

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 3 APRIL 1984

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

ASSENT TO BILL

Assent to the Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement and Queensland Coal Trust Bill reported by Mr Speaker.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Co-ordinator-General, Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1983

Registrar of Co-operative and Other Societies for the year ended 30 June 1983.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council under—

Electricity Act 1976-1982 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982

City of Brisbane Act 1924-1982 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982

Water Act 1926-1983, Irrigation Act 1922-1983, Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act 1958-1979 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982

Harbours Act 1955-1982

Regulations under—

Land Tax Act 1915-1984

Queensland Marine Act 1958-1979.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Queensland Housing Commission**

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing) (11.5 a.m.), by leave: In the past week, both inside and outside this House, a number of claims have been made about the Queensland Housing Commission. Many of those claims have been both wild and wide of the mark, and the record needs to be set straight.

The claims have stemmed from the statements made in the House last week by Labor's former spokesman on housing, Mr Mackenroth. Since then there has been an orchestrated attack directed by Mr Mackenroth on the Housing Commission. Undoubtedly, that attack is aimed at undermining the commission's income-geared rent system. This is the best system for providing assistance to those genuinely in need, and helping them for as long as that need exists.

Under this system, more than 60 per cent of the commission's tenants are now paying less than \$40 a week for good and secure rental housing. In fact, almost 50 per cent of commission tenants are now paying \$30 or less a week in rent. Under this system, the less income a tenant has, the more subsidy that tenant receives.

To be fair to all tenants concerned, the commission needs to know the number of people occupying a Housing Commission premises and the income of the persons concerned. To do this, it asks the Housing Commission tenants to notify the commission of changes in the number of people occupying Housing Commission flats or houses. The overwhelming majority of tenants are honest and do so, but there are, unfortunately, a very small number who are out to defraud the system. It is for this reason, regrettably, that the commission has to employ inspectors to detect people who are blatantly cheating the system.

Let me make it clear also that the commission does not have a large army of inspectors checking on each commission rental premises. This is a notion being fostered by Mr Mackenroth in his attempt to protect people who have blatantly broken the tenancy rules—rules that are clearly spelt out in their tenancy agreement.

In fact, just a handful of men is employed for the purpose of detecting such abuse of the system. These inspectors check out reports, generally received from other Housing Commission tenants, of particular tenants abusing the system by having unauthorised persons residing in the house or unit on a regular basis over a considerable period. It is the commission's responsibility to investigate such claims made by people who are concerned that the system is being abused.

Two cases which were extensively publicised last week were cases in which the commission had received such complaints and investigated them. In both cases, the tenants concerned have acknowledged that they did have unauthorised persons living in the premises over a considerable period. Both tenants were receiving rental subsidy and paying rents of approximately \$21 a week.

Let me make it clear also that the Housing Commission does not prohibit visitors to premises. What the commission does ask, however, is that tenants notify the commission of such visitors staying in the unit or house. There is also one other consideration, namely, that the unit should be large enough to accommodate the number of guests that the tenant may wish to have stay in the unit.

Queensland is not the only State that is concerned about fraud of the type I have mentioned. Let me quote from the 1983 annual report of the New South Wales Housing Commission. It says—

“Not inconsiderable numbers of applicants and tenants continue to be detected in the act of defrauding the commission by their wilful failure to disclose their full income and sometimes their true family complements when applying for accommodation or for a rent reduction. It is impossible to judge at this time the extent of the undetected frauds, but they are estimated to be serious enough to warrant the appointment of additional staff to complete more extensive investigations of claims.”

Other States, such as Victoria and South Australia, share the concern on such matters.

Much misinformation on the Housing Commission has been put out by the member for Chatsworth in the past week. But that is nothing new; he has a long history of doing so.

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise to a point of order. The Minister stated that I “put out” misinformation. I ask him to tell me what is that misinformation.

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

Mr WHARTON: As I have spelt out, the commission's concern in this matter is about those people who are blatantly abusing the system to their own ends.

The requirements of the tenancy agreement concerning the notification by tenants of additional occupants residing in Housing Commission premises are put there for the prime purpose of using these conditions against people who flagrantly or fraudulently abuse the tenancy agreement. It is not the commission's practice to concern itself with casual or irregular visitors to Housing Commission premises. The agreement conditions are used to counter situations such as those cases which Mr Mackenroth has raised and which he is seeking to defend.

In-line Machines

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (11.10 a.m.), by leave: For some time now, Opposition members have been conducting a campaign in this House, and through some sections of the media that appear to be sympathetic to the cause of the Labor Party, to undermine the club industry in Queensland. One particular line of attack has been in respect of in-line machines and an alleged take-over by Mr Jack Rooklyn of the entertainment machine industry in Queensland. Opposition members have followed their usual practice of running a smear campaign in the hope that if enough outlandish claims are made, there is a chance that some of them may be remembered regardless of whether or not they are correct.

Accusations have been made against Mr Jack Rooklyn, who, it is alleged, is involved in “corrupt practices in relation to the distribution and operations of in-line machines”. As I have said previously, I have never had any personal contact with Mr Rooklyn, and I am sure that he is quite capable of protecting himself against the accusations

being hurled indiscriminately by Opposition members. However, I would stress one important point, and that is that Mr Rooklyn has not even been charged with any offence in Australia, let alone been convicted. To listen to the Opposition, one would think that he has a string of convictions.

To enable the public to evaluate the merits of the Opposition smear campaign, let us look at some of the inaccurate statements made by Opposition members.

It has been claimed that Queensland Automatics, which is alleged to be a front for Jack Rooklyn, has acquired a monopoly in the in-line machine industry by owning 80 per cent of the machines licensed in Queensland. That is incorrect, as Queensland Automatics has less than half of the 1 100 machines licensed. At least another 16 owners operate the remaining machines.

It is a great pity that the member for Salisbury is not in the House to hear me refute some of the false claims that he has been making. In this House on Wednesday, 28 March, the honourable member for Salisbury claimed that an amount of \$134,000 had been paid by the Southport RSL—

Mr Hinze: You've flushed him out; he's here!

Mr HARPER: It is pleasing to see that the honourable member for Salisbury has been flushed out.

On Wednesday, 28 March, he claimed that an amount of \$134,000 had been paid by the Southport RSL—and I notice that he referred to the Southport RSL—to Jack Rooklyn as a gambling pay-off in relation to machines installed in the RSL club. That was the accusation that was made.

Once again the honourable member is grasping at straws. Neither Queensland Automatics nor Jack Rooklyn owns any of the machines in the club. The machines in the club are owned by Austral Amusements. That organisation has no connection whatsoever with Queensland Automatics or Jack Rooklyn.

Since in-line machines were approved in April 1974, there has been nothing to stop clubs buying those machines. I understand that several clubs investigated such a purchase but decided that the clubs would gain more financially by letting independent owners operate the machines upon payment of 50 per cent of the proceeds to the clubs. The machines are complicated and require regular maintenance by qualified mechanics to ensure that they function properly.

Apart from that fact, it has been found that patrons tend to tire of a particular machine. A leasing arrangement facilitates the replacement of machines when this occurs. No complaints have been received by my department from any club management committee in respect of this arrangement. In fact, all clubs seem to be pleased to receive the revenue for little effort on their part. Once again, Opposition members are found to be giving misleading information.

