry in England have to do with the Budget of the State of Queensland?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The matter under discussion is the Treasurer's Financial Statement, and I am concerned that the honourable member is not closely relating his speech to it. I am prepared to allow a wide-ranging debate, but there has to be some limitation. I suggest that the honourable member for Bulimba relate his remarks to the Treasurer's Financial Statement. If he can do that, I will be happy to let him continue.

Mr Lester interjected.

Mr McLEAN: I am pleased that the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs interjected, because I am about to go on to something that might interest him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! In these circumstances I will not tolerate provocative statements from either side of the Chamber. I am trying to get the honourable member for Bulimba back to the theme of his address. I do not want provocative statements made at this stage.

Mr McLEAN: I was referring to the lack of expenditure in the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs and the fact that there is room for improvement. I am trying to point out the full repercussions of the introduction of an Act similar to the British Act. If I cannot discuss that subject in this forum, where can I discuss it?

Mr Lester interjected.

Mr McLEAN: I am talking about a proposal that will come through the Minister's department.

Mr Warburton: The staff of the Minister's department has not been increased for 10 years, so why wouldn't there be bad industrial relations? Have a look at the accident record!

Mr LESTER: I rise to a point of order. I find the comments of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition offensive because they are not true.

Mr Warburton: They are true—absolutely true.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Is the Minister asking for a withdrawal?

Mr LESTER: Because the remarks are not true—if the honourable member wants me to specify them all, I will—I ask him to withdraw what he said.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I take the Minister's point of order on the basis that he denies the proposition advanced by the member for Bulimba. I ask the member for Bulimba to withdraw the comment.

Mr Warburton: It was me! It was my interjection, Mr Row.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Is the Minister taking a point of order against the member for Bulimba?

Mr LESTER: No, I am taking it against the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will not accept the point of order. I ask the member for Bulimba to continue his speech.

Mr McLEAN: Thank you, Mr Row.

If I may return to discussing the Budget—I was amazed to read that the Premier and Treasurer was impressed with the British Act and thought that it would benefit Queensland and would complement the Essential Services Act. That is like saying that Agent Orange would complement mustard gas, because it is very hard to find anything that would complement the Essential Services Act.

I would also like to discuss penalty rates. That issue seems like a long-playing record. Penalty rates are very important in the tourist industry, which, in turn, is important to the State's finances, so I hope I am allowed to continue.

Many Government statements do not constructively or practically approach the question of penalty rates but are mere political grandstanding. Penalty-rates-bashing appears to have replaced dole-bludger-bashing. Penalty rates have been made a scapegoat by the Government and the media.

It is frequently said that penalty rates are the drawback to a tourist-led recovery, to more employment and to cheaper tariffs in the tourist industry. It is said also that they are restricting services to the community and that they are probably holding back general economic recovery. Facts, instead of well canvassed theories, should be stated, so I shall state them. Firstly, as to a tourist-led recovery, over a lengthy period we have heard of plenty of recoveries. The National and Liberal Parties were selling the investment-led recovery, the consumer-led recovery and the export-led recovery. Now, of course, it is the tourist-led recovery.

Mr Lester: May I ask you a question?

Mr McLEAN: Yes.

Mr Lester: Why is it that Queensland tourist industry numbers have improved dramatically over the last two years while, over the same period, those in New South Wales and Victoria have gone down?

Mr McLEAN: The Minister is arguing against his own case. He should let me finish making the point I am trying to make.

As to this tourist-led recovery—probably the people in Australia are not the ones who go touring. The way has to be paved for the free-spending Japanese and Americans. However, how is the way to be paved? From the Minister's comments, I gather that the ones who will do the paving will be the workers in the tourist industry, in that they will be taking real cuts in their wages and a lessening of their working conditions.

The argument is put up consistently by Government members that the potential boom resulting from cheaper international air fares is threatened by prohibitive costs in motels, hotels and restaurants. It is claimed that the cost of labour is inflated by penalty rates to a degree that is undreamed of in most other countries. It is contended that if hotels, motels and restaurants did not have to pay those exorbitant rates, they would lower their tariffs and therefore encourage more tourists.

From assertions of that type, which appear consistently in the media, come three assumptions. The first is that penalty rates are exorbitant; the second is that, if they were abolished, hotels and restaurants would automatically reduce their charges; and the third is that, if that occurred, the State would have an influx of tourists. I dispute those claims, because I do not believe that rates are exorbitant, excessive or unrealistic.

In the tourist industry, employees work a 40-hour week, an eight-hour day; after eight hours they are paid time and a half; after 11 hours they are paid double time; on Saturday they are paid time and a half; on Sunday they are paid double time; and on public holidays they are paid double time. Perhaps it is the Government's view that those rates and conditions are exorbitant, excessive and unrealistic. I disagree. The issue is not as big as the Government makes out.

I now want to answer some of the statements attributed in the media to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs.

Mr Lester: Why is your Federal Tourism Minister, Mr Brown, admitting that penalty rates are a problem?

Mr McLEAN: Penalty rates are not the issue; flexibility in working hours is the issue.

It has been argued that hotel and restaurant charges would be reduced if penalty rates were abolished. That is not true. Over the 12-month wage freeze the prices of approximately 3 300 articles rose and approximately 1 200 Government charges went up. That makes me doubt whether any reduction in penalty rates would be passed on to the consumer by way of reduced charges. As a matter of fact, a leading director of a large hotel chain in Australia, Travelodge, stated publicly that it would not be. He claimed that, if penalty rates were completely eliminated in the tourist industry, the highest possible reduction in tariffs would be 50c per night. I wonder how many international tourists would be attracted to Australia if tariffs were reduced by 50c a night. The argument for the abolition of penalty rates is not soundly based. It is nothing more than a red herring drawn across the trail by Government members.

The cost to the consumer could increase. Wages in most other countries are made up of one-third rock-bottom award wages and two-thirds tips. Until recently, Australia has been one of the four western industrial countries relatively free from that outrageous system. That system allows the employer to pay terribly low wages and to employ a highly motivated work-force. Of course, in employee terms, that highly motivated work-force means being reduced to the degradation of having to grovel for tips and having a totally insecure wage structure based solely on the customer. In fact, the redistribution would not shift from the overpaid waitress or the barman, as is claimed, to the reluctant tourist but would go to the employers themselves. The tourist would probably pay more than he would have paid before the abandonment of penalty rates. That is an interesting point that has not been canvassed before.

The stated reason for the attacks on penalty rates is the theory that future employment will be in the service sector. That is in direct contrast with many reports that have been published.

The report of the Bureau of Industrial Economics on the tourist industry revealed that many tourist industries are capital intensive, that activities such as hotel accommodation and air transport use large amounts of capital, and that that trend is increasing. Of course, technology is hitting the tourist industry as well as others and it will not be the labour-intensive industry that it was before.

Many young people work in fast-food outlets. They are being paid low wages and they are being exploited.

Mr Lester: That is not right.

Mr McLEAN: It is.

I would like to point out why penalty rates were introduced. They were introduced to compensate a person for having to work on special days. It is clearly understood that if those days were accepted by all not to be special any more—for instance, if the work-force stopped working a five-day week and an eight-hour day—the argument would cease to be as strong as it is now. The five-day week and the eight-hour day is not a physical fixation. In our society, not only is it strictly institutionalised by public and private sector alike; it is highly unlikely that there will be any support for a change in the near future.

The multitude of alternative work schemes suggested as solutions to the unemployment crisis from every other area is in complete opposition to that way of thinking.

Mr Warburton: Isn't it a fact that the Minister who keeps interrupting you was the one who claimed that there were no unions participating in the very recent Industrial Commission hearing into penalty rates?

Mr McLEAN: That is right.

Mr Warburton: Isn't it a fact that 32 unions appeared?

Mr Lester: No. That was the previous one.

Mr Warburton: From 1979 to 1981.

Mr McLEAN: That is right.

Mr Warburton: So much for his knowledge of penalty rates!

Mr McLEAN: I would like to refer to that, because time is running out. On Tuesday morning, the Minister stated in answer to a question that the union movement in no way helped in the last investigation that was held by the Government, the results of which were released on 31 October 1981. The Minister for Employment and Labor Relations at the time was Fred Campbell. The matter came before the Parliament in June 1979. Terms of reference were stated. I would like to refer to them.

In his answer to Parliament the other day, the Minister claimed that it was not a Government inquiry and that the proposed one is intended to be a Government inquiry that will cover some of the areas that the earlier one did not. I refer to the letter initiating the inquiry into penalty payments. It said that it was to be held in regard to—

- “(i) the nature of penalty payments
- (ii) the extent of payments made to various sectors of the work force
- (iii) the relationship of penalty payments to traditional working hours
- (iv) the effect that changing work patterns might have on various penalty payments
- (v) whether there are factors emerging which require a review of penalty payments.”

The letter continued—

“In accordance with the terms of the Cabinet Decision and by authority under Section 11 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act I direct that a Full Bench of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission hold an inquiry into penalty rates in terms of Cabinet's Decision as aforesaid.”

The Commission said—

“In our opinion there are certain payments which warrant priority in examining penalty payments.

Work during standard hours—

- Weekend—Saturday and Sunday—work;
- Work on public and statutory holidays;
- Work requiring early start;
- Night work;
- Work over extended spread of hours;
- Shift work.

Work outside standard hours—

Overtime;
 Work during recognized meal break;
 On-call, Standby, Availability Payments;
 Payments relating to travel outside standard hours.

Work other than full-time work—

Part-time work;
 Casual work."

How can the Minister say that that did not cover the whole spectrum?

Mr Warburton: 32 unions entered an appearance before the commission.

Mr McLEAN: I was leading up to that. In spite of 32 unions entering appearances, the Minister told the Parliament that the unions boycotted the inquiry.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the honourable member for Sandgate wishes to continue interjecting, he will move to his usual place. I have allowed a certain amount of freedom in this debate. I will not allow any more.

Mr Burns: Get out! It's a Budget debate. You are allowed to talk on anything.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Is the member for Lytton disputing the decision of the Chair?

Mr Burns: My oath I am!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the member for Lytton under Standing Order 123A.

Mr McLEAN: All registered unions were advised by the Registrar. At the initial hearing on 19 July 1979, appearances were entered by 32 unions and the Trades and Labor Council of Queensland. At the hearing on 31 July 1979 six union advocates contributed to the submissions on the scope of the inquiry. Union representatives attended all hearings. Three different unions made final submissions at the hearing on 22 July 1981.

If the Government does not accept its responsibility in industrial relations, the State is headed for industrial chaos. If a sensible approach is not adopted as well as a change of direction that will allow for all sections of industry—employers, employees and Government—to get together and to be accepted as equally important cogs in the wheels of industry, Queensland is on a disaster course.

Mr ALISON (Maryborough) (8.9 p.m.): I congratulate the Premier and Treasurer on his Budget. It is a very fine document, being a blueprint for the finances of the State in the coming 12 months. It is a blueprint for progress in the State. I congratulate the Under Treasurer (Mr Leo Hielscher) on the supporting documents, particularly "Queensland Economy 1982-83", which is easily digested and gives a firm insight into the direction in which the State is heading. This is a very auspicious occasion, being the first Budget introduced by a National Party Treasurer.

With a deficit of only \$136,000 the 1983-84 Budget is basically balanced. Its strategic objectives are to maintain all Government services, with improvements in high priority areas and implementation of as many election promises as possible, including a review of stamp duties, no new taxes, taxation concessions in pay-roll tax and land tax, maintenance of capital works programs to provide facilities and employment opportunities, assistance to reduce unemployment through the wages pause program, the Commonwealth Community Employment Program, apprenticeship assistance schemes and various other schemes and financial arrangements, encouragement of business activity and, above all, to balance the finances of the State.

When the State's Budget is under debate it is relevant, especially with the recent State election, to consider what an ALP Treasurer might have put in his Budget. The people of Queensland should congratulate themselves on their wise decision to return a National Party Government and not a Labor Party Government. The ALP policy document reveals that the Labor Party, if elected, would have raised additional funds, by way of taxation and Federal Government funding, of \$341m, or \$137 for each man, woman and child in Queensland based on a Queensland population of 2 473 000. Of course, the policy document is very airy-fairy on the way it would raise that money.

The Premier and Treasurer pointed out that \$51.7m is estimated to be received from the Federal Government under the proposed Medicare arrangements. The Federal Government has offered only \$30.7m, which is \$21m less than the Government has budgeted for. The Federal Government is showing straight-out, barefaced discrimination against Queenslanders by providing for the current year only \$8.49 for every man, woman and child in Queensland under the proposed arrangements. On average, in a full year the other States will receive \$49.60 per head of population and Queensland will receive only \$29 per capita. The difference this year is \$21m and in a full year it will amount to \$52m. In other words, Queensland is being robbed to the tune of \$1m per week. What do members of the Opposition have to say about this? They simply condone it and support the Federal Government with all sorts of arguments that amount to rubbish.

The Federal Government argues that Queensland does not charge fees in its public hospitals and therefore no revenue is lost. Dr Blewett and his colleagues say that Queensland is getting all it puts in by way of levy and that the Grants Commission will adjust any inequity. The irrefutable answers to those arguments are that Queenslanders, like all other Australians, are paying a levy and are entitled to receive some back for free hospitals, as will happen in every other State. In fact, under the Federal Labor Government's arrangements, Queenslanders will pay twice for their free hospitals. If the Grants Commission adjusts this matter it will be three years before Queensland receives anything, which is just not acceptable.

Another argument put forward by the ALP is that Queensland will get more under the Medicare arrangements than it did under the Fraser Government's health arrangements. That may or may not be so, but in any case it is irrelevant. The facts of the matter are that Queenslanders are being discriminated against and I am sure they will want to know where the State ALP members stand in this matter.

I am very pleased to note that subsidies for regional tourist bureaus are to be increased from \$25,000 to \$35,000 a year.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr ALISON: The honourable member should not blame the Under Treasurer if he cannot understand figures. Perhaps we can get together later and sort them out.

According to "Queensland Economy 1982-83" the Queensland share of Australian-generated visitor nights was 22.6 per cent. Queensland was exceeded only by New South Wales, with 34 per cent. Australians spent 32.3 per cent more visitor nights in Queensland in 1982-83 than in 1978-79. Over the same period the number of visitor nights spent in the rest of Australia by Australian residents increased by only 9 per cent.

Queensland's ability to attract international visitors has improved considerably because of a second international airport at Townsville. Additional international flights and three additional airlines now service the State. In my electorate a problem has arisen in that, recently, the Bundaberg City Council and a couple of adjacent councils withdrew from the Sugar Coast Regional Tourist Association. I understand that they have approached the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts to split up the area. I hope that that does not occur because it would be a backward step. I am not knocking Bundaberg; I am simply saying that the Sugar Coast regional tourist area is an excellent area to sell in package tourism. I sincerely hope that the Minister in charge of tourism can call those people together, particularly the local authorities, and once again get them under the umbrella of the Sugar Coast Regional Tourist Association.

The honourable member for Bulimba had his head in the sand concerning the tourist industry. He just could not see that the reduction or elimination of penalty rates by arrangement with the unions concerned would create employment. There is no doubt about that according to the research carried out by independent people and the tourist industry itself. The Minister in charge of Employment and Industrial Affairs has also made it quite clear. I congratulate him on his initiative in suggesting to the tourist industry that it should do something to improve the situation by getting penalty rates reduced.

I am very pleased that the State Government has increased the per capita grants to non-State schools from \$303 to \$345 per annum for primary students and from \$486 to \$552 per annum for secondary students. The new rates will provide a real increase of 4 per

cent towards their running costs. I am also pleased to note that the Government has extended the term from 5 to 10 years under the non-Government schools interest subsidy scheme for capital works. That will further assist private schools.

Private schools play a very important role in the Australian education scheme. In 1982, 23.9 per cent of schoolchildren throughout Australia attended non-Government schools, leaving 76.1 per cent of children attending Government schools. In that year, 81 per cent of the total schooling budget came from the State Government and 19 per cent from the Federal Government. It is interesting to note that only 13.2 per cent of total Government expenditure was made on non-Government schools, while 86.8 per cent was made on Government schools. My point is that with 23.9 per cent of the total schoolchildren throughout Australia at private schools, the private schools get only 13.2 per cent of the total Government education budget. It is my firm conviction that all our Australian parents have a fundamental right to decide what type of schooling their children should receive. Private schools should get a fair share of the total education Vote so that these Australian children are not discriminated against.

The Fraser Government re-established the principle of a basic grant, equivalent in value to 20 per cent of the cost of educating a child in a State school, for each child no matter what school he or she might attend, and added new capital works funds and supplementary assistance based on need. That was a great step forward which tied to the cost of educating a child in the Government system the basic grant to primary and high schools.

Unfortunately, earlier this year the Hawke Government, in pandering to the left-wingers and some of the more radical people in the teachers' unions, broke the nexus between the cost of educating a child in a Government school and the level of recurrent grants to non-government schools. This is part of a very obvious ploy by the Federal Education Minister (Senator Ryan) to divide and conquer the private schools, with the eventual aim of integrating the entire independent school sector into one Government system. That aim is actively supported by the Australian Teachers Federation, by the Queensland Teachers Union and, I understand, by all of the other State teachers' unions.

I suggest to the Queensland Teachers Union, in particular, that it should become less paranoid about private schools and perhaps ponder more on why more and more people are taking their children from State schools and placing them in private schools. Both the New South Wales and Victorian Governments are also attacking the private school system with savage cuts in financial assistance. I am confident that the vast majority of Australians of all political and religious beliefs would agree that Australian parents have the right to determine the kind of education that their children may have. Because of the basic belief of Australian parents in fair play, I believe also that the State aid problem will help to bring down the Wran, Cain and Hawke Governments.

Senator Susan Ryan is setting out on this divide-and-conquer policy, which I mentioned earlier, by setting one private school against the other. She has a hit list of 41 private schools. Senator Ryan and Mr Hawke have denied that the integration of Government and non-Government schools is the ALP Federal Government's policy. However, if that is not its policy, then why is the Hawke Government pursuing its policy of reducing grants to children in some non-Government schools? This is the first step in any integration process.

Mr Casey: How many in Queensland?

Mr ALISON: I understand there are none, and that is the point I am trying to make. They are setting one school off against the other. They are making it appear as though nobody in Queensland will get hurt.