On Thursday, 29 March, the honourable Leader of the Opposition claimed that Queensland Automatics had acquired several sites such as snack-bars, cafes and fast-food stores for the purpose of replacing existing video game machines with in-line machines. What utter rubbish! In-line machines are restricted to bona fide clubs and are not permitted in snack-bars, cafes or fast-food stores. Again we see smear tactics being used deliberately in an effort to create a false impression. I hope that any member of the Opposition with a conscience feels as disgusted with these gutter tactics as do members of the Government.

Mention was made also of the Justice Department inspectors being confined to the office. This does happen from time to time depending on the state of the work-load in the office. However, as I stated previously, inspectors have recently confiscated machines at Toobeah, Goondiwindi and Roma. Last year they completed a sweep of the Gold Coast. Members may be interested in a summary of the results of that inspection on the Gold Coast—

319 premises were inspected, of which 29 did not have approval to install entertainment machines;

300 entertainment machines, which represents 25 per cent of the machines inspected, 11 in-line machines and 11 billiard tables were located without current permits attached; and

16 entertainment machines were seized and penalty fees in the vicinity of \$8,000 were requisitioned.

A second inspection on the Gold Coast resulted. Twenty-one hotels were inspected, but only seven machines were detected without current labels attached.

During 1983, a thorough inspection of the Brisbane metropolitan area was also conducted. I can assure honourable members that the inspectors from my department will continue to carry out their duties as required.

The honourable member for Salisbury also tried to make capital of the minutes of the sixtieth annual general meeting of the Registered and Licensed Clubs Association of Queensland. He huffed and puffed in the Chamber about how the evidence in these minutes showed that income from in-line machines was technically a gambling commission and, therefore, a criminal offence. I hope that he showed better judgment when he practised as a solicitor. Admittedly, I doubt that he was then under pressure of the type being exerted by his party's faceless men—and others—as in the present case.

Let me tell honourable members what the Acting Solicitor-General has advised in regard to information and material supplied to me by Channel O—

“If the company's lawyers are correct in their assertion that clubs are acting illegally in relation to in-line machines, there is nothing in the material furnished to the Minister that provides satisfactory admissible evidence to support that assertion. If, in fact, the company's lawyers did advise that the minutes are evidence of ‘why, how and where’ the revenue from in-line machines is concealed, then this advice is, in my opinion, not sustainable.

Mr McKendry's statement, as alleged, seems to me to be no more than a ‘suggestion’ to secretary managers and would not be sufficient to connect any club with any illegal operation or any member of the executive of a club with such illegality.”

So much for the honourable member's histrionics—about a meeting held, incidentally, some three years ago!

Having completely exposed the Opposition members' false accusations and innuendos, let me now inform the House of the real reason for the Opposition's smear campaign. This is really the crunch—the reason for the campaign. On Monday, in the media, the honourable member for Salisbury claimed that the Justice Department had refused to license an electronic in-line machine marketed by Associated Leisure Industries. It is correct that this machine was not approved. On appropriate grounds, I personally directed that it should not be approved. I, again personally, accept responsibility for that decision—no-one else!

The honourable member referred to the attraction of in-line machines to criminal elements but he did not disclose who was going to supply these electronic machines from Sydney. Well let me tell you, Mr Speaker, and honourable members—none other than the devious duo, Len Ainsworth and his infamous sidekick, Ted Vibert. Len Ainsworth's company is the major manufacturer of poker machines in New South Wales. Ted Vibert is the executive director of the Australian Club Development Association and a close associate of Len Ainsworth. This pair has made strenuous efforts to have poker machines accepted in both Queensland and Victoria, without any success.

All members will recall the payment by these “gentlemen” of \$30,000 to the former Leader of the Opposition (Mr Casey). These are the people who now want to obtain approval for electronic in-line machines in Queensland clubs. They do not care whether the machine is suitable or not; they will do anything to try to obtain a foothold in Queensland. In the light of these facts, the reason for the Opposition members' smear campaign against the present Government's policy becomes crystal clear. I leave it to the imagination of honourable members as to whether or not the Opposition is showing genuine concern for the clubs or it is a repetition of the financial arrangements which led to the downfall of the former Leader of the Opposition.

As if this was not enough, the hypocrisy of the Opposition members is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the devious duo of Ainsworth and Vibert cannot even operate honestly in New South Wales. Both men are facing charges of false pretences in New South Wales and are awaiting committal proceedings.

The Government's policy on in-line machines has operated for 10 years with the complete approval of clubs and their members. Club members should carefully note that the Labor Party, just to satisfy its own selfish interests, is attempting to destroy the present prosperity of the clubs.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Land Valuations, Carbrook and Cornubia

From Mr I. J. Gibbs (291 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will review and adjust land valuations in the general area of Carbrook and Cornubia, Logan City.

Spraying of 2,4-D on Residential Areas

From Mr Hinze (52 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take steps to stop the spraying of 2,4-D on residential areas.

Petitions received.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice by members were answered as follows—

1. **Resource and Remedial Teachers**

Mr Smith asked the Minister for Education—

(1) What is the present ratio of resource and remedial teachers to students in primary and secondary schools?

(2) Is there any departmental estimate of the students in State schools who have a reading deficit of three years or more?

(3) Is there any departmental estimate of students in State schools who have a numeracy/mathematics deficit of three years or more?

Answer—

(1) The present ratio of remedial teachers to students in State primary schools is 1:754. The present ratio of resource teachers to students in State secondary schools is 1:2 440.

I remind honourable members that the responsibility for the progress of children should remain with the staff of the regular school and that an overdependence on specialist teachers should not be fostered. Resource teachers are provided to assist class-room teachers. They directly assist only those children with severe problems.

(2 & 3) There is no departmental estimate of the number of students in State schools who exhibit a deficit of three years or more in the performance of tests of reading or mathematics. The department co-operates, with national bodies such as the Australian Council for Educational Research, in national surveys of student performance.

Recent surveys conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research and for the Australian Schools Commission have indicated that the performance of Queensland children is similar to that of children in other Australian States.

Mr POWELL: I take this opportunity to honour my undertaking of last Thursday to inform the honourable member and the House of the position pertaining to the resource teacher course conducted at the Kelvin Grove campus of the Brisbane College of Advanced Education.

In recent years the secondary resource teacher course at the Kelvin Grove campus of the Brisbane College of Advanced Education has not attracted sufficient applicants to make it a viable proposition. In 1984 the Department of Education has released 10 secondary teachers to undertake the post graduate diploma in resource teaching.

2. **Mitchell-St George Road**

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

What is the proposed program for the upgrading of the Mitchell-St George Road?

Answer—

The present planning program provides, subject to the availability of funds, for the construction of two 6-km sections over the 1986-87 and 1987-88 financial years.

3 Flood-mitigation Component, Wivenhoe Dam

Mr Innes asked the Premier and Treasurer—

With reference to the designed flood-mitigation component of the Wivenhoe Dam, what reduction will occur, after completion of the dam, in the Brisbane River heights at the following places, on the assumption of a January 1974 rain situation: (a) the Westlake-Jindalee reach, (b) the Corinda-Indooroopilly Bridge reach and (c) the Indooroopilly Bridge-Tennyson reach?