Mr Casey: How many private schools in Maryborough receive assistance from the Schools Commission?

Mr ALISON: There are two, and that is what I am concerned about.

Mr Casey: There would be none if there was a Liberal Government.

Mr ALISON: The honourable member might believe that.

Why is the Federal Government making impact statements necessary before new non-Government schools are allowed to be built in developed areas? It is becoming increasingly obvious that Senator Ryan hates the private schools and, aided and abetted by the Australian Teachers Federation, as well as receiving the support of the ALP Federal caucus, is setting out on a clear path to integrate the private school system into the State school system.

Recently, Senator Ryan stacked the Australian Schools Commission with five replacement appointments. I understand that four out of those five are strongly opposed to State aid.

I wish to refer to another matter in the Budget. I am pleased to see that some capital works are to be carried out in Maryborough. For instance, a pre-school is to be built at the Albert Primary School. A nursing home is to be built at a cost of \$1,751,000. It will have 40 beds, a dining-room, a servery, an activities room, sitting-rooms and ablutions. Pensioner units, as well as Housing Commission homes, are to be built in the Maryborough area. I am particularly pleased to see that \$2.5m has been ear-marked for the Lower Mary River Irrigation Scheme. Work will be commenced on the reticulation scheme. The Moonaboola Industrial Estate has been ear-marked for further development.

I turn now to expenditure by the Queensland Housing Commission. I congratulate the Treasurer and the Minister for Works and Housing (Mr Wharton) on the programs that have been introduced during the year to help people to acquire their own home or obtain rental homes. In both cases the process has been made easier.

It is good to see the assistance that is given to people to buy their own homes. There is a Housing Commission interest-subsidy scheme under which a borrower is required to make repayments amounting to 25 per cent of his gross income. The shortfall between that amount and the commercial interest rate is met by way of a non-repayable subsidy. The other scheme is a commercial scheme. It involves the capacity of commercial lending institutions to provide finance for home ownership purposes.

In the past year, there has been a net welfare rental gain of Housing Commission homes of 1246. The Treasurer said that in this financial year the Housing Commission would make available \$224.1m for housing purposes. That is an increase of \$38.1m, or 83.7 per cent. The Queensland Housing Commission expects to assist more than 2500 families with housing finance this year. That is a substantial increase of 18.7 per cent. However, I am concerned about two aspects.

First, there is a long delay for applicants waiting for finance from the Housing Commission to purchase a home. That highlights the success of the scheme, but it has created problems.

Secondly, I am concerned about the increase in the number of applicants for Housing Commission homes for rental. Even though the Government has increased expenditure and is doing everything possible, attempts must be made to do better. I note that applications by families for rental housing have increased by 621 over the last year, and applications for pensioner units have increased by 256.

In my own electorate, and no doubt throughout the rest of Queensland and Australia, a serious situation has arisen. Because of the state of the economy, people are not able to get satisfactory accommodation. Some people are living with their in-laws in houses in which there are two or three bedrooms and three or four children; others are living in caravans and underneath houses. As I said, I know of such instances in my own electorate. I am very grateful to the Minister for Works and Housing for inviting tenders for Housing Commission houses, but more finance is needed. In my electorate, 70 applicants are waiting for Housing Commission houses.

The National Party Government should take a bow on the presentation of the Budget, which incorporates its most important policies. Within six weeks of the election, most of the party's election promises have been honoured. The Budget is a blueprint for the future and I am sure that it will create greater growth in this wonderful State.

Mr BURNS (Lytton) .(8.28 p.m.): I shall be talking about Budgets brought down throughout the nation and about Government assistance to industry and commerce. I make it clear that, although I will be referring to matters in the State Budget, I will speak about Australia-wide assistance to industry. That assistance is largely unquestioned, unaccountable and in some cases uncoded.

People contribute through taxation to Government schemes to promote employment, business opportunities and new industries. Tax-payers can only hope that both Federal and State Governments take a close look at the money that is spent and see whether the community gets a return from, or benefits by, the money that is spent.

The type of assistance that I am talking about is far less obvious than social services, which are paid to house-holders. Any attempt to outline the magnitude of the assistance is fraught with difficulties. Assistance to industry can take several forms. Assistance through Federal and State Government Budgets is fairly obvious. There are import tariffs and quotas that restrict import competition and pricing arrangements and assistance in purchasing locally produced goods.

Assistance through the Budget generally takes four basic forms. Firstly, there is direct financial assistance by way of bounties and subsidies. Secondly, there are taxation concessions resulting in both revenue forgone (for example, investment allowances) and revenue deferred (for example, accelerated depreciation provisions). Thirdly, there are loans and concessional terms. Lastly, there is the provision of services (that is, export and research services) or facilities, such as irrigation projects and infrastructure projects, at concessional charges.

Those forms of assistance affect industries in different ways. Some measures provide assistance by raising sales revenue or supplementing income levels. The common aim is to maintain or increase profits so as to maintain or increase production either generally or in particular industries and therefore—we hope—to increase employment levels.

I want to give some idea of the magnitude of this assistance. I have taken my figures from Budget Papers, Treasury documents and reports of the Industries Assistance Commission.

The first matter I want to talk about is import restrictions. It has been estimated that the subsidy to the Australian-based industries through import tariffs and quotas approximates well over \$6,000m per year. That is based on the IAC figures for 1980. Ultimately this is paid by the Australian consumers in the form of higher prices for imported and/or domestic goods.

We should ask: Has it achieved its aim of enabling Australian production to compete with overseas produced goods and, hence, maintained employment levels in protected industries? I believe that no accountability is imposed on the receivers of that money. I am told by those who should know that too often it is used to maintain dividends or to fund rationalisations, which are often less labour intensive, or it is diverted into more profitable activities.

The opponents of such tariffs propose their abolition. I do not know whether the abolition of tariff protection is the answer. If tariffs were abolished, the real problem of public accountability by the companies for the public funds that are used remains. As well, the revenue lost to the Government is ignored. Governments receive over \$2,000m from import duties. In the absence of alternatives, their abolition ignores the employment implications of exposing the work-forces in those industries that are now protected by tariffs to world competition and conditions of employment in other nations. I do not know that Australia could compete with the Asian nations. No matter how much we talk about penalty rates and wages and conditions, no-one in Australia would accept a situation in which the workers were paid the same rates as in Asia. If we maintain a high standard of living, we must maintain a high standard of wages.

A Government Member: And we have to be efficient.

Mr BURNS: Of course we have to be efficient. That is why I mentioned imports. In many cases, we never see a report on whether the money that goes towards assisting people by way of tariff protection is in fact assisting them. The farmers federation has its argument and the trade unions have their argument. Everybody seems to have an argument; but no-one comes down with facts to show whether we are getting value for that money. That is what we really need to know when we talk about Budgets and about money that is taken out of the tax-payers' pockets.

The Budget Papers show that a large amount of money is collected from Australians all over the nation and it goes into the Queensland Budget. Although it might be claimed that the Queensland Government does not tax the people very much, it demands

that the Federal Government does so, so that the Queensland Government can take large sums of money from it for channelling into the Queensland Government's Labor-inspired health schemes and other areas.

I will get away from import arrangements for a moment and turn to pricing arrangements. These operate largely in the rural sector and oil industry. In the rural sector, they include Government contributions to stabilisation funds and underwriting arrangements in the price stabilisation schemes. Discriminatory pricing arrangements allow for price discrimination between sales on domestic and export markets, usually through some supply restriction. At any particular point in time, these can discriminate against domestic producers or consumers.

For instance, in 1979-80 transfers from producers totalled \$103m and transfers to producers totalled \$178m, or a net impact of \$75m. The oil parity pricing scheme enables domestic producers to sell oil at the current import price, irrespective of the cost of production. In general, producers receive about half of this difference, the remainder going to the Government in the crude oil levy. For 1982-83, this was estimated at \$3,237m. That is a massive amount of money.

I am not trying to suggest in any way that that assistance is undesirable. In many instances it is perfectly reasonable and equitable.

Mr Simpson: For a national industry?

Mr BURNS: It might be necessary to help even particular industries established in particular States. I do not think that it should be claimed without proof that any of that assistance is undesirable. What I am saying is that it is impossible to find out what happens to the money involved.

The problem lies in its overall distribution and, more particularly, in its lack of accountability. This money is provided by ordinary Australians to industry to guarantee production and employment in particular sectors. But no controls exist over the use made of these moneys. Even worse, in the mass of assistance operating, no monitoring is undertaken of the effectiveness of such money, of its equitable distribution, or of its contribution to our ideas or aims of full employment.

There are Government purchasing preferences, and I think it is perfectly clear that I have always argued that the State of Queensland should protect its own industries first. Again, members do not know the value of those subsidies. The subsidies come from the consumers' pockets, because they pay in one way or another.

Mr Simpson: Sometimes to the worker's advantage.

Mr BURNS: That is right. Sometimes it is to their disadvantage. We do not really know.

In the Federal sphere, since August 1981, purchasing preference for Australian-produced goods by the Commonwealth departments and authorities has been confined to the products of "defence strategic" industries. In that defence area, New Zealand is classed as part of Australia. That is a crazy situation. However, prior to that all purchases of departments and authorities accorded a 20 per cent adjustment in favour of local industry. That refers to the Australian Government.

Most States accord a general priority against overseas suppliers and a 10 per cent preference against the Australian States, with up to 10 per cent additional preference for decentralised industries. Further, in the offsets programs (through the specification of tenders for Commonwealth Government contracts), a requirement exists on all purchases over \$500,000 to place 30 per cent of such work with local industry where overseas suppliers have received a major order. Collectively, Governments in Australia account for about one-quarter of gross national expenditure.

Honourable members can go through the figures for themselves. They are not figures that I should churn out tonight, but they include: Commonwealth Departments and authorities—about \$4,800m; State Government departments and authorities—about \$10,800m; and local government departments and authorities—about \$1,500m. They are all 1978-79 figures.

These preference programs can be quite significant. However, given that their value depends upon the relative significance at the margin in a critical decision framework, little can be said about their monetary value to local industry. It could be as high as \$2,000m.

To quote the IAC—

“In the absence of detailed statistics . . . no firm conclusions can be drawn as to the extent of assistance accorded to preferences.”

The IAC cannot tell us how much assistance has been provided by way of preferences.

Mr Simpson: We know some, but not all.

Mr BURNS: That is right. We do not know the total.

Budgetary assistance to industry is a matter in which many National Party members should be interested. I do not suggest that it is undesirable; I am questioning how it is checked.

Mr Booth: We haven't said a word.

Mr BURNS: But I know what the honourable member is thinking. He will be popping up and saying, “He is against assistance.” Members ought to be able to challenge the idea of allowing them to be unaccountable.

As to direct financial assistance—both Federal and State Governments provide direct assistance to industry in the form of bounties and subsidies.

Mr Simpson: Is that the Federal member's speech?

Mr BURNS: It is our speech, because it is the honourable member and I who pay the tax. The information was prepared by some people in my party who said to me one day, “Tom, have you ever looked at how much comes out of our pocket as ordinary workers to pay for assistance to industry?” There seems to be no reason why members should not be arguing it in this Parliament, as is done in any other Parliament. I know that there are many restrictions that Government members would like to impose on what happens in this Parliament; but surely we ought to be able to talk about our taxes and where they are spent.

Mr Gunn: Mainly in the southern States.

Mr BURNS: A lot of it is spent here, too. Queenslanders are Australians, too. Although the Deputy Premier and Treasurer might like to think that we are not, we are all part of this great country.

All the assistance that is provided comes out of the pockets of Australian taxpayers. The tax that Queenslanders pay goes to the Australian Government and the States receive their share. It is part of the Australian scene.

I shall refer now to the 1983 Federal Budget. The Federal Labor Government gave the agricultural and pastoral sector (excluding pricing measures) assistance of \$178.8m. The mining sector received \$42.9m. I can provide a long list of the areas in which assistance was provided. Assistance was given to primary producers to adopt artificially low values for natural increase in livestock. There was provision of five-year spreading of assessment in (a) insurance recoveries for the loss of timber or livestock and (b) income from forced disposal of livestock; deduction for the cost of timber mill buildings; deduction for reduced value of land due to timber depletion; unlimited carry-forward of primary production losses—

Mr Innes: What about the poor old workers in the gallery?

Mr BURNS: I will send them up a copy later.

The list continues—

“deduction for capital expenditure in the development or purchase of an Australian patent, design, copyright or license

deduction for purchase of mining or prospecting rights by general and petroleum miners

exemption of income from sale, transfer or assignment of rights to mine gold or prescribed metals

deductions for capital expenditure on scientific research, employee housing, butter and cheese, etc. factories

deductions for conversion of plant for use in connection with the metric system
deduction for capital expenditure by primary producers on timber access roads
sales tax exemptions for:

- (a) ethylene gas
- (b) equipment and materials in fishing industry
- (c) articles for use in the destruction of pests for business or industrial purposes
- (d) lubricants for industrial purposes for machinery implements or apparatus."

The list goes on and on.

I will now talk about deferred revenue. Deferred tax concessions include accelerated depreciation allowance and rapid write-off. None of those are available to the ordinary people in the work-force. There are rapid write-off provisions for the mining industry and primary producers. Difficulties exist in estimating the cost to the Government of such provisions. We should try to find where that money went and how much money is involved. We should ring them up and ask them, and start to check round to ascertain the total amount of money that we pay out of our pocket as tax-payers for those support schemes from the Federal Government before we start to look at our own State Government and what happens here. I want to know when a check will be made on how effectively our money is being spent. The other night a member said that a fellow who would not take a job should have the dole taken from him and that unmarried mothers should not be helped because they are having babies so they can get this little bit of social welfare payment. That is crazy. That is stupid old right-wing politics out of the past. The same sort of argument was put up against the baby bonus back at the turn of the century.

Government members talk about checks on the bloke who gets the dole, on the widow, on the pensioner and on the ex-serviceman, but they do not talk about serious checks on these things which cost \$12,500m a year—and that money is coming out of the pockets of the average man and woman, the business man and woman and the farmer. What we should be asking is whether we are spending all of this money effectively. Is all the money that is being raised from the tax-payers of this nation being used to the best benefit, or are we wasting a lot of it because no-one is prepared to kick some schemes out?

Mr Innes: What are you suggesting? The Human Rights Commission went to central Australia to investigate people who went there from all over Australia to protest and break the law. That came out of the workers' pockets.

Mr BURNS: It is a matter of getting value for money. That is a matter that cannot be calculated in terms of cash equivalent, but it should be subject to monitoring.

I now continue to deal with revenue deferred. Difficulties exist in estimating the cost to Government of such provisions. For the company, tax deferral is equivalent to an interest-free loan from the Government. For the Government it means revenue forgone. To quote the Treasury—

"Part of the difficulty with these items is that their costs are spread over a number of years whereas Tax expenditure estimates relate to single years.

Particularly in the case of a new concession such as an acceleration of depreciation deductions, the cost may be small in the first one or two years, yet may grow substantially in later years."

Later, from the same document—

"the revenue would never make up that loss unless the concession was repealed at a later date. When investment subject to the provisions is expanding, these concessions give rise to a continuing lower level of taxation than would otherwise be the case.

Since 1975/76, accelerated depreciation arrangements have been introduced into a number of industries. This culminated in the Fraser government's announcement in July 1982 of a new package of depreciation allowances which apply to almost all plant, income-producing buildings and mine development. The estimated revenue cost range from \$62m. in 1983/84 up to \$1,611m. in 1988/89 with the ultimate annual cost of \$973m. (at 1981/82 prices)."

That is a lot of money. We ought to know whether we are getting value for money. We ought to know whether the tax-payers are really getting value for their money.

The Budget provides rebates to industry on pay-roll and land tax. In 1979-80 the estimated cost to each State Government for those rebates was \$32.1m. The present cost is unknown.

All State Governments make loans available to industries through various agencies. I can recall that the Queensland State Government assisted Flameless Incinerators and also a Whitsunday air operator. In most cases, assistance to industry is provided by concessional rates of interest on the loans. Most State Governments also adopt the practice of providing loan guarantees to assist particular activities. In 1979-80 the IAC estimated the cost of this to government as \$7.8m.

I am continually trying to make the point that honourable members examine only what happens in the current year in their own State and do not take an overall view of what is happening to the money taken from the little bloke down at the bottom who is paying income tax for all these things to be done. Surely he is entitled to ask: It is fair, is it reasonable, it is giving me value for money? I really do not know the answer to those questions.

In most States, buildings, industrial estates or areas of serviced land are made available in various centres for use, lease and/or purchase. My electorate has a great deal of industrial land and many businesses want to establish on those estates. In many instances, the land or premises are made available on very favourable terms.

In addition, special supply contracts are often available for large users encompassing subsidies for water supply, sewerage, electricity and other services. In 1979-80, the IAC estimated these at \$25m.

In addition, all States offer some form of assistance to industry for the transport of goods. This is designed primarily as an incentive to decentralised industries, but also operates as a subsidy to primary producers. In 1979-80 the cost was estimated at \$21m. Last financial year the Federal Government contributed \$32m to the Tasmanian freight equalisation scheme. Because the Federal Government paid that money, it comes out of my taxes and I do not know what value it has.

Mr Tenni: Will you tell the Federal Government to do the same for me in north Queensland.

Mr BURNS: The Minister should make better representations. He has been a very poor member. It is about time he pulled his socks up and did something for the people of the north.

The sum total of this budgetary assistance to industry in all its forms is \$3,400m. Since the tax received from such company and business-related individuals only approximates about double this, we can then appreciate the significance of such assistance. Half of the revenue that the Government gains from business is given back in assistance.

All up, the total assistance to industry provided through the aegis of Government is well over \$12,500m. This is approximately 40 per cent of the gross operating surplus of all corporate trading and unincorporated enterprises in Australia. Basically, without it, profits would be at least 40 per cent less.

This is not to suggest that such assistance is undesirable. In many cases it is perfectly reasonable and quite equitable, and without it many more would be unemployed. The problem lies in its overall distribution, and, more particularly, in its lack of accountability. This money is provided by ordinary Australians to industry to guarantee production and employment in particular sectors. But no controls exist over the use made of these monies. Even worse, in the myriad of assistance operating, no monitoring is undertaken of the effectiveness of such money, of its equitable distribution, or of its contribution to the goal of reduced unemployment.

The money, literally handed in hope to industry, approximates the Federal Government's expenditure on welfare. Yet at no time do the stringent tests on welfare recipients operate. The question must be asked whether the return from business in both tax and employment is adequate to justify that outlay. It is an important question, not merely because it asks: Can business in capitalism really survive without State support? If it can, then State money can be directed to us all. If it cannot, then possibly a better way exists to organise the resources of our society to ensure that the benefits are received by all the members of that society.

Mr NEWTON (Caboolture) (8.49 p.m.): I commend the member for Lytton. He is a hard act to follow. His speed of speaking would burn anybody up.

I commend the Premier and Treasurer on his Budget and on his foresight in relation to the electrification of the rail lines in the urban and country areas of this great State. The Government has allocated \$347.9m to railway capital works, and \$8.7m will be spent on major track improvement and signalling equipment. The Government is committed also to increasing greatly capital works programs for the electrification of coal lines. The proposal will involve the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars and will mean a substantial long-term saving in fuel costs and surety of supply.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority's five-year program will be completed this year, with an expenditure of \$40.5m. The suburban rail electrification, which will be completed this year, will assist greatly in moving people when Expo '88 is held here.

Mr Hamill: It was to be done in 1957 under a Labor Government.

Mr NEWTON: That is all very well. It is now under way.

The Petrie-Caboolture rail electrification is very important to me. I commend the Government for allocating \$4.4m for part of the rail line to the north coast. It will serve to upgrade the railway stations and services and will ensure that the stations have a more modern appearance. A much faster and improved service will be provided, and I have already received a number of inquiries from people in my electorate about the service. More housing and other facilities will be needed in the Caboolture electorate as a result of the rail electrification. My constituents are looking forward to a fast, improved rail service to Brisbane. I hope to use it myself when I attend parliamentary sittings.

Mr Casey: I think you had better go to Vince Lester's reading classes.

Mr NEWTON: I am doing all right.

The electrification of the railway line to the north coast will mean more jobs. It will also serve the wonderful tourist attractions of Bribie Island, which, in spite of what Opposition members said during the election campaign, the Government has preserved from heavy industry. People travelling between Brisbane and Caboolture will have a very comfortable trip, and I hope that buses will then transport them from Caboolture to the island. I fully support the Government's proposal to electrify the railway line to the north.

Over the years, the Government has seen fit to develop our vast coal resources. I commend the Government on its foresight in deciding to electrify the railway lines on which coal is hauled. The total cost of the proposed electrification is about \$600,000,000. The expenditure of that money will create a vast number of jobs for the people of Queensland. Tenders for electric locomotives are being called, and tenders have also been called for the transmission lines.

I commend the Government on its foresight in creating jobs for Queenslanders through the Budget.

Mr McPHIE (Toowoomba North) (8.54 p.m.): I congratulate the Premier and Treasurer on a most enlightening Budget which, I believe, has addressed all aspects of the ongoing financing and developing of the State in a very businesslike manner. Sufficient funds are never available in any year for all desired new projects.

In today's press the honourable member for Chatsworth made a great point of there being insufficient money for schools in his area and a number of other areas from which Labor members have been returned to Parliament.

Mr Casey: Are you satisfied with the schools in Toowoomba North?

Mr McPHIE: I am coming to that.

People in the Toowoomba North area would like more work done on schools; but they recognise that expenditure must be spread evenly throughout the State to meet the needs of all departments, and that has been done by the Budget. In addition, it has provided for a broad band of development and expansion across the State, yet it is balanced, and that surely is the work of a master Treasurer.

During this debate I have listened to many comments by Opposition members. All of them can be described by one word—knockers. In considering any document, detractors can attack items one by one, using an infinite variety of arguments, whether factual or

not. Many of the arguments from Opposition members have not been factual. They endeavoured to discredit the total document by taking it apart item by item but that is not what we are considering tonight. We are considering a total document, a complete entity, with all items combined together to make a whole. No single item stands alone or can be looked at in isolation. In that regard, I have not heard a single, concrete argument from the Opposition that reduces or challenges the significance of this Budget.

The Budget must surely be the envy of other mainland States, for it is a balanced Budget. It ensures continued and controlled progress and expansion within the State. Government involvement in everyday matters has been minimised and costs have been kept in check without the introduction of unnecessary taxes, such as those introduced in the other States. That latter item has been made a point of great attack by Opposition members. They have spoken generally, in broad terms, but let me give some facts. These figures supplement those given so ably by the member for Roma earlier in the debate. The source of these figures is the State taxing authorities in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

For motor vehicle registration and third party insurance on a six-cylinder Commodore, the cost is \$270.40 in New South Wales, \$248.60 in Victoria and \$234.10 in Queensland. Stamp duty on new registrations or on transfers is \$2 per \$100 or part thereof in New South Wales, \$8 per \$200 of market value in Victoria, and \$2 per \$100 in Queensland. The cost in Queensland for that one item is similar to that in New South Wales.

The pay-roll tax exemption level is \$120,000 in New South Wales, \$132,500 in Victoria and \$204,000 in Queensland. Stamp duty on leasing agreements on real property is 35c per \$100 in New South Wales, 60c per \$100 in Victoria and 32c per \$100 in Queensland. Stamp duty on contract sales for a \$50,000 house which is the principal place of residence is \$875 in New South Wales, \$1,100 in Victoria and \$500 in Queensland. The financial institutions duty is 3c for every \$100 transaction in New South Wales and Victoria. There is no duty in Queensland.

The tax on super-grade petrol is 3.02c per litre in New South Wales and 2.22c per litre in Victoria. There is no tax in Queensland.

The rate of tax on the wholesale value of liquor purchases is 10 per cent in New South Wales, 9 per cent in Victoria and 8 per cent in Queensland.

Finally in this group of figures I mention tobacco tax. The rate of tax on the wholesale value of tobacco sales in New South Wales is 10 per cent and in Victoria it is 12 per cent. Queensland has no tax. Those figures illustrate that Queensland is the least taxed State.

The source of my information on motor vehicle registrations is the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The first figures that I will cite are based on the estimated population in June 1982 and the new car registration figures for the whole of 1982. New vehicle registrations per thousand people were 50 in Queensland, 40 in New South Wales, 37 in Victoria, 38 in South Australia and 42 in Western Australia. The higher Queensland figure indicates that the State's economic conditions and lower taxes have encouraged more purchases of new vehicles.

To put these figures in a more realistic way, I will deal with the age group from 16 to 70 years, because people in that bracket are most likely to be purchasing cars. For 1982 the new vehicle registrations per thousand people were 76 in Queensland, 60 in New South Wales, 56 in Victoria, 57 in South Australia and 65 in Western Australia. That supports my contention that people who live in Queensland are far better off than those in the other States.

The Opposition has spoken about electricity charges. People who live in adjoining electorates and draw their power from the Queensland grid pay less for their electricity than those who live in the electorate of Carnarvon, who draw their electricity from the New South Wales grid.

The claim by ALP members that electricity costs can be reduced is not valid. If they did have the magic formula for reducing them, surely they would have informed their friend, Mr Wran, so that he could reduce the staggering charges that people in New South Wales pay.

I consider that this Budget sets an excellent example for all other Governments in Australia, especially those on the mainland who so urgently need help with financial planning and management. This is a well thought-out and balanced document which will ensure continued progress in Queensland. It follows a long line of Budgets from our National Party-led Governments over many years that have helped Queensland develop, mature and become the State with the most viable economy in this nation. The population has increased at double the national average and this has resulted partly from the greatest internal shift of population ever recorded in the history of Australia.

The contribution of Queensland towards the economy of the nation is immense. Queensland produces 98 per cent of the national sugar production, which brings \$1,000m into Australia. Queensland exports 53 per cent of the coal produced, amounting to \$1.365m. Queensland also produces 67 per cent of all copper, 59 per cent of silver, lead and zinc and 35 per cent of Australia's export beef. Queensland enjoys a triple A credit rating in the USA and with other leading financial authorities. Queensland's loan borrowings have been carefully managed and it is now in the enviable position of having its interest and redemption payment at only 6.5 per cent of its total consolidated revenue. No other State is in this position. Surely that indicates that the Budgets that have been brought down by this Government and previous National Party-led Governments are sound documents which have put this State on the right financial road.

People in New South Wales find that their State is facing a huge deficit and has been forced to increase its taxes and charges. I have mentioned the 3.02c tax on fuel and the special tax on cigarettes. I have said that Queensland is the only State that has not inflicted such taxes on its population.

Queensland Budgets have produced other initiatives. Over the last couple of years, they have created 42 000 new jobs in this State. In contrast, over the same period, the socialist States of New South Wales and Victoria have lost thousand of jobs.

It is no wonder that people are coming to Queensland from those States at the rate of 1 200 or so a week. In fact, when I was door-knocking in my electorate during the election campaign, I met one person who was previously a Labor supporter in New South Wales. He and his wife have established a plant nursery in Toowoomba. They are now National Party supporters, and they came to Queensland because of this State's low taxation. They reported to me that they had to obtain five separate permits, at a total cost of \$110, before they could sell pot plants at a roadside stall near Lismore in aid of a Lions Club charity drive. If that is not over-taxation, what is?

People who have come from the southern States to Queensland have been able to find employment very quickly. They will never return to a State that has an ALP Government. They know when they are well off. They came here because they do not trust ALP Governments.

It took Mr Hawke, in government, only 70 hours to break every promise that he made prior to the election. More recently, the Commonwealth has failed to come forward to honour the many promises that it made in north Queensland during the State election. It made promises in an area that, without the Queensland Government's vigorous northern development program and budgetary provisions, would be sadly neglected.

The people of Queensland wanted a continuation of stable and strong government, and they wanted sound budgetary and economic management. They did not want empty promises. They realise now that they were conned by the Hawke Government, just as they were conned by the Whitlam Government before that.

Today's newspapers contain reports that a Federal election will be held before the end of next year. No wonder! Look at what has been going on with the Federal Attorney-General, who has been discredited over the referendum issues and taken off negotiations in the hope that the referendum may proceed. However, the damage has been done by Senator Evans.

Many examples exist of mismanagement under the ALP, and such mismanagement is highlighted by the Budgets that are produced in the southern States. Budgetary problems have arisen with the Federal ALP Government in its fiddling with school assistance, with what it has been doing with pensions and with taxing pensions. Far worse things have come from the Federal ALP. It has adopted communist-sponsored

United Nations accords in preference to the laws of this land. It has used F111 reconnaissance aircraft to check up on what was happening in a sovereign State of this Commonwealth, one that has the right to manage its own affairs.

Mr Casey: They have F111s at Amberley, too, you know.

Mr McPHIE: I know all about them. I have been a controller at Amberley and have spoken to their pilots. To my knowledge, no F111 has been used to check up on what the Queensland Government is doing.

Senator Evans has been guilty of other misdeeds. It is proposed that the Australian flag will be done away with and that our heritage will be denied because the Federal ALP does not like the Union Jack in the top corner. That is something of which every true Australian is proud. The Federal ALP proposes to change the naturalisation oath by doing away with reference to God and the Queen. One of its Government departments commences letters with the words "Dear comrade" By its Sexual Discrimination Act it is trying to itemise in minute detail what the Australian people can do in their every waking minute.

All those actions, added to the Federal Government's financial mismanagement, can assure only one result when the Federal Government goes to the polls—I hope, sooner than the end of next year.

Queensland is now facing the future with confidence, a confidence based on performance over the past 26 years, during which Queensland has developed from the Cinderella State after years of stagnation under a socialist Government to the State with the greatest future. This has been in no small way due to the policies of the National Party, the party that has dominated politics in Queensland since 1957. It is the party that managed the Commonwealth Games and the Government that will be staging Expo '88, which will be a bigger and better event than the Games. It will put the State of Queensland on the front pages of newspapers throughout the world. The National Party is a free enterprise party that has produced this Budget document, which is surely a blueprint for the future. I wholeheartedly support the Budget and commend it to the Committee.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (9.11 p.m.): Because of the time and because of the necessity to give the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer time to reply, I shall make my comments brief. I would add my commendation to those members who have commended parts of the Budget. This is a difficult time in which to frame a Budget. Any juggling of finances requires that consideration to be given to revenue, which must match expenditure. Things that have happened in the past tend to dictate what will happen in the future. Revenue must come from somewhere. If I make some critical comments, I hope that they will be taken as being constructive and in full realisation that services cannot be provided unless revenue is obtained, and it must come from some source.

The member for Toowoomba North was inaccurate when he suggested that the National Party convened and controlled the Commonwealth Games. At that time there happened to be a coalition Government. There was co-operation within the coalition to achieve a variety of goals in this State. Indeed, that co-operation was reflected in numerous Budgets that have placed us in a situation better than that in which our interstate colleagues are placed. That has been the subject of commendation tonight. The reality is that much of the Budget was set in train by the previous Treasurer. It reflects a large input from Liberal administration and participation in administration in this State.

I ask for the indulgence of the Committee to recall some comments made during the 1981 Budget debate. Honourable members who were members of this Assembly during the previous session will recall that I have spoken frequently on the matter of stamp duty. I commend the Premier and Treasurer for maintaining the course that was set in train some years ago of working towards the use of stamp duty as an instrument whereby the State could place itself in a more advantageous financial situation to keep business that should rightly have been its own and to offer the prospect of taking upon itself financial business which it might not otherwise have obtained. During the Budget debate in 1981, referring to stamp duties, I said—

"In fact, through the last Budget the Treasurer showed a sensitivity to this and an exercise was done in relation to the discount mortgage market. I have spoken with the Treasurer and his officers about this, as have other members of a responsible subcommittee of the Liberal Party. The Premier himself went on record a month ago

as saying that he saw some virtues in the use of the stamp duty vehicle for advantaging Queensland business and attracting business to Queensland. What I am saying is that I agree with the interest that has been shown by both the Treasurer and the Premier. We must attract business to Queensland. For the next year we have to pursue that course until it results in some co-ordinated action."

I want to elaborate on the way in which the rates of stamp duty, particularly on credit transactions, had to be adjusted to keep in Queensland financial business that was being written in relation to Queensland activity. Certainly, it was not understood by most honourable members. It was not understood by the majority of the community, who just saw it as an addition to whatever bills they had to pay. Stamp duties run through almost every financial transaction in the State. They fall upon people rich and poor. In particular, duty on credit transactions fell upon the poor. The duty cut in at a high rate of interest. No duty was liable at lower rates of interest, which were the prerogative of people and companies of most substance who had most bargaining power with credit institutions and banks.

Obviously, I commend the steps taken in the Budget to adjust stamp duty, to use it flexibly and to use it in a manner that reflects modern commerce in Australia. We must make sure that we retain the advantage of transactions in this State. People went to other States or the Australian Capital Territory to consummate big transactions because of the benefit that was achieved through lower stamp duty. Our argument is really the argument on which the abolition of death duties was based. There might be a net loss, but as a result of increased volume or increased financial activity generally, we gain on the roundabouts what we lose on the swings. In fact, we gain much more on the roundabouts.

The steps taken in relation to share transactions and the Stock Exchange are not without their problems. I commend the steps that have been taken and suggest that the matter ought to be kept under review. One suspects that stockbrokers will have some difficulties. A client will pick up the financial newspapers and say, "I want to buy MIM or BHP now." The order might be for several hundred or a thousand shares. The client wishes to buy at the price quoted in that morning's newspaper. Often the hope is that the price will go up and that a profit will be made on the sale only a short time later. To fulfil the order at that price, a broker is often required to purchase round Australia. Two or three hundred shares might be available in Sydney, but the transaction will be completed in Sydney or Melbourne. As I understand it, transactions negotiated in other States might well not attract the stamp duty benefits provided in the Budget. The intent of the Budget is to advantage those transactions on the Brisbane Stock Exchange. That will have to be considered. Really, I am continuing to say that stamp duty is a factor taken into account by business, a factor according to which the affairs of business are arranged. It is not immutable and should never be looked on as immutable. It has to be adjusted according to the market, according to the type of transaction in vogue or coming into being—the way people do business—and according to what is done in other States.

It is, if I may say so with respect, a trifle simplistic to say, "We haven't got that horrendous financial transactions duty." Certain areas of the financial world benefit from settling with the financial institutions duty in New South Wales because they avoid stamp duty as the alternative. Some types of transactions might still be completed more cheaply in New South Wales than in Queensland, notwithstanding that we have not taken unto ourselves what the Victorians and New South Welshmen have through their financial institutions duty.

It does not matter what a duty is called, the important question is whether it falls on some type of business activity. Certainly people in business do not give a damn what a tax or duty is called. All they want is to be able to undertake their business as cheaply and conveniently as possible and at the lowest cost. So honourable members should not be hung up on the political rhetoric and say that Queensland does not have this financial institutions duty. If they do they might be deluding themselves and not doing the State a service. One should always keep in mind what transactions are involved in doing business and the cost of those transactions. The important question is whether any revenue is derived from them for Queensland's coffers or whether Queensland is losing some revenue.

Stamp duty must be viewed as a dynamic, as must all duties. The market must be watched all the time. I commend the Budget for reflecting that view of looking at it as a dynamic, for recognising the importance of maintaining and reinforcing the State's financial base and for encouraging it by the reductions in stamp duty it outlines. The budgeted loss in this area is \$30m. Subject to reasonable economic conditions, I hope that will not be the case. In the same way that the loss of revenue by the abolition of death duties was compensated for by an increase in other business, an increased volume of transactions prompted by a reduction in stamp duty could compensate for any predicted loss there. It is a case of what the State loses on the swings it will gain on the roundabouts. An increase in the volume of turnover could make up for the loss per transaction.

I regret that in the short term it has been seen necessary to increase conveyancing duty. I realise the necessity for concessions on the purchase of the principal home, but the little person, especially the small businessman, completes numerous transactions that attract conveyancing duty. As I say, I regret this increase, particularly because conveyancing duty is progressive. One would have thought there is some merit in the call for a flatter-tax approach. I point out that the present Government has presided over a stepped tax, which is absolutely the opposite of a flat tax. It commences at 1.5 per cent and increases to 3.5 per cent. I would have thought it would be difficult for anybody who honestly claims to believe in the equity of a flat rate of income tax to support a graded rate of conveyancing duty. If the equitable argument is that the smaller the transaction, the smaller the duty and the larger the transaction, the larger the duty, then that cannot be applied to stamp duty. It does not follow.