Answer—

I am advised that, if the Wivenhoe Dam had been completed at the time of the 1974 flood, reductions of the order of 5 metres at Westlake, 4.5 metres at Sherwood and 4 metres at Tennyson Power Station could have been expected. However, I caution the honourable member against drawing the conclusion that Wivenhoe Dam will reduce the height of all future floods below the levels experienced in 1974. Flood heights greater than those of 1974 could still occur in the Brisbane River after the Wivenhoe Dam is completed, but the probability of their recurrence will be significantly reduced.

4. Definitions of "School" and "Non-State School"

Mr Innes asked the Minister for Education—

With reference to my recent serious question about the implications of the recent amendments to the Education Act and to his reply, to which I object, in which he said that I would find a definition of the term "school" in the Education Act if I read it—

(1) Where does the definition of the word "school" or the term "non-State school" appear in that Act?

(2) If in fact there is no definition of that word or that term in the Act, which facilities or places does he and his department believe to be embraced by the term "non-State school"?

(3) Does not the usual dictionary meaning of "school" indicate "a place or establishment where instruction is given", without specifying anything about curriculum or facilities?

(4) In view of the removal of his previous overall supervisory role over all school-age children provided for by the previous Act, cannot his authority and the right of his inspectors to enter a place where instruction is being given on school days to school-age children be contested by the operators of that institution on the grounds that it is, in their opinion, a non-State school?

Answer—

The answer provided to the honourable member's previous so-called "serious question" was as serious as the question asked. The answers to the particular questions he now raises are as follows—

(1) The word "school" is defined under the various institutional forms in which it is used in the Act. These definitions may be found in the interpretation section of the Act. The definition of a "non-State school" is, by exclusion, a school that is not a State school.

(2) See (1).

(3) The honourable member will be aware that the effect of the meanings of words contained within ordinary dictionaries is not binding and will not override any judicial guidance or authority.

The words of a statute, when there is doubt about their meaning, are to be interpreted in the sense that best conforms with the overall subject of the enactment and the object that the legislature had in view. It therefore is immaterial to the argument to include references to the dictionary meanings of words.

(4) I draw the honourable member's attention to Part IV of the Act relating to compulsory education. I must reiterate remarks that I made in answer to a similar question in this House from him on 8 March.

Section 28 of the Education Act was repealed because it contained a defect in that it required a child to attend only at a State School, not necessarily the one at which the child was enrolled. For a prosecution under this section to have proceeded it could well have been argued that it was necessary for the Crown to prove that the child had not attended any State school on the day in question.

The amended Act requires the parents of all children of compulsory attendance age to cause their children to attend the State or non-State school at which they are enrolled. The previous Act contained provisions that were inconsistent with practice, and that is why it was amended. People who for various reasons do not wish their children to attend a school may apply to me for an exemption from compliance with the obligations contained in section 28 (1) of the Act.

5. Kessells Road, Upper Mt Gravatt

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

(1) Who has responsibility for Kessells Road, Upper Mt Gravatt—the Main Roads Department or the Brisbane City Council?

(2) Is he, as Minister for Main Roads, ultimately responsible for making decisions affecting Kessells Road, Upper Mt Gravatt?

(3) Did he write to Mr G. Scassola, former Liberal member for Mt Gravatt, on 10 October 1983, to inform him that traffic lights would not be installed at the corner of Wadley Street and Kessells Road, Upper Mt Gravatt?

(4) Did he, after the State election of 22 October 1983, receive continuous representations from me urging him to reverse his decision in order to solve a serious traffic problem?

(5) Did he, after the State election of 22 October 1983, receive any representation in any form from Mr G. Scassola, Alderman John Coneybeer or Mr Don Cameron, MP, urging him to reverse his decision?

(6) Did he write to me on 31 January indicating that he had noted my representations and that he had decided to reverse his previous decision and allow the installation of traffic lights?

(7) Did any of the following influence his decision (a) Alderman J. Coneybeer, Liberal, Nathan (b) Mr D. Cameron, MP, Liberal, Moreton and (c) Mr G. Scassola of Sunnybank?

(8) How does he react to the article on page 1 of the "Southern Star" of Tuesday, 6 March, titled "Alderman sheds light on signals"?

Answer—

(1) The Main Roads Department took over the responsibility from the Brisbane City Council on 1 July 1983.

(2) Yes, as far as those decisions relate to my responsibilities as Minister for Main Roads.

(3) Yes.

(4) Yes, I have received numerous representations from both the honourable member for Mansfield (Bill Kaus) and the honourable member for Mt Gravatt.

(5) I do not recall any representations being made by any of the gentlemen referred to.

(6 & 7) As this is rather complex, it is appropriate that a detailed written reply be given to the honourable member. I note that the honourable member referred in this part of his question to Mr Scassola. He was a pompous sort of individual. He was rather ineffective. He did not have much going for him. I guess that is why the present member for Mt Gravatt won the seat. I would not worry about Mr Scassola. I do not think that he will ever get back into Parliament. He was a bit of a dill in the party room.

(8) I do not read muck articles that are distributed on the streets. I have not read the article. I do not intend to read it.

6. Cairncross Dock

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

With reference to recent statements by himself and others concerning work at the Cairncross Dock—

(1) Is he aware of television reports in which the manager of Evans Deakin indicated that there is the possibility of a submarine construction tender being awarded to Evans Deakin for this work at Cairncross?

(2) Is any further information concerning this proposal available and, if Brisbane is successful in winning the tender, will repair work be carried out while the submarines are being constructed?

Answer—

(1 & 2) The Federal Government has advertised internationally by way of expressions of interest for the building of submarines.

I understand that Vickers of England as well as French, German and Dutch shipbuilding companies have indicated interest in a joint venture with Australian firms, including Evans Deakin.

The Port of Brisbane Authority has no direct involvement in the project other than the provision of land and infrastructure, such as cranes and heavy equipment. The success of Evans Deakin in getting the tender would not in any way interfere with ship repairs at Cairncross Dock.

One of the advantages that Brisbane has over other areas in Australia is that the Cairncross Dock could be used for the immersing of submarines for testing when completed. This facility is not available in other areas and the Cairncross Dock, as honourable members are no doubt aware, is the largest of its type in Australia.

I understand that the Federal Government will be making no decision of awarding a tender until some time in 1985-86. Hopefully the tender will come to Queensland.

7. Main Roads Department Tenders

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

With reference to concern expressed by people in the construction industry that the Main Roads Department is deliberately continuing to call tenders for small jobs, and in so doing making it uneconomical, through establishment costs, for private contractors to carry out minor works, for example, the calling of two or more contracts on the Nerang bypass project which should have been let as one contract—

(1) Will he instruct the Main Roads Department to call larger contracts?

(2) If not, will he advise the estimate below which tenders will not be called in cases where the work is of a minor nature and the Main Roads Department is of the opinion that the invitation of tenders would involve undue additional cost?

Answer—

(1 & 2) The Main Roads Department is conscious of economics in carrying out both contract and day-labour work in the magnitude of major projects. However, consideration is given to many other factors before the size of a road project is determined. Particular site conditions, magnitude of available funding, priority in relation to other sections and the requirements of local communities are all issues which have a bearing on the extent of proposed works. The other main factor assessed is the need to provide tendering opportunities for the many smaller contractors who are successfully carrying out road and bridge projects in most areas of the State.

The Main Roads Department is programming its work with sensitivity to all factors and is providing a satisfactory mix of work for both large and small contractors by releasing jobs in the \$3m to \$5m bracket as well as others in the vicinity of \$500,000. I do not know which bracket the honourable member represents. He seems to be getting a series of questions pumped into him virtually every day to give him something to talk about.

8. Government and Local Authority Day-labour Works

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

Were the revised arrangements announced recently by the Federal Minister for Transport, whereby the ABRD Trust Fund Act and the Road Grants Act are to be amended to permit the Main Roads Department and local authorities to undertake day-labour works without calling public tenders, agreed to at the Australian Transport Advisory Council (ATAC) conference held in Brisbane in July 1983?

Answer—

In discussion at the July 1983 meeting of ATAC there was general support for the Commonwealth Minister for Transport being given flexibility under the legislation to consider submissions on projects for which, under particular circumstances, adherence to the tendering procedures is inappropriate. The proposed revised arrangements in no way give States power to depart at will from the calling of public tenders. The Commonwealth Minister has indicated that he expects that the circumstances will require him to exercise this power very infrequently. I hope that that satisfies the honourable member.

9. Draft Safety Plan for Meat Industry

Mr McLean asked the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs—

(1) Did the group called MMM Production Consultants produce a report in January 1982 as a result of a survey conducted on behalf of the Meat Industry Safety Council into "lost time injuries" within the meat industry in Queensland?

(2) As a result of this report, was a tripartite conference convened by the then Minister, Sir William Knox, between the employers, the unions and the Workers Compensation Board?

(3) As a result, did a so-called independent group called the National Safety Council of Australia (Queensland Division) prepare a draft safety plan for consideration by the Meat Industry Safety Council?

(4) Did the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union and bacon factory union object to a number of items in this draft plan?

(5) Was the plan amended to provide for a reduction in the compensation rate of pay and an extension of hours worked by meat-workers?

(6) What justification has he as Minister for proposing and supporting these items on behalf of the Meat Works Association and the Meat and Allied Trades Federation of Australia to the detriment of workers in the industry?

(7) Will he now ensure that no meat worker will be disadvantaged as a result of so-called safety investigations which in reality were only a sham to reduce meat-workers' conditions?

Answer—

(1 to 7) I should like to thank the honourable member for Bulimba for giving me the opportunity to place on record the true position regarding the endeavours of this Government to reduce the number of accidents occurring in the meat industry.

A firm called M & M Protection Consultants did carry out a survey into lost time injuries within the meat and metal industries of Queensland which resulted in a report being submitted in January 1982. This survey was commissioned by the Meat Industry Tripartite Safety Council and the Metal Industry Tripartite Safety Council.

The Honourable Sir William Knox convened a series of separate meetings involving the Workers Compensation Board, officers of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs, the Meat Industry Safety Council and the National Safety Council. The meetings were held first with representatives of the employers in the meat industry and then with representatives of the meat industry unions. At those meetings, a draft safety plan prepared by the National Safety Council of Australia, Queensland Division, and endorsed by the tripartite Meat Industry Safety Council was presented for discussion and consideration as a possible means of reducing accidents.

I point out to the honourable member that the National Safety Council is a professional, independent, non-profit organisation dedicated to reducing accidents in industries and the resulting losses of human and material resources. It disturbs me that the honourable member has attacked it.

As a follow-up to those initial meetings, and because of my concern for the large number of accidents occurring in the meat industry, I have, since becoming Minister, convened two tripartite meetings. At the meeting held last week, a submission was presented with four measures for consideration as possible first steps towards developing a program for the reduction of work injuries in Queensland meatworks.

One of the measures submitted for consideration was a proposal for an industry standard of tally in seven hours. After some discussion, it was decided not to proceed with this proposal but to concentrate on the other three measures, which involved training, with the costs being met by the participating companies, and the adoption of standard accident reporting and investigating procedures. These three measures were supported in general principle by the employers and the representatives of the Bacon Factories Union. The safety plan submitted did not propose any reduction in the compensation rate of pay.

I was extremely disappointed by the attitude adopted by the representatives of the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union, who left half way through the meeting. I pay a compliment here to the representatives of the Bacon Factories Union, who adopted a very responsible attitude and not only remained until the conclusion of the meeting but also indicated their support for the three measures mentioned above.

As Minister, I did not propose or support any items on behalf of the Meatworks Association or the Meat and Allied Trades Federation. Any items submitted by those bodies were put forward by them purely as points for discussion.

In the meetings convened, there has never been any aim to reduce the conditions of employment of meat-workers. As I have stated already, the aim was to endeavour to have safer working conditions for meat-workers, reduce accidents and the subsequent stress and human suffering for the workers and their families, and to try to reduce the cost of such accidents to the industry generally.

There is no suggestion of detriment to the employees in the industry. I assure the House that it is my sincere hope that a safety plan will, in due course, be put in place in the meat industry that will be for the benefit of all parties concerned.

It does no credit to the honourable member for Bulimba to wrongly accuse officers of my department and accredited members of the Meat Industry Safety Council of stooping to sham tactics in negotiations. On their behalf, I place on record my extreme resentment of the implication that they would sacrifice safety in the work-place for ulterior motives.

It amazes me that the member for Bulimba is not here to face the music. His question was obviously ill-prepared and he cannot cope—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will conclude his statement.

10. Immigration Policies

Mr Jennings asked the Minister for Welfare Services and Ethnic Affairs—

With reference to his statement concerning support for amendment to Australia's immigration policies with a view to encouraging investment from overseas, what are the potential benefits to be derived from such an amendment?

Answer—

Business migration has for many years been an approved intake category under Australia's immigration policy. Migrants arriving under this category bring with them substantial capital, technology and entrepreneurial skills. They utilise the services of local tradesmen and professional people, and create additional employment opportunities within the State.

I believe that we need a flexible approach to business migration. As the honourable member is aware, the Queensland Government welcomes the inflow of overseas capital to establish commercial and industrial projects in this State. This is particularly so where a joint venture with local equity is involved. I would add that I have made strong representations to the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to consider relaxing the business migration requirements to assist in the development of the mall project proposed by the Chinese community for Duncan Street, Fortitude Valley.

11. Toxic Waste Dumps

Mr Burns asked the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer—

With reference to media reports that a secret Government report lists 66 sites in Brisbane that could be used as toxic waste dumps and that none of these sites is located within an electorate with a National Party member—

(1) Will he table this report so that it can be available for public scrutiny?

(2) Will he give details of each site and its priority for selection?

(3) Which sites were considered before the list of 66 sites was drawn up?

(4) What quantity of toxic waste is dumped annually at the Willawong dump?

(5) What is the estimated quantity that the new dump will be required to handle annually?

(6) Which other toxic dumps are operated in south-east Queensland, what is their location and who operates them?

(7) Will local residents be given the right to object to the site before it is given Government approval?