I had intended to terminate so that the member for Cunningham could speak in the debate. I would like to say many other things about the Budget. Just by way of a throw-away question, perhaps the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer could tell me why some \$600,000 is still necessary for rabbit control following the use of myxomatosis. Three persons are employed and over \$600,000 spent, whereas soil conservation, which one would have thought was far more important—

Mr Gunn: You would whinge if they got into Sherwood.

Mr INNES: No. I just wonder whether that bureaucracy was set up when it was necessary, has continued and cannot be wound down.

If the documents are looked at fairly, it will be seen that far more pressing and urgent rural matters do not get the amount of money that is given to the maintenance of rabbit control. I will be interested to see whether Parkinson's law, quangos and the attitude of maintaining what has been there in the past will still apply. This is the time when we should be looking at saving everything possible in budgetary terms. If the money saved can be put into soil erosion and water conservation it will be far better.

I commend the Government on its stamp duty initiatives, which are very important. They must be kept under review. They may well need adjustment in the future.

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (9.26 p.m.): I am delighted to support and pay credit to the Budget. As has been said, it is a historic occasion for a National Party Treasurer to introduce a National Party Budget. I congratulate the Treasurer on the approach he has taken. I also pay a tribute to the previous Treasurer and the Treasury officials who, over the years, produced balanced Budgets.

When I note what has happened in the States that have moved from conservative to Labor Governments, I find it upsetting to realise that they have used funds from various statutory bodies rather than bite the bullet and try to balance their Budgets. I pay tribute to the Under-Treasurer, the Treasurer and all his officials on a magnificent job in this area under very difficult circumstances.

My main point tonight relates to a matter raised by my colleagues, the honourable member for Condamine and the honourable member for Sherwood about soil erosion. I noted in the Treasurer's Budget Speech that the amount allocated for soil erosion is for the start of a program to redress problems and bring the expenditure on soil erosion back into balance. Considering the size of the Queensland Budget, the special allocation for soil erosion of only \$125,000, is fairly hard to live with. I ask the Treasurer and the Under-Treasurer to indicate what other sums are provided in the Primary Industries vote,

or other areas of funding, that may be ear-marked for soil erosion. I hope the allocation of only \$125,000 indicates that an increased amount is being tied specifically to expenditure on personnel for soil erosion control.

I firmly believe that our most precious resource is our soil. Any State or nation that fails to conserve its soil has no future. It will be a disaster if ever-increasing amounts of the more friable, arable soils are lost in the rich agricultural areas of the State.

I was interested to read "Queensland Economy 1982-83" and note the percentage of income derived from primary production. It is obvious that we must do everything in our power as legislators to ensure that the soil is preserved for future generations.

Mr Casey: That simply means we have not built up a manufacturing base in this State.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is one point of view. Obviously the manufacturing base is expanding. However, I have only a short time at my disposal and I will not be side-tracked.

It would appear from the Budget that the Government is coming to grips with a small problem which, regrettably, has been centred largely in my area. I refer to the payment of stamp duty on borrowings of a commercial nature from banks. I hope that the Government will look at what has happened. The stamp duty payable on such borrowings was designed not to catch ordinary people, but to raise revenue from transactions involving bills of mortgage.

I thank the Committee for its indulgence in allowing me to make those few comments.

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (9.31 p.m.), in reply: I think most of us hoped, if not expected, that the Opposition, with its increased numbers and the injection of new blood and new ideas and the greater intellectual capacity that this should have brought, would have made some worthwhile contribution to this debate. This was not to be.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke for 90 minutes on a multitude of matters and clearly had done a lot of preparation, albeit misguided and productive of false conclusions, unwarranted criticisms and deliberately deceitful accusations.

In this entire Budget debate not one member of the Opposition has presented a rational or viable alternative to any of the Government's policies. The whole theme, if there was a theme, has been to knock, knock, knock—to tear down the Government's well-considered and well-accepted Budget proposals without offering any feasible alternative or giving any indication of what would be happening if the Opposition were in Government. Poor hope, then, for the people of Queensland if some misadventure or misjudgment on their part brought the ALP onto the Government benches!

Let me look, now, at some of the more glaring examples of the Opposition's shortcomings as they were reflected in the speech of the Leader of the Opposition.

Queensland Economy

I do regret the confusion as to the correct figures for mineral production in Queensland in 1981-82 and 1982-83, as stated in the document "Queensland Economy 1982-83". I accept that the economic statement should have either reconciled the two sets of figures or perhaps used just one statistical measure.

The facts are that the figures quoted on page 2 of the document for 1981-82 and 1982-83 were the latest preliminary estimates of mineral production for these years assessed on the basis of estimates by the mining companies of value of mineral products.

This basis has been used for many years but it had serious imperfections because the estimates were done by individual companies on each company's interpretation of what the value figure included. For example, it was discovered that some were using f.o.r. values, others f.o.b., and so on.

The basis that will be used in future is more accurate and more reliable and is the basis used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. It is in effect the value of production at the mine site or at associated treatment works in the vicinity of the mine, calculated by valuing the mineral produced at the unit selling value, less any transport costs to the point of sale. The figures quoted for 1981-82 and 1982-83 on page 29 have been assessed on this better basis.

I must still caution, however, that the figures are only preliminary, as are most early statistics, and are thus subject to later review. It is expected that final figures will be published in the annual report of the Department of Mines.

The figure of \$2.25 billion that has been released as the value of mineral production in 1982 was also questioned. That figure is for the calendar year 1982, whereas the figures in the Budget statement are for financial years and are, therefore, not comparable with the other figures.

The Leader of the Opposition's remarks on the remainder of the economic statement were quite reprehensible. He attempted to create an impression that the economic statement was misleading. A close study reveals that the document is comprehensive and detailed to an extent that it cannot possibly be said to be a misrepresentation.

The Leader of the Opposition has commented on only two sentences in the 41 pages of a very comprehensive and detailed economic overview of the State's progress. He attempted to develop a case out of the use of the words that the economic prospects for the balance of 1983-84 are "generally excellent". The fact is, of course, that statement was made in the economic summary after reference had been made to the economic difficulties of 1982-83. It referred to the fact that the recession in the major Western economies had reduced demand locally to a greater extent than in the previous year. It mentioned also the wages freeze that was introduced in 1982-83 and that unemployment had reached 10.7 per cent by March 1983.

The summary then went on to define the sense in which the statement was made. It said—

"Thorough, widespread rains earlier in 1983 have brought promise of bumper grain crops this season and much improved pastoral conditions. International demand is predicted to quicken its pace and Australian business confidence and, importantly, consumer confidence is increasing now. In particular, the demand for housing has risen sharply as from the last quarter of 1982-83."

The Leader of the Opposition then indulged in an exercise in semantics. He suggested that perhaps it would have been more appropriate to say that prospects were "generally good", or "generally encouraging", or "generally strong". He took strong exception to the fact that the words "generally excellent" were used. Let me elaborate on that and let honourable members then assess whether or not it is fair to draw the conclusion that the prospects for the balance of 1983-84 are "generally excellent".

The position is that Australia is improving its economic performance rapidly now, and Queensland is sharing in that improvement. National accounts figures for the September quarter show a 4.4 per cent increase in gross domestic product over the previous quarter in real terms. That is a tremendous improvement.

The position in recent quarters, as compared with the previous quarter in each case, was as follows—

	Per cent
September 1983 quarter	+4.4
June 1983 quarter	-1.4
March 1983 quarter	-0.4
December 1982 quarter	-1.0
September 1982 quarter	-0.3
June 1982 quarter
March 1982 quarter	-0.3
December 1981 quarter	-0.2

The September quarter figures, therefore, show a real and "very excellent" reversal.

I believe that that evidence does demonstrate the reasonableness of the statement that business confidence and consumer confidence are increasing, and that it is reasonable to expect that the upturn in the Australian economy now will continue into 1984. There has been evidence recently of a definite improvement in consumer confidence.

A recent survey of consumer opinion has shown that there has been a remarkable turn-around in consumers' views of the economy. These indications have been confirmed by Queensland retailers, who have reported that the Christmas shopping upsurge has started early this year and sales are booming.

Dwelling approvals in Queensland in the four months to October 1983 were 21 per cent above those for the same period in 1982.

The value of other building approvals for Queensland for the four months to October 1983 was 79.8 per cent greater than the corresponding period to October 1982, and compared with an increase of 16.4 per cent during this same period in the value of other building approvals for the rest of Australia.

Total Queensland exports for the three months ended September 1983 totalled \$1,412.7m, an increase of over \$217m, or 18.2 per cent, over the level for the same period last year, whereas total Australian exports increased by 5.5 per cent.

Prospects for primary production in 1983-84 are generally favourable. Whereas severe drought conditions prevailed in large parts of the State until the end of March 1983, currently only eight shires or portions of shires remain declared drought stricken. That compares with 61 at the end of the March 1983 quarter.

Wheat production in 1983-84 is expected to be 2 million tonnes, or 175 per cent greater than production in 1982-83.

Barley production in 1983-84 is expected to be 600 000 tonnes, or 125 per cent greater than production in 1982-83.

Most parts of the State are now experiencing exceptionally good pastoral conditions and grazing livestock are in good condition.

Returns for beef-producers in 1983-84 are expected to be substantially better than in 1982-83 as a result of higher prices and lower costs resulting from the cessation of drought conditions.

We all know that the unemployment figures for the end of November show that the number of unemployed persons in Queensland reduced by a further 1 per cent between October and November.

Those are some examples only. There are so many economic indices indicating a recovery, at least for 1983-84, that the statement that prospects are "generally excellent" was a very responsible statement.

I am sorry if that upsets the doom-and-gloom merchants on the Opposition benches, but these are the facts. It would be a misrepresentation to have reported the position in any other way.

The Leader of the Opposition and other Opposition members then advanced what they claimed was convincing proof that this State's prospects are anything but excellent. The Leader of the Opposition quoted a number of extracts from a paper prepared by the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development titled "A Review of Industry Conditions as at 30th September, 1983".

That report is prepared regularly by that department. It surveys the previous quarter and examines the short-term prospects. It was prepared well before the Budget document, and could be expected to differ in outlook from the papers prepared in November for the Budget.

The extracts quoted from the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development's report have, in fact, been very deliberately chosen by the Leader of the Opposition, so that the impression is given that the report concluded that there are no favourable features of the economic future of the State.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In selectively quoting from the report, the Leader of the Opposition has caused undue concern as to the economy of the State of Queensland.

Let me give the Committee some examples. In respect of building materials he said—

"Building material supply industries improved slightly."

The department report also said—

"October has seen a continuation of this upward trend (in demand) employment levels and prices in general remained constant."

On the clothing industry, he said—

"Clothing sales generally were below last year's September quarter and conditions in the industry are unlikely to improve significantly in the short term."

The report also said—

"Employment levels remained fairly stable through the quarter with no retrenchments being reported and at least one manufacturer increasing staff levels."

On the footwear sector, he said—

“Footwear manufacturers reported mixed results.”

The same report stated—

“Of the firms surveyed, there was a significant net increase in employment with only one firm recording a reduction. Some concern was expressed about availability of skilled workers.”

In respect of the timber industry, the Leader of the Opposition quoted this extract from the report—

“Timber industry conditions improved late in the quarter although millers still are operating below capacity with very low forward orders.”

The report, in fact, went on to record—

“Millers are optimistic about improvement in trading conditions later in the year. Hardboard production continued at close to capacity with a significant proportion of product destined for southern markets. This is expected to continue well into 1984.”

The Leader of the Opposition quoted this extract in relation to the furniture industry—

“Furniture industry conditions have changed little over six months, with production, sales and employment static.”

The departmental report continued—

“It is anticipated that the recent improvements in housing commencements may provide increased demand during the December quarter.”

In relation to the plastics industry, he said—

“Plastics firms operated largely below satisfactory capacity levels but trading conditions improved.”

In fact, the report advised that most sectors were operating “a little below satisfactory levels of capacity” and not “largely below”, as was claimed. The report then went on to report increased demand for products in a number of areas of the industry.

The net extract quoted by the Leader of the Opposition was—

“Chemicals, detergents, adhesives, fertiliser and oil-refining industries also operated below capacity.”

However, the report stated, with respect to chemicals, detergents, adhesives, etcetera, that, “The industry overall expects a further improvement in demand in the new year.” A similar forecast of expected increased demand was made in regard to the fertiliser industry.

The Leader of the Opposition made the following statement in relation to the mineral processing industry—

“Mineral processors are expected to reduce inventories rather than increase production.”

The reference in the report to the reduction of inventories was not a general statement referring to all mineral processors as claimed by the honourable member but specifically referred to nickel production alone. The actual words used in the report were—

“Although an expansion in the nickel market is expected reduction of inventories will occur rather than increased production.”

In addition, the report by the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development stated—

“The State’s alumina refinery has been operating at above rated capacity during this quarter to meet demand for customers.”

In relation to light metal fabricators, he said—

“Light metal fabricators are taking any kind of work to survive and there are few signs of improvement.”

The departmental report included the following comments—

“Employment has been generally stable for fabricators and sheet metal workers but there have been some retrenchments in the industry. Companies involved in toolmaking are generally enjoying plenty of work although the levels are still down on 1982 figures. In some instances more staff have been employed.”

He quoted the following extract in relation to foundries—

“Foundries face low production levels and fiercely competitive tenders and most are just surviving and unsure of the current quarter.”

Honourable members will be aware of the assistance provided to one of the foundry companies, Suttons of Ipswich, in October which enabled its continued operation. Although the industry faces some difficulties, the picture is not as black as the Leader of the Opposition implies, and the departmental report indicated that most companies are retaining current staff levels.

The honourable member asked that I accurately inform the Committee of the true situation in regard to the Queensland economy. It is clear that what has been shown in the Government's Budget papers is the true situation and that, if the honourable member had quoted correctly from the report by the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development, there would be no conflict between the documents. It is the selective quoting out of context by the Leader of the Opposition that has caused the difficulty which he has in accepting that the State economy is in a far better position than he would like it to be.

The Leader of the Opposition said that he is unable to understand the relevance of the statement that Queensland's proportion of mineral production is relatively high, given its share of the Australian population. The fact that he is unable to understand the relevance of per capita comparisons is of course no criterion that they are not valid. Such comparisons provide a common interstate comparison in Australia and are important and frequently used in public finance. The statement indicated that for the latest year available, 1981-82, Queensland's share of the total value of mineral production was 23.3 per cent compared with our population proportion of 16 per cent.

We in Queensland are very proud of our State's economic performance and especially of the contribution of our mining industry to the economy. Relatively, we outperform other States in exports on a per capita basis and provide a relatively greater share of the nation's overseas reserves, and thus external stability, and it is only proper that this should be highlighted in any review of the State's economy. For example, in 1982-83, Queensland exports were \$1,823 per capita compared with \$1,383 per capita for the rest of Australia.

The Leader of the Opposition should know that it is a fundamental of economic development that continued growth in basic infrastructure is essential and the additions to fixed capital in 1982-83 are very significant. The summary highlighted the very large increase in new fixed capital expenditure by private enterprises in 1982-83 and in the estimated public capital works expenditure in Queensland for 1982-83. Overall, it is estimated that actual new fixed capital expenditure by private enterprises in selected industries for the first nine months of 1982-83 was \$2,442.9m, or 16.8 per cent higher than in 1981-82. Estimated public capital works expenditure in Queensland for 1982-83 represented \$2,748.8m, or an increase of 58 per cent over 1981-82. The document also recorded that the Government has given priority to an expanded capital works program in recent years to provide additional employment.

The Leader of the Opposition has pointed out that the number of new dwellings approved in 1982-83 was lower than in 1981-82. However, the approvals for Queensland in 1982-83 were 11.08 per thousand of population, which compares with a figure of 6.95 per thousand of population in the rest of Australia; so new-dwelling construction in Queensland was still at a level significantly higher than in the rest of Australia.

The Leader of the Opposition questioned the reality of the economic growth experienced in Queensland in 1982-83. It is evident in many areas. The Boyne Island aluminium smelter opened in 1982-83. It is a very large project and one which makes this State the first to achieve a fully integrated aluminium industry. We have six major coal projects under construction or just completed. The capital expenditure by the mining industry in 1982-83 was over \$1,000m. The capital expenditure on the Dalrymple Bay and Abbot Point port facilities was \$144m in 1982-83. Expenditure on rail facilities for mineral projects exceeded \$242m in 1982-83 alone. The \$120m Jackson-Moonie oil pipeline was commenced in 1982-83 and is well under way. New tourist facilities were constructed in a number of areas of the State, including the Hamilton Island project, and there was continued development along the coastal areas of south-east Queensland. In Brisbane, the new Wintergarden shopping centre and the \$35m Strathpine complex were completed during the year.

Work continued on the Brisbane rail electrification project with the system to Kingston, Shorncliffe and Petrie completed during 1982-83. Thirty-three new electric rail cars were delivered, bringing the total in service to 180, and 48 additional units were ordered.

The economic statement, which the Leader of the Opposition criticised for not containing supporting statistics, does in fact clearly indicate the areas where Queensland outperformed the Australian economy in 1982-83. They are—

Queensland's labour force grew by 3.6 per cent compared with 1.7 per cent for Australia;

The CPI increased by 11 per cent from June 1982 to June 1983 in Brisbane compared with the average of the six State capitals of 11.2 per cent;

The growth in retail sales was higher in Queensland than in the remainder of Australia;

The State's population increased by 2.2 per cent to 30 June 1983 compared to an increase of 1.1 per cent for the remainder of Australia.

Even the honourable member for Murrumba would realise that that is double.

This brief outline of the development which took place in Queensland—despite numerous droughts, economic downturn and economic stagnation in the Labor States—clearly indicates the continued economic growth experienced in 1982-83 in the State, which the Leader of the Opposition apparently ignores, is unaware of, or hopes is not happening.

I suggest that his denial of the State's achievements is a denial by him of the individual efforts of all Queenslanders, an effort which in all the circumstances of the national and international economies has produced some excellent results to date and has laid the groundwork for generally excellent prospects for at least the rest of 1983-84.

Wages Pause and Capital Works

The Leader of the Opposition says that the Government has reduced its supplement from consolidated revenue to the works program. This is completely incorrect, as can be seen on page 17 of the Estimates. The Consolidated Revenue Fund supplement was budgeted at \$8m for 1982-83, was increased during the year to \$37m and is budgeted for 1983-84 at \$68.7m. In anyone's language, this is not a reduction. The Leader of the Opposition has not read the Budget documents correctly.

Departmental capital works are funded through the Loan Fund, trust funds, semi-governmental borrowings and off-budget sources. I appreciate the difficulty of crystallising the full picture of capital supplementation and to clarify this I have prepared a set of comparative figures for 1982-83 and 1983-84. It shows that the total supplement from all sources for 1983-84 is \$203m compared with \$174m in 1982-83.

I seek leave to have this information incorporated in "Hansard".

(Leave granted.)

Source of Supplement	Budget \$m	1982-83 Actual \$m	1983-84 Budget \$m
CRF	8.0	37.0	68.7
Special Project Fund Balances ..	—	—	11.8
Off Budget Sources	126.0	137.4	76.5
Semi-Governmental borrowings ..	—	—	46.0
Totals	134.0	174.4	203.0
Wages Pause Expenditure included in above	—	34.7	70.3
Metropolitan Transit Authority funding included in above ..	36.0	34.8	21.1
Normal Governmental Capital Works supplement	98.0	104.9	111.6

Mr GUNN: I stress that these figures represent only the supplementary program. To these figures must be added the normal loan council allocation and other receipts to the loan fund, specific purpose moneys which come directly into trust and special funds from various sources including the Commonwealth and, for example, motor vehicle registration fees.

These figures do not include capital expenditures by governmental instrumentalities and agencies that operate outside the public accounts such as electricity boards, harbour boards and fire brigades which also make up the governmental sector capital works program. I make the point that over the last seven years a total of \$793m has been injected into the system by way of supplementation.

This Government has made maintenance of employment a keystone in its policies and financial and social objectives. By its efforts it has ensured continued employment and created jobs for thousands upon thousands of Queenslanders and, incidentally, in doing so saved the Commonwealth millions of dollars in dole payments. Queensland has done this without creating artificial schemes with monstrous administrative arrangements such as occurs when the Commonwealth has decided to assist with employment through its wages pause scheme and now the Community Employment Scheme.

The Queensland Government's record in the employment field is second to none. The Leader of the Opposition knows that and he cannot in all honesty deny it.

Housing

I turn now to the Leader of the Opposition's reference to the funding allocations for housing. He said that the statements in the Budget papers are misleading because the funds are not fully applied to capital works, with some being used for administration, maintenance and debt servicing payments. Of course some of the housing funds are used for these purposes, but there was no need to turn to the Estimates, as Mr Wright says he did, to find that out. The Appendix to the Budget Speech quite clearly states—

“After allowing for interest and redemption, maintenance costs on rental premises, Local Authority charges, administrative costs etc. \$148.3 million will be spent on land acquisition and development, construction and purchase of rental housing and home ownership finance”.

How much more clearly can the position be stated? The amount of \$148.3m is \$23.8m, or 19.1 per cent greater than last year's expenditure, so what is the honourable member's criticism?

The Leader of the Opposition sees it as “scandalous” that some of the housing appropriation lapsed in 1982-83. He referred to \$77m as falling in that category. The correct figure is \$73.7m. The major component of that unspent amount was \$66.2m of the allocation from the special \$100m Government scheme, which is financed from Superannuation Fund balances and designed to provide home purchase finance on commercial terms for people who do not qualify for subsidised housing finance and yet are unable to secure loans from normal commercial sources.

The reason for the lapsed appropriation is explained on page 229 of the Departmental Appropriation Accounts, which states—

“Funds were made available for home ownership advances for clients on higher incomes if financial institutions were unable to assist. There were limited approaches in this regard.”

Banks and housing societies now have ample funds for commercial lending and are meeting virtually all needs in this area. That was not the case when the scheme was devised.

Taxation

Despite explanations in the Budget documents and elsewhere year after year the Opposition has still not come to grips with the difference between taxation as such and fees and charges levied by Government for services rendered or to offset the cost of regulatory processes. The most obvious difference is that fees and charges have a direct relationship with services and the cost of providing them. Taxation does not.

As costs of providing services and regulatory processes increase, so must the recoveries from the people who benefit directly from them. If the fees and charges do not maintain their relationship with costs then the difference must be met from other sources, such as increased taxation from people who probably receive no benefit from the service, or reduced Government programs—again affecting all people.

The Financial Administration and Audit Act recognises that principle and makes it mandatory for departments to review their charges and fees regularly. Thus the reviews of rates are effected on a continuing basis and have no place in the budgetary decision-making process. Just how many times does this have to be explained before Opposition members grasp the principles involved and recognise that they are based on sound and sensible financial premises?

In the field of taxation as such, the Government has honoured its promises that there would be no new taxes, that the Stamp Duties Act and its provisions would be reviewed and restructured and that further taxation concessions in the areas of pay-roll tax and land tax would be implemented. That has been done and has received loud acclaim from the business sector, the finance sector and home buyers generally.

The Leader of the Opposition has found an Australian Bureau of Statistics publication which, on his shallow assessment, shows that South Australia and Tasmania have lower per capita taxation than Queensland.

Let me explain a few simple facts which should be quite obvious to anyone who takes the time to think about the figures. The fundamental fact which should be recognised is that any comparison of this nature should be looking at taxation rates, not revenue collections. Revenue collections are the basis of the statistician's table and take no account of differing economic conditions and consequential financial activity as between the States.

The figures for 1981-82 are the latest available and they reflect the high level of economic activity and growth in Queensland by comparison with the rest of Australia. For example, 1981-82 revenue collections in Queensland for stamp duty were high because of the high levels of transfers in the property boom in 1981. That must be obvious even to the most dumb Opposition member. That did not mean that our tax rates on land transfers were high. It simply meant that the State was moving, the people had the money to spend and properties were being bought and sold at a far greater rate than in the other States.

Where high economic activity in the State produces higher revenue collections, it should not be interpreted as a higher incidence of taxation.

The fact is that Queenslanders are more lightly taxed than people in other States of Australia in many specific areas and certainly overall. For example—

- (i) For motor vehicle transfer stamp duty, the Queensland rate is 2 per cent whereas in other States the rates are as high as 4 per cent;
- (ii) For pay-roll tax, the Queensland maximum exemption of \$252,000 is far more concessional than in other States; and
The New South Wales and Victorian pay-roll tax rate is 6 per cent on higher pay-rolls, compared with Queensland's 5 per cent.

In addition to all this—and this is very important—Queensland does not have a financial institution duty, a tobacco tax, fuel levies or statutory corporation levies, which the other States do have. Furthermore, this Government does not propose to introduce them.

Per Capita Expenditures

Much was made by the Leader of the Opposition about the per capita expenditure on various functions of Government, such as education, health, and law and order. He came to the conclusion that low per capita expenditure means lower standards of service.

That theory is nonsense in that it completely disregards the effects of efficiencies in delivery of the services, economies of operation and the proven ability of the Queensland administrations to obtain value for money.

Nowhere in any reputable publication or pronouncement has it been established that standards of service in Queensland in any of the major functional areas are lower than elsewhere in Australia, and I challenge the Opposition to produce concrete and supportable evidence that they are.

Medicare

Almost as an afterthought in his address, the Leader of the Opposition raised one of the worst injustices that has been perpetrated by the Commonwealth Government as far as Queenslanders are concerned. I refer of course to the Medicare debacle.

The Commonwealth Government can put forward all sorts of rationalisations and arguments, and they can be supported by the Opposition in this House, but the very simple fact remains, that Queenslanders are being done in the eye to the tune of \$21m this year and \$52m in 1984-85, and for ever after.

Queenslanders are paying their 1 per cent levy the same as every other Australian, yet they receive back towards public hospital costs only \$29 per person per year, whilst all other Australians receive nearly \$50. Because Queensland already has free public hospitals, it is being short weighted by \$52m per annum, which is collected by the Commonwealth through the levy and by other means to compensate States for lost fees.

All the other States charge for their public hospital services and receive this compensation. Where is the justice in this?

The Opposition has supported the Commonwealth's position. Not one Opposition member is prepared to stand up in this Chamber and say otherwise. Where do the Opposition's interests lie—with its comrades in Canberra or with the people of Queensland whom they represent and who are effectively paying twice for their free hospitals because of the Commonwealth's illogical and dishonest stance?

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr GUNN: Where do they stand? I ask them to tell me that. As for the effect on the Budget should the \$21m entitlement not be received, how the Leader of the Opposition can suggest that an unfavourable variation of \$21m in budgeted revenues can be accommodated without a substantial review of the Budget astonishes me.

Whether this \$21m represents 0.5 per cent of the Budget, 5 per cent or 50 per cent is quite irrelevant. It represents \$21m worth of services, projects or programs which cannot be carried out or \$21m of revenues which must be secured somehow if these services, projects and programs are to be continued.

The answer might well be a combination. Whatever the most appropriate course of action might be, it must be taken. The Budget must be balanced and it will be balanced.

Furthermore—and this has been made quite clear—the responsibility will be sheeted home to the source of the problem. The whole issue is still under very active correspondence between the Premier and the Prime Minister. I remain confident that justice and good sense will prevail in Commonwealth circles before then.

I am unable to give any commitments or undertakings as to what remedial measures will or will not be taken should the \$21m not be forthcoming. But I suggest that at the next Federal election the people of Queensland vote against the socialist Government in Canberra.

Conclusion

There are so many inaccuracies and false assumptions in the comments made by Opposition members that it would take hours to correct them. I believe that I have covered the main issues and have put the record straight in areas where I think it was necessary. Having done that, the whole thrust of the Opposition's response to the Budget collapses like a pack of cards and I think I need say no more.

I reiterate that this Budget is an outstanding one by any standards. It reflects the Government's resolve to keep Queensland forging ahead economically and industrially. The Budget seeks to maximise the employment opportunities of Queenslanders and keep faith with them by maintaining the policies and honouring the commitments on which the electorate judged the National Party in the recent elections.

I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate.

Item (Contingencies—His Excellency the Governor) agreed to.

Progress reported.

NORTH COAST RAILWAY LINE

Initiation

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport): I move—

“That Mr Speaker do now leave the chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolution—

“That the House approves of the working plan, section, and book of reference for construction of a railway deviation between 29.6 and 31.7 kilometres, North Coast Line.’”

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (10.16 p.m.): I move—

“That the House approves of the working plan, section, and book of reference for construction of a railway deviation between 29.6 and 31.7 kilometres, North Coast Line.”

Honourable members will be aware that on 29 November 1983, the working plan, section and book of reference were laid upon the table of this Parliament. I now seek endorsement of the necessary resolution under the Railways Act.

I hope that honourable members have studied the relevant documents, because they highlight yet again the great strides that are being made in railway electrification and its contribution to revenue, passenger comfort and patronage, which is rising at the very impressive rate of 20 per cent a year.

As a result of constant monitoring and the introduction of top technology, Greater Brisbane now has a railway system equal to world standards, and the Government will not rest on its laurels.

It has recently completed suburban electrification with the link to Thorneside. Kingston to Beenleigh, Petrie to Kippa Ring and Petrie to Caboolture are either in progress or in advanced planning.

Lack of money is a problem, but I am extremely confident, as I am about main line and coal line electrification.

The Railway Department has come a long way since steam and diesel electrics in Brisbane. Brisbane now has the best urban rail transport and the department is extending it.

I shall now deal with the project before the Committee. The proposed deviation on the North Coast Line represents a significant improvement in alignment, enabling the maximum permissible speed to be increased from 50-60 km/h to 100 km/h. Running times for both passenger and freight traffic will be reduced, as will maintenance and operating costs.

The deviation will traverse undulating and adjacent undeveloped high ground. About a quarter of the deviation is next to a developed suburban residential area and it is expected that residential development will eventually abut its whole length.

The deviation will be constructed as a duplicate track with 47 kg per metre welded rail. The maximum grade will be 1 in 84. The minimum curve radius will be 850 metres. The maximum depth for earthworks cut is 9 metres, with an average depth of 4 metres. The cut quantity is 66 000 cubic metres. The maximum embankment height is 6.4 metres, with an average height of 3 metres. The fill quantity is 37 000 cubic metres.

The existing timber bridge that carries Narangba Road traffic over the railway will be replaced by a pre-stressed concrete bridge. The areas of land required are detailed in the book of reference.

The estimated cost of the deviation, including land resumptions, surveys and engineering, is \$1,965,000. No additional rolling-stock will be required.

Honourable members will know of new platforms at Dakabin, Burpengary and Morayfield. It is expected that all platform works, including the raising and extension of platforms at Narangba and the construction of an additional platform, will be completed by February 1984. Temporary raising of the platform at Caboolture will then allow the operation of stainless-steel cars to Caboolture in February or March 1984.

Footbridges have been or are being constructed at Dakabin and Narangba. Other footbridges will be constructed at Morayfield and Burpengary by June 1984. The program calls for completion of all works between Petrie and Caboolture by December 1986. It is proposed to commence construction of deviations near Petrie early in 1984.

The major deviation works, including the construction of new rail bridges over Burpengary Creek, Sheep Station Creek and the Caboolture River will be carried out by contract, with trackwork being carried out by the department. Tenders will be called in 1984 for the construction of overbridges at Caboolture and Morayfield.

The proposal I have outlined is part of the ongoing determination of the Government to help balance the railway cash flow books by attracting more clients and, in the process, to fulfil the Government's promise to make Queensland Railways the best in Australia by eventually electrifying the entire coastal main line to Cairns. It is a goal well within our realisation.

I commend the proposal to the Committee.

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (10.20 p.m.): A matter such as this, relating to railway lines in the State of Queensland, is usually a simple one. The Minister has said that this proposal concerns a section of the North Coast Line just north of Petrie. It is desirable that that section be regraded and realigned as part of the electrification of the northern section of the metropolitan railway system. The cost of \$2m is reasonable for the works involved. With the shortened running times and the other improvements that will be made, I believe that it will be well and truly paid for over a period of not more than 20 years. Therefore it probably is a good proposal.

The Opposition has no criticism of the project. It is one of the many regradings and realignments on the North Coast Line. As the electrification program proceeds, a number of similar projects will be required. When lines were constructed many years ago in Queensland, the earth-moving machinery that is available today to make the lines much straighter and to make the grades much easier was not available.

The Minister said that the cost of regradings and realignments presents problems. That probably is a fact. The point that I wish to make to the people of Queensland is that the money for this project has come from the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Program funds. The truth of the matter is that the Minister has stolen the money from those funds to use for railways, although it was promised that the bicentennial road funds would be used for road funding in the State of Queensland. I am sure that many back-bench members of the National Party believe that more money should be spent on roads in their electorates. My own colleagues complain from time to time about the need for money to be spent on roads.

It is true—and the Minister will probably be the first to remind me—that the railways are paying a considerable sum in fuel tax. The farmers, who do not use public roads with many of their vehicles that use fuel on which a tax is paid, also pay the tax. The contractors who do not operate their vehicles on public roads, such as the contractors who will be working on this proposed line, also pay the tax. Some power stations in Queensland pay the fuel tax. Boat-owners are paying the fuel tax although they do not use the roads. The boundary riders and ringers on pastoral properties in Queensland also pay the tax.

There is no question that the understanding of the people of Australia, especially Queenslanders, about the proposal for road funding from fuel tax came first from the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing in this State. He was responsible for putting the tax on the back of every Australian.

In answers to questions put to the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing, honourable members were told that the money would be used to improve the road system of Australia. That was the whole purpose of it. The tax was not designed to enable urban railway electrification to be undertaken.

Part of the Bill that was introduced by the Federal Government provided that 25 per cent of the tax would be used for the upgrading of urban transportation systems. Reference was made to the roadways, the freeways and bridges within city areas that would be constructed to eliminate the congestion that occurs during peak hours. In addition, the system was designed to provide facilities for modern transportation authorities, such as the Brisbane City Council or the authorities in New South Wales and Victoria, and to assist in upgrading the transportation systems. That was the reason for the legislation.

In Queensland, not only has specific funding been provided for the electrification project but, overall, \$20m will be siphoned off from bicentennial road funds and directed towards railway electrification projects. Earlier this year, the Minister announced that \$2.9m for the Kingston to Beenleigh section of the urban electrification scheme would be taken from bicentennial road funds. At that time, people in north Queensland were very interested to hear about that use of their 2c a litre contribution.

The decision to impose on motorists an additional tax of 2c a litre was aided and abetted by a Liberal-National Party Government in Canberra. It set up the fund and made the first announcement. On 16 February this year, Ralph Hunt, who was then the Federal Minister for Transport, indicated that the money would be used for rail electrification.

Mr Lane: Just as well we got in before the election.

Mr CASEY: At that time the Minister belonged to the Liberal Party, so he was very interested in helping the Liberal electorates to get urban electrification. He did not give two hoots about members from far-flung areas of the State who had poor roads in their electorates. However, in October this year an event happened that saw him change from his former political allegiance to the National Party.

Mr Lane interjected.

Mr CASEY: On no occasion have I been known to be nasty in this place. At that time, the Minister changed his political colour. What happened? The people from whom he was pinching the money are now sitting on the Government back bench.

Government Members interjected.

Mr CASEY: It is as well to remind the member for Mulgrave, who has people on his back about the Babinda bypass—

Government Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Multiple interjections will not be tolerated. I call the member for Mackay.

Mr CASEY: Thank you, Mr Row. You, as the member for Hinchinbrook, would be very concerned that money should be expended on roadworks in your area over the Cardwell Range section. You would agree with me that that is a very bad section of road that needs regrading and realigning. Where is the money going? Into the Brisbane-Petrie urban railway electrification scheme.

Earlier today the member for Mirani spoke about the need for more road funding in his area. He is already getting a good bite out of bicentennial road funds, but he could have had a little more to upgrade the stretch from Koumala. The member for Gympie and other National Party members—

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr CASEY: No, the roads down on the Gold Coast are pretty good. Russ Hinze has looked after the member for Surfers Paradise very well. He cannot get a bite out of this cake.

The truth of the matter is that that is the treatment meted out to country areas by the Minister for Transport. I see that the Premier is now in the Chamber. Along with the Minister for Main Roads, he put the proposition to the Commonwealth Government to slug motorists of this State an additional 2c a litre. He gave the Parliament a guarantee that the fuel tax would be used to give us all better roads. He is now party to taking this money away from the roads of Queensland and putting it into an urban railway electrification scheme. Is it any wonder that the people of Queensland are kicking up a row about that money being grabbed from their pockets and used in that way?