Answer—

(1 to 3) This question gives me the opportunity to correct some false information that is presently appearing in the media.

In 1981, the Queensland Government, in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council and a number of local authorities in the near-Brisbane area, initiated a major investigation into the industrial liquid waste problem, based on the need to plan and provide facilities for the effective disposal of industrial liquid waste and hazardous and toxic waste in Brisbane and the near-Brisbane area. This investigation has not been finalised and no report, secret or otherwise, has been presented to the Government.

The investigations are being carried out by a firm of engineering consultants and the Brisbane City Council, which has been conducting pilot plant studies to determine the most suitable treatments for the waste stream. The work is supervised by a steering committee comprising officers of various Government departments, the Brisbane City Council and a number of other local authorities in the study area.

The consultants have prepared draft reports on various sections of the investigations for the steering committee. These drafts are presently under review by officers with specialised knowledge in the particular fields under scrutiny.

If, as I assume, it is these draft reports which are being referred to as "secret" reports, I would stress that until such time as these reviews are completed and the

particulars presented in the body of a report to the Government, they have no standing and represent merely the views of the consultants. The queries relating to the alleged "secret" reports are, therefore, irrelevant.

With respect to the specific information required of a factual nature and raised in (4), (6) and (7)—

(4) I understand that about 29 000 cubic metres of material is delivered annually to Willawong, of which some 4.5 per cent might be classified as toxic.

(5) See (1 to 3).

(6) Willawong is the only authorised treatment site for toxic wastes.

(7) Land use planning and waste disposal and treatment are the responsibility of local government, and if a new facility was to be established in Brisbane it would be subject to the appropriate Brisbane City Council planning requirements.

12. Victorian Brothels

Mr Littleproud asked the Minister for Welfare Services and Ethnic Affairs—

Is he aware of reports in the press recently that the Victorian Labor Government intends to decriminalise prostitution in brothels and issue permits for such brothels to operate?

Answer—

I am shocked but not surprised at this attack by the Australian Labor Party on the dignity of women and the well-being of family life. It is in keeping with the trendy ALP socialist policies, which also favour the legalisation of marijuana. The ALP, which talks so much about women's rights, stands universally condemned for this action.

Prostitution is one of the worst forms of exploitation in our society, and its legalisation in any form represents a fundamental breaking of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As honourable members are aware, the National Party Government in Queensland has proclaimed 1984 as the Year of the Family. This is in stark contrast to the action of the ALP in Victoria, which, in legalising brothels, is undermining the very foundation of family life.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr MUNTZ: The Victorian Government is legalising brothels, and it is a Government that is controlled by the same party as that to which Opposition members belong.

13. Soil Conservation

Mr Littleproud asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) What funding for Queensland was forthcoming from the Federal Government for soil conservation in 1983-84?

(2) As the State Government allocated only \$100,000 for soil conservation in 1983-84, will he give an assurance that he will press for a much larger allocation for soil conservation for 1984-85?

Answer—

(1) The Federal Government allocated a total of \$113,400 under the National Soil Conservation Program to fund five specific soil conservation projects in Queensland. These projects involve planning and co-ordination work in defined catchment areas, conservation cropping practice investigations and land capability assessment.

(2) The State Government currently provides salaries for 128 officers directly concerned with soil conservation, and operating expenses in excess of \$1,150,000 were provided in 1983-84. This includes an additional \$125,000 provided specifically within the 1983-84 State Budget for soil conservation. There is no doubt that soil erosion is of major concern to this State's agriculture and to the State and the nation in general. I will continue to press for additional input into soil conservation programs. At present, my department needs officers to plan and design structural works and to encourage and advise on the use of crop management techniques.

14. Funding for North Queensland Roads and Transportation

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

With reference to the 1982-83 Federal Budget, and specifically Budget paper 7, page 66, which refers to a special allocation of \$20m for north Queensland roads and transportation—

(1) Is he aware that the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services, Mr Tenni, admitted in a telegram to the member for Leichhardt on 13 October 1983 that these special Budget funds were allocated for the upgrading of Queensland's transport system generally and not north Queensland as specifically provided for?

(2) Will he explain the discrepancy between the content of Mr Tenni's telegram and his statement published in "The Cairns Post" of 20 October 1983 that \$10m was for northern roads and \$10m was for other transport projects such as railways and bus development in north Queensland?

(3) Will he detail where and when this money was actually spent in north Queensland, especially the \$10m for railways and bus development, in view of his Government's brutal exercise in cutting railway costs in north Queensland?

Answer—

(1 to 3) I am advised that the statements in the Commonwealth Budget documents referred to by the honourable member are inconsistent with the purpose of the special funds as officially advised by the then Federal Treasurer, namely, "the upgrading of Queensland's transportation system". The funds were accordingly distributed by the State Treasurer in the amounts of \$10m each to the Main Roads Department and the Railway Department as special allocations to the capital programs of those departments for application in accordance with needs as determined by them.

I understand that the Federal member for Leichhardt is also raising this issue in north Queensland and will no doubt have access to the official advice of the Federal Treasurer referred to above. To get his facts straight the honourable member would be well advised to consult with Mr Gayler.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Visitors to Queensland Housing Commission Accommodation

Mr WRIGHT: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: As 1984 is Queensland's Year of the Family, as designated by this Government, can he explain why the Queensland Housing Commission has banned an 8-year-old boy from visiting his grandmother? In view of the public outcry about that despicable action, will he publicly apologise to the woman in question?

Mr WHARTON: I accept that 1984 is the Year of the Family. The Leader of the Opposition should accept that, too. The matter of the child who was visiting a pensioner unit is a matter for the people who are already tenants of the Queensland Housing Commission. One problem may be that there is no room. There may be other reasons that we do not know about.

Mr Wright: What was wrong in this instance?

Mr WHARTON: The Leader of the Opposition should allow me to answer the question. In the instance to which he referred, there was a lack of room. The premises involved was a 1 x 1 unit. A complaint was made by the other tenants. The Leader of the Opposition should accept that such complaints are made. The Government's rent policy, which is based on income, is very useful. I refer the Leader of the Opposition to the ministerial statement that I made today.

The Housing Commission must know who is residing in its accommodation. Visits are allowed, and the Housing Commission does not mind people making those visits on occasions. However, it is concerned when the tenants exceed the requirements of their tenancy agreement.

Raids by Inspectors on Housing Commission Accommodation

Mr WRIGHT: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Does he condone Housing Commission inspectors raiding Housing Commission homes at 6.30 a.m.; and, if so, under what circumstances?

Mr WHARTON: I ask the Leader of the Opposition to substantiate his claims and to produce evidence to prove his statement. The member for Chatsworth made a similar allegation. Those honourable members should prove that what they have said is correct.

Mr Wright: Do you condone it?

Mr WHARTON: The Leader of the Opposition asked me a question, and I will answer it.

A handful of inspectors is employed by the Queensland Housing Commission to investigate complaints made by tenants that they are being disturbed. The inspectors are employed to look after the existing tenants and many other persons wishing to obtain rental accommodation. A tenant under his signed tenancy agreement agrees that officers of the Housing Commission can call and investigate the number of persons in his house.