Local authorities all over Queensland complain about the meagre funding they are receiving from bicentennial road funds. But the Minister for Transport is not complaining; he is getting plenty. He is using it for the Petrie to Caboolture rail electrification. He has already made a public announcement about the section from Kingston to Beenleigh.

The honourable member for Redcliffe does not say much about the line from Caboolture to Redcliffe. That has gone down the chute again. However, there are better days ahead. The people of Redcliffe might one day get an electric rail line. It was promised at three

successive elections. I heard one of the new members—it might have been the member for Toowoomba North—say that in a very short period of time the Government had honoured all of its election promises. One certainly could say that the National Party did not promise rail electrification to Redcliffe in the 1983 election campaign. However, the Premier could not deny that he promised it in the 1980 election campaign, in the 1977 election campaign, and in the by-election campaign as well.

But worse is to come. Some of the funding was supposed to be used for urban transport systems. Who else has the Minister pinched this money from? None other than the Brisbane City Council! He has taken the money that was allocated for the Brisbane City Council's bus program. The urban transport system in Brisbane certainly needs upgrading and that was part of the whole deal from the Federal Government. However, only a week or so ago the Federal Minister for Transport (Mr Morris) came to Brisbane and, through the strong representation of the Lord Mayor of Brisbane (Alderman Roy Harvey), an extra \$7.9m was secured to provide 50 additional buses over the next five years.

The Queensland Minister for Transport should be endeavouring to properly integrate urban transport schemes in the State. He should be co-operating with the Brisbane City Council to help it provide a good feeder bus system to the railway stations that have become part of the electrified system. Over many years, the annual reports of the Commissioner for Railways have shown that the greatest loss on a train/kilometre basis is sustained on the Brisbane urban transportation system.

Mr Katter: And you want to give them free buses.

Mr CASEY: I hear the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs and whatever he is supposed to look after. He is certainly not looking after northern development. If he was he would be protesting because the money that should be going to northern roads is being spent on the Petrie-Caboolture electrification scheme. When the member for Flinders was a back-bencher, I heard him carrying on because country people were subsidising Brisbane people. Time after time I have heard him carrying on about how the poor people of Hughenden, Julia Creek, Richmond and up towards the Gulf of Carpentaria were suffering because of the money the Queensland Government was losing on the railway system. Now he comes into this place and tries to do an about-face.

I have to be fair and say that the rate-payers of Brisbane find that the loss on the Brisbane transport system is their greatest burden. That is one of the main reasons why some of the Bicentennial Road Development Program funds were to assist with urban transport systems. But that money has gone down the drain. It has been taken by the Minister for Transport. So the country roads and the city buses will be denied their funding so that the Brisbane rail commuter network can be improved.

Mr WHITE (Redcliffe) (10.34 p.m.): I rise to support the motion moved by the Minister for Transport and congratulate the Government on its initiative in upgrading the railway to the Sunshine Coast. I am sure the member for Landsborough, who is now in the Chamber, has been waiting for many, many years for this to happen.

I remind the Minister and the Government of the commitments made over the years for a rail link to Redcliffe. The Budget allocates the sum of \$200,000 for land resumption and a further sum of \$17.4m for miscellaneous and general works. A rail link to Redcliffe has been promised on many occasions. It was mooted initially in about the year 1884.

On a number of occasions Opposition members have referred to the decision made by the coalition Government in 1957 not to proceed with the electrification program. At that time the Government made the right decision. Its resources were put into education. I well remember as a young person that there were very few high schools in Queensland. It is timely now for the Government to get on with the electrification program.

Honourable members with electrification in their constituencies know how efficient the service is. The carriages are first class and an excellent service is provided.

I commend the Government on its initiative. I remind the Treasurer and the Minister for Transport, who have been to my electorate, about the commitments made on behalf of the Government. I hope that they will honour them.

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (10.37 p.m.), in reply: It is important to answer a few of the comments made by the honourable members who have spoken in the debate. The honourable member for Mackay, who is the Opposition spokesman on transport matters, drew attention to the decision to allocate portion of the Australian Bicentennial Road Development funds to the electrification of the stretch of line from Petrie to Caboolture. That has been done in the same way as it was done to extend electrification from Kingston to Beenleigh. The decision was taken on my recommendation quite deliberately because it meant that money raised for a special purpose was being pledged to something that would offer permanence and lasting benefit to this great State. It was on that basis that the decision to recommend appropriation of the money was made.

The honourable member for Mackay neglected to say that, of all the money raised for roads each year under the Bicentennial Road Development Program via the fuel levy, only 25 per cent of the funds set aside for urban arterial roads was made available on application for urban public transport projects. A very high proportion of the money available for roadworks went into roadworks through the Main Roads Department, but a component was made available for urban arterial roads. Only 25 per cent of those funds were available for urban public transport, and some of that 25 per cent was allocated to the two rail projects.

I make submissions to the Federal Minister on how the fuel levy money should be spent each year. Currently, he has the authority to accept or reject my recommendations. To answer the latter part of the honourable member's speech, he accepted my recommendations to purchase 50 new buses for the Brisbane City Council to be operated in the Brisbane city system.

I will not refer in depth to the discourtesy that the Federal Minister extended to me and to the Queensland Government by coming to Queensland and making that announcement in the presence of the Lord Mayor. He did not extend to me the courtesy of advising me or the Queensland Government of his presence in this State or of his intention to make that announcement. The announcement was made in a joint statement by the Federal Minister and the Lord Mayor, presumably so that people would believe that the submission came from the Brisbane City Council. Indeed, it did not; it came from the Queensland Government. When that announcement was made by the Federal Minister and the Lord Mayor, there was little or no reference to that fact. We were disclaimed and left out of the announcement.

Another matter that the honourable member for Mackay neglected to mention was the contribution that the Queensland Railways make in terms of the diesel fuel levy. In one year, the levy on the diesel line that is used by railway diesel locomotives amounts to about \$12m. That contribution is made to the ABRD funds. So Queensland pays \$12m into the funds by way of the new diesel tax and gets a lot less back for urban public transport and nothing, might I say, for dieselised mainline rail. To put it crudely, Queensland has been duded. However, it presses on and tries to do the best with the funds that are available. The most useful thing to do with the funds is apply them to two projects that have some permanence and will be of lasting benefit to the State.

In decades to come, I am sure that people in Queensland will look back on the decision of the Queensland Government to recommend the extension of electrification to Beenleigh in one direction and to Caboolture in the other direction, and say that it was a very sound decision. They will say that the opposition by the Australian Labor Party to future rail development in the State was misguided.

Considering some of the links that exist between the railway unions and the Australian Labor Party, I was surprised that the Opposition tonight condemned an investment by the Queensland Government in further rail development. That is something that will rest hard on the conscience of the members of the Australian Labor Party.

Mr CASEY: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is deliberately misleading the Committee. At no stage did I oppose the proposal. I clearly pointed out to the Committee that the funding is not coming directly from the railways; it is coming from the road-users in Queensland. I ask the Minister to withdraw the insinuation that I was knocking the particular proposal.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the Minister withdraw the insinuation?

Mr LANE: I am happy to withdraw such an insinuation.

When the honourable member speaks, he is very difficult to follow. He has a style of speaking which makes him very hard to listen to. I and many other Government members find his speeches rather confusing. Sometimes it is difficult to know precisely what he has said. However, I clearly heard him say that we had stolen the money from the ABRD funds, and we will see that when we read "Hansard" tomorrow. Every member of every railway union and of other unions in the railway environment will read "Hansard" and see that the Opposition spokesman on transport matters said that we had stolen money from the ABRD funds for future rail developments. If that is not implying that we should not embark on further rail development, I do not know what it is. We will let those people judge that for themselves.

Another speaker in the debate sought to have the Government pledge itself to the construction of a railway line to Redcliffe. Might I say in respect of that honourable member's remarks that this Government will honour its pledge to the residents of the Redcliffe area. Of course, that honourable member does not have that qualification.

Motion (Mr Lane) agreed to.

Resolution reported and agreed to.

WHEAT POOL (VALIDATION OF PROCLAMATIONS) BILL

Suspension of Standing Orders

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

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the immediate bringing in of a Bill intituled, 'A Bill to validate certain Proclamations made under The Wheat Pool Act of 1920', and the passing of such Bill through all the stages in one day."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.48 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The purpose of the Bill is simply to validate certain proclamations made pursuant to the Wheat Pool Act 1920-1983. Under that Act a power is vested in the Governor in Council to extend the operations of the State Wheat Board by proclamation. Proclamations pursuant to these provisions were made on 28 June 1956 and 9 November 1967. The purpose of those proclamations was to allow the State Wheat Board to receive, handle, store and treat grains, other than wheat, and any seed crop on behalf of any person.

The State Wheat Board has for many years stored and handled various grains and oilseeds for various organisations including the Queensland Graingrowers Association pursuant to these proclamations. Honourable members are no doubt aware of the financial problems of the Queensland Graingrowers Association. The State Wheat Board is a major creditor of the association and in order to protect its interest, the board issued a lien pursuant to the Warehousemen's Liens Act 1973, soon after the association went into voluntary receivership on 15 August 1983. This lien for an amount of \$1.9m was calculated by the board on the basis of the disposition of stocks being held on behalf of the association as at 15 August 1983.

Doubts have now been raised as to the validity of the proclamations allowing the board to handle and store various grains and oilseeds. However, the intention of the legislation has been apparent since 1967 and the State Wheat Board and other industry bodies, including the Queensland Graingrowers Association, have for many years acted on the basis of that intention. The present Bill is designed to remove doubts which may exist concerning the validity of the proclamations in question.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr KRUGER (Murrumba) (10.50 p.m.): During discussions today, members of the Opposition agreed that we would allow this Bill to go through all its stages in one day. However, we do not want it thought that we are happy with that type of situation. We have long believed that validating legislation is not always in the best interests of the people concerned. We believe that in this instance it is in the best interests of the people concerned, but we are disappointed that it is necessary to have the Bill passed through all its stages in one day.

Today, during the Budget debate, the honourable member for Balonne claimed that I had spoken on some program about the Queensland Grain Handling Act and that I was confused between the Act and the Graingrowers Association. I was not confused. I was speaking about the fact that the Queensland Grain Handling Act had recently been passed by this Assembly. Certainly other things were said.

I expressed the hope that the Graingrowers Association would have some chance of restructuring itself, even though, because of the problems that it created for itself, I do not always have sympathy for it. At that stage I was not going to knock the association for attempting to get itself back on its feet. I was concerned about the well-being of the growers and about the nation's economy.

As I have said, Opposition members are usually opposed to validating legislation. However, in this instance we can see the need for it.

Action needs to be taken to secure Wheat Pool money for the good of the growers who supply the Wheat Board. In case the honourable member for Balonne attempts once again to misconstrue my comments, I point out that Opposition members are concerned for the people connected with the Wheat Board, which for many years has been handling other grains.

This morning's "Courier-Mail" contained a good article on the background to this legislation. That article reads, in part—

"The legislation aims to force the bankrupt Queensland Graingrowers' Association to honour a \$2 million debt to the State Wheat Board for grain handling charges.

...

Party members understand the State Wheat Board has issued a lien claiming the \$2 million as a secured creditor following a challenge by the receiver-manager of the Graingrowers' Association about legality of the Wheat Board to operate as a grain handler.

The State Government now intended to allow the State Wheat Board to handle grain other than wheat. It would backdate this to cover the relevant Act, which would be either 1956 or 1967.

...

A rescue trust was set up aimed at raising \$10 million to prop up the association. But just over \$2 million has been promised in the time originally predicted to raise the \$10 million."

It can be seen quite clearly that the Graingrowers Association itself is not very sure about its security; a cloud hangs over it.

The article goes on to say—

"Although no formal approach has been made to the Government for assistance, senior Ministers understand one is in the pipeline, with the Government having little alternative but to support it or allow its 8000 members to lose an estimated \$15 million.

..

The state council of the Graingrowers' Association met in Toowoomba yesterday. Its president, Mr Don Eather, said the association's future was in the hands of the 3200 creditors."

I obtained copies of articles that appeared in various newspapers over the years about the Graingrowers Association. Having read them again, I can fully understand the extent of the problems that the Graingrowers Association has created for itself.

On 16 August 1983 the following article appeared—

"State Plan to Bail Out Grain Men

The State Government may bail out the Queensland Graingrowers' Association, which went into voluntary receivership yesterday.

The Primary Industries Minister, Mr Ahern, said yesterday Cabinet had decided to consider ways of assisting the association, even though it was a non-Government body.

Mr Ahern said the QGGA had sustained losses, understood to be in the order of \$17 million, because of errors in currency hedging.

"The association is involved in exporting grain on growers' behalf. When you do that, you have to be involved in futures trading and currency hedging," he said.

The Government has done very little to assist the graingrowers and they have done very little to assist themselves. That can be gauged from the various articles that appeared in the press from time to time.

Another article that appeared on 21 September stated—

"There is a marked air of optimism at Q.G.G.A. headquarters this week as seemingly impenetrable barriers have been torn down."

Such reference can be found in many articles. I do not want to get too involved with them. I suggest that anybody who does not know anything about the problems of the Queensland Graingrowers Association ought to have a look at what has been published in the press. A recent article that appeared under the heading "Move to help graingrowers" stated—

"State Cabinet yesterday approved investigations of a scheme designed to bypass stringent provisions of the Companies (Queensland) Code to help members who lost money in the collapse of the Queensland Graingrowers' Association.

The Justice Minister, Mr Harper, said Cabinet had authorised him to request an exemption from the code at a meeting of Australian Attorneys-General in Melbourne on Thursday.

The Ministers will meet at a schedule meeting of the Council for Companies and Securities. Mr Harper was confident he would get the approval he sought."

That is the problem facing the graingrowers, so the Government now has another problem to overcome. Members should read the articles to which I have referred to make themselves conversant with the problems of the Queensland Graingrowers Association.

Under section 3 of the Wheat Pool Act, power is vested in the Governor in Council to extend the operations of the State Wheat Board by proclamation.

Proclamations were made in June 1956 and again in November 1967 which allowed the State Wheat Board to receive, handle, store and treat grains other than wheat on behalf of any person and subject to such arrangements as may be made between the Board and the other party.

The Queensland Government Gazette of 30 June 1956, under the authority of the Wheat Pool Acts, 1920 to 1930, refers to the extension of the Acts to wheat harvested until the 1975-76 season. That proclamation was made by a Labor Government. Section 10 of the proclamation that appeared in the Government Gazette on 30 June 1956 states—

"The following new sections are inserted after section 5 and shall be numbered sections 5A, 5B, and 5C respectively:—

5A. The board may with the approval of the board receive, handle, store and treat grain other than wheat on behalf of and as agent for a board constituted under 'The Primary Producers' Organisations and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1955', or any Act in amendment thereof or substitution therefor or any other Act relating to the delivery to a board of grain other than wheat."

That is quite clear to me, with the exception that the Queensland Graingrowers Association is not controlled by the Government.

Certain changes were made when, in 1957, an Order in Council that appeared in the Queensland Government Gazette stated—

"Whereas, by 'The Wheat Pool Acts, 1920 to 1930,' it is provided that the Governor in Council may, by another Order in Council, amend or rescind any Order in Council made under the said Acts: And whereas, by an Order in Council made on the twenty-seventh day of June 1957

It then refers to the intent of the Order in Council. I am quoting this information to point out quite clearly the intent of the original proclamation under which the Wheat Board was handling other grains.

On 11 November 1967, the following statement appears in the Queensland Government Gazette—

“In pursuance of ‘The Wheat Pool Acts, 1920 to 1957,’ I, Sir Alan James Mansfield, the Governor aforesaid, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, do, by this my Proclamation, declare and direct as follows ”

I will not read it any further. This debate ought not be prolonged because it relates to a relatively simple matter.

The points I have just mentioned show a general acceptance of the principle that those commodities may be handled by the board. Further powers were vested in the State Wheat Board by section 14 of the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926-1983. They permit the board to sell or arrange for the sale of a commodity of the same kind as the commodity wheat and to make such charges for the service as it determines.

The Wheat Board has acted in an acceptable way over many years. People who have had their grain stored or handled by the board have been quite happy. The Wheat Board has handled various grains and oil-seeds on behalf of the Queensland Graingrowers Association, and has never complained in the past.

Of course, the Graingrowers Association faces severe problems. One has to be limited in one's sympathy for that association, but certainly one is sympathetic for the growers who have been misled by the people in charge. By trading on the overseas money market, the association became involved in hedging. The representative of the graingrowers at the time apparently had a free hand to take such action as he thought was correct. He was dealing in currency hedging, which I believe was beyond his ability and authority. That was the principal problem. When it was known by us that there would be a collapse, very little was produced to us to show that the people involved knew exactly what they were doing. The Graingrowers Association ought to have had an accounting system that provided a check of what was happening. That would have prevented its becoming involved in currency hedging and encountering financial difficulties. No organisation should become so deeply involved without its being known that a problem exists.

The real answers were never given. The executive director, Mr Colbert, seems to me to have covered up quite a bit of what happened. The growers would have been much happier with their association had they been given the full and honest facts about its dealings. The graingrowers had a chance to trade under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act. They did not avail themselves of that opportunity and certainly, as a result, they were not protected by the Government. Had they taken the opportunity, some of the problems they are now faced with would not have arisen.

In August 1983 the Queensland Graingrowers Association entered into voluntary receivership. Subsequently, the State Wheat Board issued a lien pursuant to the Warehousemen's Liens Act of 1973 in respect of moneys owed by the association to the board for grains and oil-seeds handled by the board on behalf of the association. That action entitled the board to preference as a secured creditor of the association. However, there is some legal doubt now whether the board is a secured creditor on behalf of those who have had grain stored and handled. Anybody who is owed money ought to be given a chance to receive a fair share as a secured creditor. If we do not pass the legislation that is now before us, those people will be placed at a greater financial risk. The legality of previous proclamations is in doubt. That doubt will be eliminated by the legislation before us. As the legislation has been explained to us, when it is proclaimed there will be no doubt.