Mr Wright: At any time? At 6.30?

Mr WHARTON: Reasonable time. The Leader of the Opposition is talking about 6.30.

Mr Wright: That is reasonable, is it?

Mr WHARTON: I am not saying that.

Mr Wright: Do you condone that action?

Mr WHARTON: It is very reasonable to ask the Opposition to substantiate its allegations by producing the evidence.

Mr Wright: I will put it the other way. Do you oppose it?

Mr WHARTON: I oppose something that is fictitious.

Mr Mackenroth: What time do they start in the morning? What time do they go to someone's place in the morning?

Mr WHARTON: The member for Chatsworth would know. He should state it.

Mr Mackenroth: Nominate a time.

Mr WHARTON: I do not have to. The tenants have signed a tenancy agreement under which they accept that an officer from the commission may visit to see whether people are there. Officers are able to check on the number of people there. The commission is not concerned about those who come at odd times. However, when people are there for lengthy periods, I am sure that even the Leader of the Opposition would agree that that is not desirable. That is why inspections are necessary.

Extended Trading Hours for Motor Vehicle Retailers

Mr. WARBURTON: In directing a question to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, I refer him to the proposal to allow motor vehicle retailers to extend their trading hours to Saturday afternoons and the reasons he expressed publicly for the Cabinet decision. So that we can get the record straight, I ask: Is it not a fact that he, as a Minister, has failed to clean up backyard dealers, who are the main cause of most problems in the industry? Is it not a fact also that, once again, he is misleading the public of Queensland in saying that he has evidence of a widespread call for the extended hours, bearing in mind that his views are completely contrary to the recent survey carried out by motor retailers? Most importantly, I would like the Minister to answer my third point: In view of that complete contradiction, will he table his documentary evidence that Queenslanders want six-day trading for motor vehicle retailers?

Mr LESTER: I make it very clear that the decision has been made in the public interest of all Queenslanders. My phone has not stopped ringing with congratulatory calls since the announcement was made. I suggest that the member for Sandgate read the editorial in today's "Daily Sun", which complimented me as a Minister for taking the bit between my

teeth and making a decision in the interests of all Queenslanders. A motor car is the second most important family purchase. Previously, a person has not had the opportunity to take time with his family to make that very important decision. We, as a National Party Government, will stand up for the rights of Queenslanders and give them access, wherever we can, to a better deal all round.

Extended Trading Hours for Motor Vehicle Retailers

Mr **WARBURTON**: In directing a second question to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, I refer to his announcement that legislation will be introduced in Queensland to allow motor vehicle retailers to trade on Saturday afternoons. He should be aware that the responsibility for trading hours in Queensland rests firmly with the State Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. I ask: Is he now saying that he intends to meddle with the industrial Acts of this State, or does he propose some other form of legislation that will take decisions on trading hours out of the jurisdiction of the arbitration system?

Mr **LESTER**: What the Government is doing is in the public interest. Since the motor industry's association did not make the submission, in the interests of the public of Queensland the Government will do it for them. Furthermore, the Government will receive enormous backing for the move it has made to assist Queensland families to have better opportunities to purchase a motor vehicle.

Visitors to Queensland Housing Commission Accommodation

Mr **MACKENROTH**: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Will he define whom the Queensland Housing Commission classifies as an occupant of a Housing Commission home for the purposes of assessing rent?

Mr **WHARTON**: A Housing Commission tenant is one who has been accepted by the commission on the basis of income and need. As the honourable member will appreciate, Queensland looks after needy people and not those without need. It is a matter of need; that is how the classification is made.

Mr **Mackenroth**: How long does someone have to stay in a house before he is classified as an occupant? How long has a visitor to stay in a house before he is classified as an occupant?

Mr **SPEAKER**: Order! The honourable member has asked a question. Would the Minister like it asked again?

Mr **WHARTON**: That will be his second question.

Mr **Mackenroth**: You are not getting me that way.

Mr **SPEAKER**: Order!

Mr **WHARTON**: I will answer the question now. The moment a person becomes a tenant, he is a tenant of the Housing Commission.

Visitors to Queensland Housing Commission Accommodation

Mr **MACKENROTH**: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Will he instruct the Queensland Housing Commission to draw up a clear and definite policy outlining—

- (1) When tenants are entitled to have overnight visitors;
- (2) When visitors will be classified as occupants for the purposes of assessing rent—

A Government Member interjected.

Mr **MACKENROTH**: If the Minister cannot answer the question without interruption, he has no chance with interjections from his own back bench.

Mr **SPEAKER**: Order! The honourable member will ask his question directly of the Minister.

Mr MACKENROTH: My question concludes—

(3) At what time in the morning are inspectors allowed to arrive at tenants' homes?

Mr WHARTON: The honourable member knows that the tenancy agreement, which the tenant signs, provides a clear definition. I know that the honourable member does not understand the tenancy agreement. A person who resides in a Housing Commission house signs the tenancy agreement, which provides that the handful of officers can make inspections when other people complain. I have already explained that in my ministerial statement. I do not have to spell out anything; it is all contained in the tenancy agreement and is understood by the tenant, who is the one most concerned. If the Housing Commission tenant knows, who else needs to know?

Visitors to Queensland Housing Commission Accommodation

Mr De LACY: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: On what grounds would a Housing Commission inspector call at a home at 6.30 a.m.? If the grounds are based on unsourced information, what checks are made to substantiate the information?

Mr WHARTON: I answered the question a few moments ago.

An Opposition Member: Not that one!

Mr WHARTON: I did answer the question a few moments ago. If honourable members of the Opposition want to deal in fiction, that is OK, but I am here to give the facts, which were contained in the ministerial statement that I delivered this morning. They are the facts and I am sorry if Opposition members do not understand them.

Mr Wright: Why don't you say you don't know?

Mr WHARTON: They are the words of the honourable member.

Racing Development Fund

Mr VEIVERS: In directing a question to the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing, I refer to efforts being made by him to obtain support for his actions in relation to the Racing Development Fund. I preface my question by drawing attention to the fact that, at the National Party Central Council meeting in Mackay on Saturday, delegates said that the benefits of improvements to the racing industry outweighed any possible question of financial overextension. Apparently, the end can now justify the means, and that is National Party policy. In a "Telegraph" report of 10 January this year, the Minister was quoted as saying that he was prepared to table in Parliament all information concerning the fund and to answer questions relating to the matter. I therefore ask: Will he table all relevant documents in Parliament tomorrow to honour his public undertaking? Will he also table the Racing Development Fund report prepared by the Under Treasurer (Mr Hielscher), which was given to the Minister and handed to the Premier and Treasurer on Monday, 12 March this year?

Mr HINZE: I have known the member for Ashgrove for a long time. I know his father, old Bob Veivers, a good old farmer, who worked like a horse to keep this bloke alive. I cannot recall anybody being able to convince me that the member for Ashgrove has ever worked in his life. I do not think that he would work in an iron lung, but he is here now—

An Opposition Member: He's getting paid for doing it, though.

Mr HINZE: If the honourable member waits a moment, I will tell him a bit more about the honourable member for Ashgrove. The honourable member played cricket, although he was not much of a cricketer.

Mr Wright: He's got you on this one, has he?