The Opposition knew little about the legislation until lunch-time today. We believe it to be the intent of the legislation to save further embarrassment to those people who are entitled to \$2m. There may be \$3m involved, but no guarantee can be given about the third million. As it has been explained to us, if we do not pass the legislation there will be a legal doubt.

It appears to us the Government has taken the only action that is available to it in the circumstances. The Opposition feels there is merit in the legislation. However, in closing, I make it clear that we would prefer not to have to deal with Bills in a manner such as this in the one day. Certainly, we do not want it to be thought that we are setting a precedent by dealing with it in this way. Further, we do not want it to be thought we are setting a precedent by agreeing to validating legislation. However, in the circumstances, we see no alternative.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (11.5 p.m.): As the member for Murrumba said in his final comments, one is placed in some difficulty when confronted by legislation of which one has only a couple of hours' notice. In fact, I have had only 10 minutes to peruse what is certainly a fairly brief Bill.

To attempt to understand what is being proposed, one has to ask a few questions. I will try to be fairly careful in phrasing my questions, as I am sure the Minister will need assistance and advice to answer them. They are matters on which members of the Liberal Party in this House would like information. When one looks at something from a particular perspective, it is easy to take off on an emotion and lose sight of the consequences. One of the benefits to honourable members of having legislation before them for several days or a week or more is that interested parties who have looked at the legislation from a different angle have time to state their concerns. Honourable members are not all-powerful or all-wise. We cannot foresee every ramification of legislation. The first approach from a member of the public might be to the effect that the legislation is terrible. He will state his point of view and it is very easy for honourable members to agree and shoot off in some direction that will help him and forget about others who will be adversely affected by what is done to remedy the problems of the first complainant. I do not have the degree of familiarity that some members on both sides of the House have on this matter. I am certainly not a member of the Queensland Graingrowers Association as I am not a grain-grower.

A Government Member: There are not many wheat-growers in Sherwood.

Mr INNES: In fact, it is a fine old farming area. The wheat farms have been taken over but it still has a dairy.

Mr FitzGerald: There are a few hayseeds there.

Mr INNES: Yes, there are a few. The recent voting revealed that.

I do not want exact answers to the questions I am about to ask. I simply want the information in broad terms. Under what Act or legal sanction is the receivership being conducted? How much is involved in the receivership of the Queensland Graingrowers Association? How many secured and unsecured creditors are there and what are they owed? I ask the Minister to give a broad indication of the sort of people who are involved. Obviously the wheat-growers will be involved. There might well be banks or other institutions. One understands that some merchant banks are involved. Transport operators, suppliers, those who provide office equipment and all manner of people have a potential involvement. Has a lien been claimed over grains held by the State Wheat Board and what is the total value of those grains held by the State Wheat Board? In other words, does the lien cover the whole amount of the grain held? What are the service and handling charges that were incurred by the Wheat Board in terms of broad headings and amounts?

Looking at the possible situation, it is not clear to me exactly what we are dealing with. Would the Wheat Board have no claim at all in respect of its handling services unless this legislation is passed? Or would it have a claim, but that claim would be only that of an unsecured creditor? Does this legislation in fact put the Wheat Board into a situation of being a preferred creditor or a secured creditor, as opposed to an unsecured creditor?

Mr Casey: You should be taking it steady; he can take it in only a little bit at a time.

Mr INNES: If it is to be done properly, it must be done carefully.

I now explain why I asked those questions. I have heard it said that this legislation should be passed because the only secured creditors are the merchant bankers and that the Wheat Board, in effect, is the farmer and will be relegated to being an unsecured creditor.

If that is the argument, I suggest it is somewhat simplistic. If anybody made the loss in this exercise, it was not the "big" merchant banks, but the officers or agents of the association who went on this little foray of their own dealing in futures and foreign currencies. It was not an unscrupulous financier dealing with the association; it was the servant of the farmers organisation who incurred the debts.

I am asking the House whether we are doing something to put people in a preferred situation. We are not looking now at the validity of the first proclamation. We would totally support the right of the Wheat Board to stand in the line of creditors generally so that it may be paid for the handling services it has given. A different question arises at the end of the line and somebody has to lose. The question is who has to lose and how do we value the different people who have to lose, because everybody wants his little bit of the cake.

It may be that the unsecured creditors are all the farmers and all their relatives or other people who put their money in as an investment. But why should they lose more than the people at large in the Wheat Board? Or should the Wheat Board, being the farmers, be in any better situation with the loss resulting from their servants' actions than the merchant banks? In the end, the merchant banks are people in the community and the funds of many little people.

Let us understand who the legislation is to help, and why it helps them. That is not totally clear from the brief speech I heard. I do not blame the Minister for that. I understand that urgency is involved and I accept that. We do not want to disadvantage farmers or anyone else. If something simple can be done to give someone his rightful claim for services rendered, that is all right, but are we allowing someone to stand earlier in the queue? It may be that the secured creditors will get everything and the unsecured creditors will get nothing. That would mean that people have lost. Are we to decide who will lose? People are entitled to take advantage of any proper legal claim when they are weighing their possible loss against somebody else's possible loss.

The Minister might deal with that matter when he replies to this debate or in Committee. I know that I have asked him a lot of questions, and I am sorry about that, but he appreciates, as I am sure the House does, that we are left with no alternative but to make these inquiries on the run.

I wish to raise one further matter—and again it is not done with the intention of holding up the House. I understand that the receiver has raised this question. I also understand that at some time in the future he is thinking of going to court to have this matter declared. That means that somebody is prepared to question this legislation. Therefore, we in this House must do everything properly.

Standing Order No. 158 provides that no member shall vote upon a question in which he has a direct pecuniary interest. "Erskine May" refers to this matter because a similar rule exists in the House of Commons. At page 411 of the Twentieth Edition of Erskine May, reference is made to these words of Mr Speaker Abbot—

"This interest must be a direct pecuniary interest, and separately belonging to the persons whose votes were questioned, and not in common with the rest of his Majesty's subjects, on a matter of state policy."

I raise that as a counsel of caution, because I understand that there is broad support for this proposal from two parties in the House. We do not adopt an obstructive approach, but we would like to have some answers.

It might be cautious and prudent if any members of the Queensland Graingrowers Association were to abstain from the vote because the vote could be questioned on the basis of that Standing Order. Clearly, I would have thought that members of the Queensland Graingrowers Association had a direct pecuniary interest, potentially, in this legislation. It might well be that they will lose if they are unsecured creditors; but there is some danger there.

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (11.17 p.m.): Most of my remarks will be in line with those of the member for Murrumba, so there is not a great lot at stake in that regard. One of the things that we are trying to do tonight is validate something that we believed the State Wheat Board always had the power to do. Likewise, the State Wheat Board believed that it had that power and so acted.

An Honourable Member: And so did the Graingrowers Association.

Mr BOOTH: Perhaps that is so.

The State Wheat Board is a statutory marketing board, and it always believed that it had the power to do what it did. All that we are doing is validating what it did. We are simply validating something that we always believed the board had the power to do.

When the proclamation was made in 1956, the State Wheat Board may have wanted to trade in wheat sacks, twine and so on. The handling of bulk grain was new. No doubt, when the 1967 proclamation was made, the board intended to handle other grains. It believed that it had the power to do what it was doing and that it had the necessary backing in the Act. Tonight, we are not doing anything other than implementing what was Government policy and perhaps Opposition policy at that time, which is to have an orderly marketing system.

It is unfortunate that the Queensland Graingrowers Association is a farmers' organisation. It is not a statutory body. I believe that it is in our best interests, and in the interests of all the marketing boards and of farmers in general, to support what has been done in the past and to validate it. If we have to do it with fast legislation, so be it.

I will not try to answer any of the legal questions that were raised by the member for Sherwood. If we did not do what we are doing tonight, it would be said that we were abandoning the orderly marketing policy. This Bill should pass through all its stages tonight so that the State Wheat Board can be regarded as a secured creditor, at least with regard to the \$2m. I would like to know more about the crash of the Graingrowers Association. However, the Government is acting properly in introducing this Bill.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (11.21 p.m.): This Bill has been introduced to clarify the trading position of the State Wheat Board and to protect the debt of the Queensland Graingrowers Association to the Wheat Board.

The Minister for Primary Industries said—

“Doubts have been raised as to the validity of the proclamations allowing the board to handle and store various grains and oilseeds.”

The State Wheat Board is protected by the Wheat Pool Act. This can be illustrated with reference to earlier amendments to that legislation. I refer to the Queensland Government Gazette of 30 June 1956, which reads—

“The Board may with the approval of the Minister receive, handle, store and treat grain other than wheat on behalf of and as agents for a board constituted under ‘The Primary Producers’ Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1936 to 1955’.”

The Graingrowers Association is not constituted under the Primary Producers’ Organisation and Marketing Act.

On 11 November 1967 the Queensland Government Gazette reported another amendment to the Wheat Pool Act. The Gazette reads—

“The Board may with the approval of the Minister receive, handle, store and treat on behalf of any person any grain other than wheat and any seed crop upon such terms and conditions as may be determined by the Board from time to time.”

From that amendment, it would seem that the Graingrowers Association is now covered by the Act. The amendment provided that there must be approval by the Minister. One wonders whether previous Ministers have done their jobs properly.

The Opposition supports the Bill, which is introduced to protect the interests of the wheat-growers of this State and to ensure that the debt is paid to the State Wheat Board.

Retrospective legislation disturbs members of the Opposition, as does the need for the Standing Orders to have been suspended to allow the passage of this Bill in one night. Opposition members support the passage of the Bill to protect the interests of Queensland's wheat-farmers. We do not bow to the clumsy and tardy legislation of the Government. The Government's tendency to introduce retrospective legislation is increasing at an alarming rate. Retrospective legislation is detrimental to good government. Good laws should be passed in the first instance. In this current session, to protect developers and speculators, retrospective legislation has already been introduced to amend the Building Units and

Group Titles Act. Rumours abound that the Government will be asked to provide funds to the Graingrowers Association to bail it out of its financial difficulties. As the member for Warwick said, because the Graingrowers Association did not comply with orderly marketing arrangements, it finds itself in these difficulties.

I now refer to the crash of some building societies in Queensland in 1976. What did the Queensland Government do when it was asked to protect the financial interests of the ordinary Queenslander? The Treasurer said, "Bad luck." The Queensland shareholders in the Australian Permanent Building Society got nothing. I know of one Bundaberg family who lost their life savings of \$17,000. Their dreams of a family home just disappeared.

What did the Queensland Treasurer say? He said that any person who, wisely or unwisely or rightly or wrongly, invested his money in the building society was not a depositor but a shareholder and had to take the consequences. He said that one group of persons would not be receiving favourable treatment over others.

From the early 1970s the Queensland Graingrowers Association expanded its trading operations. Did the growers ask to become constituted under the Primary Producers Organisation and Marketing Act? No! They wanted their independence without the Government's checks and controls. The association's speculation in foreign currencies was not fully covered by a crop. In other words, it speculated, not hedged. It is now paying the price for that financial bungling. Like the small investor who, wisely or unwisely or rightly or wrongly, had to accept the financial responsibilities of his decision, the Graingrowers Association should accept responsibility for its decision and not expect the Queensland tax-payers to pick up the tab.

Mr Elliott: You personally feel that nothing whatever should be done to assist the Queensland grain-growers?

Mr CAMPBELL: I am saying that the association went outside orderly marketing, in which it could have engaged since the 1970s, so, yes, it should accept responsibility for its decision. The wheat-growers, the cane-farmers and all the other tax-payers should not have to pick up the tab.

The present situation would not have arisen if the Government had suggested to grain-growers that their association should become constituted under the Act. The State Government reneged on its responsibilities to the farmers of Queensland.

Over the past two years, the Government's failure to protect the interests of Queensland's primary producers has clearly been demonstrated. We have seen the Peanut Marketing Board fiasco and inconsistencies in the allocation of quotas of milk entitlements.

The Minister has failed to have these quangos report to Parliament. A parliamentary committee, with representation from both sides of the House, should be set up with the responsibility of ensuring that these bodies are being managed efficiently, have financial stability and are protecting the interests of all individual growers, farmers and primary producers.

I believe that parliamentary committees should have the right to sight the minutes of the board meetings and the accounts of the statutory bodies so that those parliamentary committees can ensure that the rights of the individual farmers are protected. Because of the scandals that are arising in connection with these marketing boards, the present method of monitoring is not working properly.

The general inactivity, the slowness and the secretiveness of this Government in updating its primary producer marketing board legislation is now reacting to the detriment of the ordinary Queensland farmers. Queensland had to follow New South Wales in introducing the Farm Produce Agents Act to protect the vegetable and fruit growers of this State. Although some people might claim that that Act is socialist legislation, it protects the small farmers of Queensland. More legislation of that type is needed to protect the farmers.

As I have said, the secretive attitude of this Government is adversely affecting the farmers. As well, it is affecting other Queensland industries. The "Buy Queensland Made" hypocrisy of these quangos is fully demonstrated by their buying actions. How many of these marketing bodies are using Queensland-made polythene sacks for their seed grain requirements? The Wheat Board was not even interested in helping Queensland firms, such

as the Bundaberg Bag Factory, by requesting them to supply high-quality bags for use by Queensland farmers. How many other marketing boards use Queensland sacks? Or do they use overseas, dumped sacks? Queenslanders should fully support our primary producers and consume Queensland wheat, cereals, oil-seed products, meat and sugar. However, the marketing boards that supply farmer commodities should reciprocate by supporting Queensland and Australian service and secondary industries.

The proper and open reporting by statutory bodies to this Parliament and the frequent updating of marketing board legislation are the tools by which legislation can be kept effective and appropriate for the 1980s and beyond, thereby protecting the interests of the individual farmers and also the consumers.

With my fellow-members of the Australian Labor Party, I fully support the Bill. However, once again I draw attention to the inappropriate and unsatisfactory method of introducing legislation that is retrospective and rushed through Parliament under a suspension of Standing Orders.

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (11.30 p.m.): I support the comment made by the honourable member for Sherwood in relation to questions that must be asked regarding this particular matter. As the honourable member for Bundaberg stated, retrospective legislation has been introduced into this House this evening. It deals with a very sensitive area as far as a major primary producers organisation in this State is concerned. However, we have not been told sufficient about the reasons behind the introduction of the Bill. It behoves any Minister who comes into this House expecting the Opposition to support him on a motion that suspends the Standing Orders to allow the passage of a Bill through all its stages at such a late hour to give the full facts, reasons and information behind the need for it.

Why is this Bill being rushed through this evening? Is somebody about to litigate on behalf of one of the creditors? Is the official receiver/manager to make a move against the State Wheat Board? The Minister referred to doubt. Who raised it? The wording of the legislation is most unusual and differs from anything that I have seen during my term as a member of this Assembly. The Minister used the term "for the purpose of allaying doubt". What is the doubt? It behoves the Minister to tell the Parliament, which is made up of representatives of all Queenslanders, before it passes an Act validating anything. Whether the proclamations were harmful, I believe, as the honourable member for Warwick has said, that what was done by way of those proclamations in 1956 and 1967 was done in good faith, with good purpose and, seemingly, for the benefit of all people connected with the grain-growing industry in this State. If that is so, and if all members of this Assembly are expected to give their wholehearted support to this Bill, we should be told exactly why it is necessary to introduce it. I hope that the Minister tells us in his reply. I will be very surprised if he does not. I have always had a very high personal respect for him from the time that I met him, which was long before he became a member of this Assembly.

It is the responsibility of the Minister for Primary Industry to inform honourable members about the doubt, to tell us why it exists and why it is necessary to introduce the validating legislation to remove it.

I am afraid that the information given to us by the Minister in his second-reading speech is insufficient. I said earlier that the legislation relates to a very important primary producer organisation in this State. Perhaps I am using the wrong term. Perhaps I should use the word "association" in order to keep the matter in its true and proper perspective.

Since the problems of the Queensland Graingrowers Association were discovered in August of this year, during speeches made by Government members, who have been associated with the grain industry and who have come from graingrowing areas, I have quite seriously—not facetiously—asked them during the debate on the Address in Reply and the Budget debate why the Queensland Graingrowers Association got into real trouble. I have asked those members to provide a proper explanation. Surely their constituents must be the ones who are most concerned about it? I am afraid that I have not received an answer from them, either. Many of them have honestly said that they do not really know. That perhaps was the real problem with the Queensland Graingrowers Association. The members forming that association had not properly followed the events occurring within their own association.

Earlier the member for Sherwood referred to the agents of the association who may have made mistakes or who may not have been as careful as they should have been. I would include with those persons who were agents the representatives elected to positions of responsibility on the association by the various branches. As we have recently seen in the instance of the Peanut Marketing Board, the responsibilities and duties placed on those elected representatives were not properly carried out by them.

However, strong criticism must be directed at the association itself. I can state why in some respects the Queensland Graingrowers Association fell into such a hole. It wanted the best of both worlds. Unfortunately for its members, it lost. It wanted to be an association without any form of Government control whatsoever. When I have spoken to people at branch level or officials in the head office in Toowoomba over the years that I have been interested in primary industry matters, the first thing they have said is that they did not want any form of Government control. However, as soon as the association got into trouble, they raced to the Government for help to pull them out of the fire. They did not want Government control, but they wanted Government protection. They wanted Government support and assistance when they fell into a hole.

Mr De Lacy: They just want to socialise their losses.

Mr CASEY: The legislation was introduced by a Labor Government in the 1950s. The growers said then that they did not want socialised control of their industry. Many industries, commodity boards and organisations in our State work in a way that is entirely socialistic. For my first and most telling example I need only refer to Queensland's biggest agricultural industry, the sugar industry. It is completely organised by Government legislation. However, because of the way in which that legislation is structured, the industry is controlled by those within it and not by the Government. The sugar industry legislation provides a model for all other industries in this State.

For the life of me, I could never understand why the grain industry in Queensland—our second biggest agricultural industry—could not follow the sugar industry's example. If it had legislation to control its industry as the sugar industry is controlled, it would have come under the provisions of the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act, which is virtually the bible for all primary industries in Queensland. That piece of legislation was introduced by a Labor Government in the early 1920s and has become a model for all other Governments in Australia. It has allowed the primary industries of this State to become properly organised and structured. It gives them the protection of the Queensland Government. There are only a few groups which have not availed themselves of its protection. The Queensland Graingrowers Association is one, and the United Graziers Association and its off-shoot the Queensland Cattlemen's Union are the others. All honourable members would know that they are the very bastions of toriyism in this State.