Mr HINZE: He has got me really scared, yes.

Mr Warburton: Are you going to table the document?

Mr HINZE: Of course I am going to table the document. If the honourable member has sufficient intelligence, he will be able to debate it in the House; but I doubt whether he has sufficient intelligence to do that.

Mr Prest: He plays with a straight bat, though, Russ.

Mr HINZE: By accident.

The member for Ashgrove seems to be determined to try to find something wrong with the racing industry and with the Racing Development Fund. I do not know of any body that is in a stronger position than the Racing Development Fund. I say that now, and I have said it previously. I have said it on every occasion on which I have had an opportunity to answer the ridiculous criticisms made by some stupid news-gatherers, and I refer particularly to Quentin Dempster and that other little bloke—

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr HINZE: He is one of the Opposition's mob, anyhow. He is so pink that he was given a job with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to get rid of him. He has gone to "Nationwide", of all places. We were all given an invitation to his send-off. That's a joke! He said it about himself. I said, "Have you ever seen the shape of his head? It's like that. If it had a brain in it, it would have to be on its own."

To get back to the Racing Development Fund—as honourable members can hear, I am having a bit of a picnic. I expected a question from the member for Ashgrove, because he seems not to be able to ask questions or talk about anything other than the Racing Development Fund.

In this session, I intend to bring forward amendments to the Racing and Betting Act, and members will then be able to discuss the fund for as long as they wish. Of course, I will table all of the documents in relation to—

Mr Wright: Will you table Hielscher's report?

Mr HINZE: At my convenience, I will table everything relating to the Racing Development Fund.

Mr Wright: Do it tomorrow.

Mr HINZE: I have not to do anything tomorrow just to satisfy you mugs; you know that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Wright: You have been found out. You are caught on this one.

Mr HINZE: Well, my friend—

Mr Wright: Well, do it tomorrow.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HINZE: The Leader of the Opposition should be the last one to talk about being found out. He should shut up.

Mr Wright: Do it tomorrow.

Mr HINZE: I suggest that the honourable member shut up.

Mr Wright: Do it tomorrow.

Mr HINZE: The honourable member should shut up.

An Opposition Member: You are being rattled.

Mr HINZE: I can rattle the members of the Opposition. I have been here long enough to give them a bit of a stitch-up.

I will answer all questions relating to the Racing Development Fund, because I am proud of the fund. I am getting the support of the party, as the honourable members can see, because the party is proud of the racing industry in this State. If honourable members opposite want to compare the racing industry in Queensland with the racing industry in some of the other States, particularly in the State of Victoria,

which is governed by the ALP, I would point out that Mr Trezise attends my meetings and says, "Gee, I would like to be able to do the same thing in Victoria as you are doing in Queensland." If the honourable member for Ashgrove were to make comparisons between the racing industries in New South Wales and South Australia and that of Queensland, he would realise that those States are in the same position as Victoria.

Mr Viewers interjected.

Mr HINZE: The honourable member does not know. He is a political babe in the woods. I can only say to him that he will have an opportunity to debate the Racing Development Fund.

Mr Viewers interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I did not hear a word that the honourable member for Ashgrove said. Will he please repeat his comments?

Mr Veivers: I am looking forward to the tabling of the documents.

Visitors to Queensland Housing Commission Accommodation; Assessed Rent Arrears

Mr VEIVERS: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Does he agree with the policy of the Queensland Housing Commission under which tenants are issued with rent-arrears bills of up to \$1500 based on unsourced information being supplied to the commission?

Mr WHARTON: If the honourable member for Ashgrove asks a hypothetical question he can expect a hypothetical answer. As I said in a statement this morning—I am sure the honourable member did not hear it—

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr WHARTON: The honourable member heard the statement, but he was not listening.

I said this morning that the Government was not concerned about casual visitors, or instances of people coming and going casually. However, when people stay in a unit that is being rented by a person who is on a special allowance from the Federal Government, and a child allowance as well—I am talking about a special unit with rental down to \$21 a week—the Government is concerned, not so much about the tenant as about complaints made by other tenants. Tenants complain because of noise and other disturbances created by other tenants. The commission has a long waiting-list for the special units costing \$21 a week. If a tenant abuses the privilege by having someone stay in the unit for over a year, or, in some instances, for over two years, why is it not correct to charge an accommodation fee for that person who is spending so much time in the unit? That is done in the interests of other tenants and in the interests of those on the waiting-list.

English as Compulsory TE Score Subject

Mr LINGARD: I refer the Minister for Education to recent reports suggesting that English should be regarded as a compulsory subject for the compilation of the TE score. I now ask: Because university courses such as medicine require a TE score of 985 or 990, will he request a report from the Board of Secondary School Studies on the effect on migrant students, who might attain excellent verbal and written skills in English but find it impossible to gain a mark in English that will place their TE score in the 990 rating?

Mr POWELL: I have asked the Board of Secondary School Studies to give me first an assessment of why English is not a compulsory segment of the TE score, and the reasons for that. I have asked also for the computer print-out that shows the number of students in the different bands who use English as one of the subjects on which their TE score is based.

I understand the honourable member's reservation about English becoming a compulsory subject, especially for people who are migrants to this country or who have not been born into an English-speaking family. That problem is being examined.

Criticism has been levelled at me for daring to suggest that a change might occur in the TE score in this regard. That criticism has come from people skilled in a form of science. They obviously do not believe that expression of language is a science, but I believe that it is.

Although some students may be scoring 990 without English, other students may score 990 with English. Not every student will be disadvantaged. If English becomes a compulsory subject, some students will not score 990, but others will come up the scale.

The suggestion needs to be considered very seriously. Everyday life exemplifies the need for English communication skills, and I believe that students undertaking tertiary courses should be put in the same bracket.

Malaria Outbreak at Saibai Island

Mr LINGARD: The Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs has just completed an extensive tour of the Aboriginal and Islander settlements in Queensland. In directing a question to him, I refer to an outbreak of malaria on Saibai Island. I ask: What action has he taken to ensure that the outbreak is contained?

Mr KATTER: To answer the honourable member's question, I would like to read from a memorandum directed to me.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr KATTER: I remind the Opposition that this is a very serious matter. The memorandum says—

“Verbal advice has been received of the identification of a positive case of malaria at Saibai Island and the patient is now in the Thursday Island Hospital responding to treatment.

A medical team has gone forward to Saibai and blood testing of the entire population is proceeding. A number of positive blood smears has resulted and preventative measures have consequently been introduced.

As a result, it is not expected that further serious cases will present, however, this is an event which could materialise.

I have requested the Medical Officer Health to carry out reconnaissance checks at Dauan which is an adjacent Island with significant local contact and as well Boigu whose people have an interaction with the mainland of PNG.

Continuing close liaison and support have been given to the medical team at Saibai, two Nursing Sisters from Badu having been assigned there for temporary duty for the next two weeks.”

I must pay tribute to these very hard-working ladies who travel great distances into very adverse and hard environments to do their work. If it was not for their efforts, many people would suffer pain without relief and death without hope.