If those organisations had been prepared to come under the mantle of the Parliament, they would have been entitled to the protection offered by the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act. In the 25 years of National Party rule in this State, the Government has never sought to alter the context of that Act. As was pointed out by the member for Warwick, the Government recognises its importance to orderly marketing.

I will not go into the whole system, but, under that Act the State Wheat Board does have limited protection. If the Queensland Graingrowers Association had been determined that all grain-growers would form one organisation—unfortunately it was not—that organisation could have come under the auspices of the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act and, in addition, been under the constant supervision of the Director of Marketing in this State. That is another very important aspect that I will touch on if I have sufficient time.

The annual report of the State Wheat Board reveals that only about 12 per cent of the grain traded through the board came from the Queensland Graingrowers Association. Therefore, this legislation is very necessary to protect from the receiver's actions the growers of all the other grains that have been handled by the State Wheat Board.

Other organisations that handle grain—the Atherton Tableland Maize Board, the Central Queensland Sorghum Marketing Board, and the Barley Board—are all running quite well. Despite the fact that some of the personnel involved in the Queensland Graingrowers Association are on various other commodity boards, those boards have not run into

similar trouble. Mr Speaker, as you would know from your area, that is because those organisations have the great legal protection of the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act.

In recent times, because of the supervision of the Director of Marketing and the State legislation, commodity boards, with one exception, have not got into real trouble. That one exception was the Peanut Marketing Board.

I am sorry that the Premier is not in the House this evening, because that makes quite a story. For years the annual reports of the Director of Marketing warned the Government that things were going wrong in the Peanut Marketing Board, and the Parliament still has not properly debated the matter. The warnings of the director were completely disregarded by the Government. Why was that? It was not because the former Minister for Primary Industries did not want to do something about it; it was simply that the Peanut Marketing Board was based in Kingaroy and was operating under the protective mantle of the Premier. All those involved were strong supporters of the Premier, and under no circumstances would he see their boat rocked. The politically sensitive Government allowed things to deteriorate to such an extent that the board got into trouble and the moneys of the State were used—I admit that the Act provides for that—to stabilise the Queensland peanut industry.

Unfortunately, the Queensland Graingrowers Association had no proper financial supervision over its actions under any law of this State. This is the consequence for the grain-growers. A moment ago the member for Cunningham tried to interject on the member for Bundaberg. What the member for Cunningham should be doing is going back to his electorate and convincing the grain-growers that they should do away with the present structure of the Queensland Graingrowers Association and bring themselves under the mantle of the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act. That should be the responsibility of every honourable member who represents an area in which grain is grown. If honourable members want to protect the future of the grain-growers in this State, they should realise that that is where the real protection lies.

I hope that the Minister will provide a better explanation of this validating legislation. One report indicates that it is very fortunate that Australia is governed by a Labor Government. Thanks to the good policies of the Federal Labor Government that have helped to straighten out the economy, the Australian dollar has appreciated against the American dollar. That appreciation has saved the loss of several million dollars incurred by the Graingrowers Association in trading on the overseas futures market.

I have a final question to put to the Minister, and I ask him to answer it this evening. The Wheat Board is being replaced as the handling authority by the Queensland Grain Handling Authority. Is that authority insured under the legislation? Will any future transactions under the proclamations of 1956 and 1967 be covered by the legislation introduced to establish the Queensland Grain Handling Authority?

Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (11.46 p.m.): In the past 12 months or so, retrospective legislation was passed to deal with a similar situation, and Parliament has amended Acts to cover other mistakes or misdemeanours by so-called respectable authorities. Last year, the Sugar Acquisition Act, which was introduced in 1915, was amended. Because certain actions created doubt, that Act had to be amended after it had carried the industry for 70-odd years.

The Minister told the House that the Act now before it came into effect in 1920. Tonight, legislation is being passed to put beyond doubt actions that have been taken. If the legislation is necessary to protect the industry, the Opposition agrees that it should be passed.

The Government will have to develop a monitoring system so that statutory authorities, other authorities and marketing boards are answerable to the Government.

On 11 October 1983, an article in these terms appeared in "The Courier-Mail"—
"\$34m debt faces graingrowers

Creditors of the Queensland Graingrowers Association could be owed up to \$34 million, according to the receiver-manager's report to the Supreme Court.

And it could take unsecured creditors up to 15 years to get paid if the association was allowed to trade out of its debt, the receiver, Mr Wilson Wilde said."

It appears that the Government intends to let these people try to trade out. If the association is to get out of trouble quickly, it will need support from the State Government or from the Federal Government. In measuring up to its responsibilities, the State Government will have to come to the party.

Later, the article continues—

“These losses have proved so extensive that all surplus funds of the association have now been wiped out and the growers’ funds invested in the association have also been dissipated through currency dealings.

To carry out the full hedging operation, the association would need to deal with one banking organisation only to ensure continuity. At the date of my appointment, the association had outstanding contracts with 16 merchant banks amounting to \$127 million.”

That highlights the folly that the graingrowers’ organisation was allowed to indulge in. I have another relevant quotation relating to remarks by the receiver, Mr Wilde, that appeared in “The Australian Financial Review”. It reads—

“He did note, however, that because unsecured creditors of the association would exceed \$30 million, ‘it is obvious that repayment of 100 cents in the dollar is virtually impossible.’

But he claimed that with reasonable crop seasons in the next few years, it might be possible to repay up to 60 cents in the dollar over five years.

‘I suggest to you if you could get a 20 to 25 cents initial payment and repayments up to 60 cents in the dollar over five years, you might be looking at something realistic,’ he said.”

Again the producer will be taxed. In the long run, it is always the producer who pays. The Government will have to introduce a monitoring system under which all statutory authorities, marketing boards and so on will have to answer for their actions.

Another article in “The Courier-Mail” of 11 October 1983 refers to the fact that farmers could face a loss of \$500,000, and it goes on to name them. This Government has to face up to its responsibilities. The member for Mackay mentioned the Peanut Marketing Board. That was another scandal. That board was supposed to be administered by responsible citizens.

The last matter that I will raise should make the House aware of what is happening. The accounts gave no clue that there was a problem with a large deficit. According to Hoyle, Doyle and Docherty, the accounts of all marketing authorities are audited and everything is above board. However, within a short period, millions of dollars go missing and nobody can find out where they have gone.

I refer to an article in “The Australian Financial Review” of 17 August 1983, two days after the Queensland Graingrowers Association went into voluntary liquidation. It states—

“There appears to be nothing in the 1981-82 accounts of the Queensland Grain Growers Association to give any indication of the potential problems which in just the past week have come to light as a multi-million dollar deficit.

Accounts for the 12 months to February 28, 1982, on file with the Corporate Affairs Office in Brisbane, show that the association listed foreign exchange losses of only \$17,712.

The sudden appearance of the losses has raised doubts on the controls operating in the country’s farmer operated marketing boards.”

That is the point that should be made tonight. We are all wondering how long it will be before legislation is introduced to protect some other marketing authority or statutory body in the primary industry field. When a primary industry goes bad, it affects the communities in the country and the people in the cities.

Unless the Government monitors the activities of these boards on a regular basis, it will have many problems on its hands. The people in control of these bodies have to answer to the Parliament. There has to be public accountability of their actions every six months, not every 12 months. The problem with the Queensland Graingrowers Association arose in less than 12 months. We have to protect producers and everybody else.

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.53 p.m.), in reply: I take the opportunity to thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate and also for not opposing the passing of this legislation through all stages tonight. I appreciate that.

Unfortunately, in the debate on legislation to validate certain proclamations under the Wheat Pool Act, some honourable members have taken the opportunity to attack the Queensland Graingrowers Association. It has been an effective and worthwhile organisation over a long period. Although it is experiencing difficulties at present, I believe that it has a worthwhile role to play in the grain industry. I sincerely hope that the association can resolve its difficulties.

Much has been said about validating legislation. The necessity for introducing validating legislation to cater for changing legal interpretations is not new. In the Sugar Acquisition Act Amendment Act 1982, action was taken to validate what was, and always had been, accepted as standard practice. In that instance the validation related back to 1915, but it had a real effect only on recent events.

I thank the honourable member for Murrumba, who is the Opposition spokesman on primary industry matters, for outlining to the House many of the events surrounding the introduction of the Act and the proclamation. I do not think that it is necessary for me to cover that ground again. He showed a fairly good knowledge and understanding of the problem.

I appreciate the concern of the honourable member for Sherwood, and thank him for his contribution. Most of the questions he put to me can be answered at this stage only by the receiver/manager of the Queensland Graingrowers Association. The Government has certainly not been informed of any details and since the association is not constituted under any of my department's legislation, I have no means of ascertaining the facts. It was the Wheat Board's understanding that it was a secured creditor, but that view has been questioned. The Bill merely sets out to place the matter beyond doubt.

My advice from the Wheat Board is that approximately \$1.9m is in question. In addition to that amount, I understand that there is a further \$1m owing to the board. It should be made clear that the board would rank as a creditor in any case. The only point in issue is the extent to which the debt is secured.

Mr Casey: Why is it in question?

Mr TURNER: As I pointed out in my second-reading speech, the State Wheat Board has taken out a lien under the Warehousemen's Liens Act to ensure that it is regarded as a secured creditor, but there is some doubt about that. I will elaborate on that later.

I thank the honourable member for Warwick for his contribution. He has a great knowledge and a deep understanding of the functioning of the Wheat Board and the Graingrowers Association.

I point out to the honourable member for Bundaberg that in the past both Labor and National Party Ministers have given the appropriate approvals to which he referred. I also point out that this legislation relates not to the Queensland Graingrowers Association but to the State Wheat Board.

He did make the fairly valid point that the Parliament should have passed a good law in the first instance and not have had to introduce this type of legislation. The Wheat Pool Act was substantially amended on 30 June 1956 by Harold Collins, the member for Tablelands, who was then Secretary for Agriculture.

The honourable member for Mackay referred to many matters, not all of which pertained to the Bill. The reason behind the introduction of the Bill is quite simple. The Bill is designed to remove any doubts as to the validity of the proclamations under which the State Wheat Board has operated for a considerable period. Those doubts were conveyed to me by officials of the Wheat Board, and I understand that their approach was prompted by information conveyed to them by the receiver/manager of the affairs of the Queensland Graingrowers Association.

The honourable member for Mourilyan also made a contribution for which I thank him. He referred mainly to the Graingrowers Association. I point out to him that the Graingrowers Association is not a statutory authority but a proprietary company over which the Government has no control. The honourable member referred also to the Peanut Marketing Board and other marketing authorities and, although I take on board the points he made, I do not believe that they have any particular relevance to the debate.

Motion (Mr Turner) agreed to.

[Friday, 16 December 1983]

Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Row, Hinchinbrook) in the chair; Hon. N. J. Turner (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—Validation of Proclamations—

Mr KRUGER (12.1 a.m.): Because of some of the questions that were asked by honourable members, I need to speak to this clause. I do not question the reason for asking those questions.

Clause 2 states—

“For the purpose of allaying doubt as to the validity and efficacy in law of Proclamations purporting to have been made pursuant to section 3 of The Wheat Pool Acts, 1920 to 1930, . . .”

and so on. That portion of the clause brings me to the point that those problems that might have arisen in the past certainly will not arise after this Bill is passed. That seems to me to be the only real matter that honourable members are discussing. Either we accept it or we do not accept it.

The doubt expressed by some honourable members was more about the lack of explanation than about this clause. As I said at the second-reading stage, I felt there was some doubt. The reason for this legislation is quite clearly spelt out in the clause, and I suggest that honourable members look at it in that light. That portion of clause 2 ties in with the latter portion of clause 3, on which I shall be speaking.

Mr TURNER: I reiterate what I said at the second-reading stage, namely, that the purpose of the Bill is merely to validate something that has been the intention of the legislation and has been apparent all the time. The State Wheat Board and other industry leaders and bodies, including the Queensland Graingrowers Association, have acted on the basis of that stated intention. The legislation confirms that the State Wheat Board has always had the power to handle grains other than wheat on behalf of other parties.

The Bill is simple. It merely validates what has been a practice accepted and recognised by various Governments since the original Act was introduced by a former Labor Government. Proclamations were made at that time and by a National-Liberal Government in 1967.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—Wheat Board taken to have complied with Act—

Mr KRUGER (12.3 a.m.): My reason for speaking to clause 2 was mainly to allow me to lead up to the comments that I wish to make on this clause. This clause states, in part—

“ . . . as modified pursuant to a Proclamation referred to in section 2, where the State Wheat Board has at any time received, handled, stored or treated any seed crop or any grain other than wheat the State Wheat Board shall be taken for all purposes to have received, handled, stored or treated the seed crop or, as the case may be, the grain other than wheat in compliance in all respects with those provisions and with the approval of the Minister first had and obtained.”

We are back to where we started. Those things that in the past could have been classed as being doubtful have been covered, because this clause spells out quite clearly that the Minister's blessing had been obtained, if I might put it that way, and that the handling and storing of any grains other than wheat had been carried out with the right intent.

With that intent in mind, I accept the Bill. Anything that might be doubtful certainly is not the responsibility of the Wheat Board. The problems referred to tonight, which cast some doubt, are problems for the people concerned. As the Minister pointed out, the Bill deals with what could be a problem with the Wheat Board under the Wheat Pool Act. For that reason, the Opposition accepts the legislation. If any doubt had arisen over the Wheat Board, as has been the case with some other organisations that were mentioned previously, I certainly would not be supporting the Bill.

Because of the situation that has arisen, it would seem to me that we are now legalising things that have happened in the past. It will mean that the matter will be clear in the future.

I support what the member for Mackay said when asked whether we are fully covered with the legislation that is before the Committee. I hope that the Minister has considered that. It was not spelt out by the Minister following a request for information by the member for Mackay. Perhaps the member for Mackay will want to pursue that further. That is the one doubtful question that remains.

Mr CASEY: I reiterate my dissatisfaction with the Minister's reply. He did not go close to informing members what they are entitled to know. All honourable members know that the Bill validates the two proclamations under the Wheat Pool Act. In his reply at the second-reading stage the Minister indicated that many members spoke about matters unconnected with the Wheat Pool (Validation of Proclamations) Bill. The shadowy remarks made by the Minister in introducing the Bill nowhere near covered the information that should be supplied. He said that members referred to matters about the Queensland Graingrowers Association that do not relate to the Bill. However, in his closing remarks he said that the doubt that was conveyed to him by the State Wheat Board had been conveyed to it by the receiver/manager of the Queensland Graingrowers Association. That is what this Bill is about. This Bill is about the problems of the Queensland Graingrowers Association. In his speech the Minister admitted that the Queensland Graingrowers Association is not a body that is constituted under any of his departments or under any Act of this Parliament other than the Companies Act. He has still not given us the information that we have requested.

Mr TURNER: In reply to the honourable member for Murrumba, the matter to which he referred is covered fully under the Queensland Grain Handling Act.

As I pointed out earlier to the honourable member for Mackay, the Bill validates the proclamations. I have been through that and I have explained it to him. I do not think that I can explain it any more fully.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Turner, read a third time.

COAL AND OIL SHALE MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy), by leave, without notice:
I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Coal and Oil Shale Mine Workers (Pensions) Act 1941-1981 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr I. J. Gibbs, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy) (12.10 a.m.): I move—
“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The Coal Mine Workers Pensions Fund was originally established to provide pensions to coal-mine workers and their dependants at an earlier age than community standards owing to the arduous and unnatural aspects of their employment. From 2 November 1970 the Act was amended to provide benefit by way of lump sum in lieu of weekly pension, with existing pensioners continuing to receive pensions until their death (or remarriage, in the case of widows). The only weekly pensions granted since the 1970 amendment have been to widows of deceased pensioners. At present there are still 840 of these pensioners receiving such payments.

The rates of pension have been varied from time to time by amendment to the Act, with the last increase being paid from 6 August 1981. The rate of lump-sum payment is provided by the actuary appointed under the Act, with the rate payable from 1 July each year being that calculated by the actuary as feasible considering the state of the fund.

The representatives of the contributing parties, that is, the Combined Mining Unions and the Queensland Coal Owners Association, feel that the pension rates should be reviewed in the same way as the lump-sum payment, with the rates varied by the tribunal, after consultation with the actuary, without recourse to legislation. The Bill makes that possible. However, in view of the means test applied to persons in receipt of Commonwealth pensions and the different needs of individuals, it is considered that some pensioners may not wish their pensions to be increased and so jeopardise the fringe benefits payable to recipients of social security pensions. They should, therefore, have the choice of receiving the rate provided or such lesser amount as suits their circumstances. The Bill provides for that contingency. Further, there have been requests for commutation of pensions to lump sums, and the actuary has provided a lump-sum value for each category of pensioner should he or she wish to take advantage of this benefit. This has been provided for on a once-only basis, with pensioners having a period of six months in which to exercise their options. The provision then lapses.

The 1981 amendment allowed a contributor the option of retiring at age 58 and receiving a lump-sum benefit, provided he had service in the industry of at least 30 years and, of course, satisfied the service qualifications. At that time, I said that this was seen as a first step to an eventual 55-years-of-age retirement for all eligible contributors. The Bill now takes a further step in this direction by reducing the 30-year qualifying period to 25 years, although retaining the retirement age at 58 years. Representatives of the unions have also requested that the other service conditions for eligibility be reduced under both the retirement and the incapacity provisions, to which the employers have agreed. The reduction agreed to and provided is five years for all other retirement provisions and three years under the section relating to cessation due to incapacity caused by other than compensable injury. In accordance with the reduced qualifying periods, the minimum benefit payable in respect of the death of a mine-worker, or of his incapacity through injury, has been reduced from 180 to 120 times the prescribed rate.

Owing to unforeseen delays in introducing this Bill and consequent disadvantage to some mine-workers, it is felt that it would not be unreasonable to provide some degree of retrospectivity in the amended provisions. The Pensions Tribunal has considered the question and recommended that 1 December 1983 be adopted as the date of commencement of the relevant amendments, and this has been incorporated in the Bill. The actuary has taken into account the consequences of all the amendments provided in this Bill. Actuarial solvency will be maintained.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Vaughan, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 12.16 a.m. (Friday).