Wearing of School Hats

Mr BAILEY: In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer him to the fact that no children in my electorate, apart from students at BBC, wear hats to school. That is occurring even though there is an increasing incidence of skin cancer and it is acknowledged that the sun is very intense and severe in this part of Australia. Because parents and teachers will not encourage children to wear hats, I ask the Minister: Is it possible to make the wearing of hats to and from school compulsory? Is it possible for teachers to ensure that students wear hats in the playground?

Mr POWELL: In association with the Queensland Cancer Fund, the Education Department is doing all that it possibly can to encourage the wearing of hats by children at school when they are out in the sun. It is a strange phenomenon indeed that non-Government schools seem to have no trouble in getting all their students to wear a uniform, of which at one particular school, as the honourable member suggested, part is a hat, whereas at Government schools a good deal of trouble is experienced in trying to get children to wear uniforms. Every so often I receive a smattering of letters of complaint because children are required to wear uniforms.

I do not think any honourable member would rubbish the idea of wearing hats. My department is doing everything it can to make the wearing of hats the in thing. It is important to point out that peer pressure plays a very big part in what goes on inside a school. If it is the in thing for students to wear hats, they will wear them.

I hope that honourable members, when they visit schools, will set an example. I know that my ministerial colleagues the honourable member for Flinders and the honourable member for Peak Downs are both well known for wearing hats when they go out in the sun. I hope that the honourable member who asked the question will wear a hat when he visits schools in his electorate. An example needs to be set.

David Hartley Computer Australia Pty Ltd

Mr BAILEY: I ask the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology: Has his attention been drawn to a company known as David Hartley Computer Australia Pty Ltd at Toowong? If so, can he advise the House whether the company is able to expand its operations in Queensland and contribute to the expansion of high-technology industry in the State?

Mr AHERN: Naturally, my attention has been drawn to this company, which is a very impressive one and a pioneer in Australia in the production of computer hardware. When its entrepreneur, Mr Hartley, decided to establish the company, he was described in a certain American magazine as a megalomaniac for daring to try to establish a computer hardware manufacturing operation in Australia. Today, he employs 156 people. He is a very large employer in the city of Brisbane. He does his own research, development and design. As well, he manufactures computers and the software programs to go with them. His operation is a big and truly impressive one. It is a great Australian success story.

It is interesting to note that, in these days of high technology and the employment capacity that it creates within our economy, Mr Hartley has received from an overseas country that is very keen to establish a high-technology industry an invitation to establish an industry in that country. All transfer costs will be met by that country. He has been invited to pay no taxation until the year 2000, and he has been offered a factory rent free until the year 2000. The total costs associated with a transfer, including air fares, would be met by the country that wishes to import his operation.

Fortunately for Queensland, Mr Hartley will not be leaving this State. Indeed, I have invited him to become a member of Queensland's inaugural Science and Technology Advisory Council, as a member of which he would be able to advise other Queensland industries on how he was able to be successful. That would enable Queensland as a whole to become successful in this very high-technology and high-employment-creation field in the future.

Right of School Students to Proceed to Tertiary Education

Mr HAMILL: I ask the Minister for Education: Is the Government committed to giving every Queensland child the right to participate in an education system that may provide him or her with the option of tertiary education at university or CAE level?

Mr POWELL: This question is one in which the honourable member is proposing that I answer either, "Yes" or, "No" There is no yes or no answer to the question.

Mr Fouras: Why not?

Mr POWELL: If the honourable member sits and listens for a while, he will find out.

The simple answer to the question is that the Queensland Government wishes to ensure that each student reaches the maximum of his or her potential. Not every student wants to proceed to tertiary education.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr POWELL: Not everyone wants to receive a tertiary education. There are those, of course, who do not have the ability to go to tertiary education. It would be very, very foolish of the Government or the education system to try to force to a tertiary institution

children who have no ability or who have no need to go to such an institution. Encouragement is given to as many students as possible who have the ability and the will to undertake tertiary education. The secondary school system must have flexibility to allow students to find something worth while to do. In 1970, the Radford report was implemented. It did away with the old university imposition on education. A system of school assessment was implemented. It is the Government's aim to encourage students with ability to attend tertiary institutions. At the same time, a breadth of subject-matter must be available so that students can find something worth while to do while undergoing formal education.

Registration of Schools and Tutorial Services

Mr HAMILL: I ask the Minister for Education: Will he move to register all schools and tutorial services to ensure that the standard of education recognised in State and State-assisted independent schools is universally adhered to in all primary and secondary education in Queensland? If not, why not?

Mr POWELL: The registration of a school does not necessarily mean that the standard of education that takes place in that school will be acceptable. An acceptable way of auditing the schools must be found to make sure that the quality of education is what the parents of the children who attend that school believe is acceptable. As I have said a number of times publicly, the Government is currently examining a system. At the moment I am trying to have a paper drawn up so that my ideas are known. The system that is used in Canada and the system that is used in other States of Australia would probably be melded into that system. What currently happens in Queensland is no different from what happens in the other States.

If a non-Government school requires funding, it makes a request to the State Government. The school is inspected. Provided that it meets certain criteria, approval is given. The word "approval" is used rather than "registration" That happens in all States of Australia. If approval is granted, the school operates with Government funding. No further audit is made of those particular schools. Government schools are inspected annually. It is my proposition that an audit or inspection should be conducted annually at all schools and that parents should know what is going on inside those schools. Currently I am working on a paper, which I hope to present to this Assembly after the winter recess, to give the honourable member an idea of the track along which the Government is going.

Lower Burdekin Irrigation Area

Mr STONEMAN: I ask the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services: Following his discussions with Senator Walsh last week, can the Minister advise the Parliament of the current situation regarding the development of the Lower Burdekin Irrigation Area?

Mr GOLEBY: I did have meaningful discussions with my counterpart in Canberra, Senator Walsh, regarding the funding for the Burdekin Dam. This week I corresponded with Senator Walsh on the agreement between the two Governments. I hope that agreement will be reached on certain matters. In the next few days I hope to be in a position to announce additional funding for bitumen sealing of various roads leading to the dam and for other State works there. The only matter outstanding relates to the areas of retention farms. We discussed that thoroughly and, I hope, will arrive at a satisfactory conclusion within a very short time.

Mr MILLER: Mr Speaker, because of the time factor, I will put one question on notice for the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Brisbane Central.

Mr MILLER: I rise to a point of order.

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

Mr MILLER: I rise to a point of order. We have been given a list by the Government Whip informing us when we should ask questions. My name is next on the list.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I determine who will ask the next question. That is exactly what I have done. I have a similar list.

The time allotted for questions has now expired.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 29 March (see p. 2272) on Mr Glasson's motion—

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

Mr SIMPSON (Cooroora) (12.26 p.m.): This legislation lies at the very heart of our livelihood and philosophy. Other countries have a different system of land tenure. In some, the land is owned by the State, but those countries cannot even feed themselves. We in Queensland jealously guard the right to own land and to prudently work it so that we may be productive and feed ourselves as well as other people.

There continues to be a need to improve our legislation, and that is what is being done through these amendments. Settlement farm leases, grazing farm leases, grazing homestead leases and grazing homestead perpetual leases will have a common form. That is the basis on which they have been treated and it is the Government's wish to formalise that arrangement. A number of machinery issues as well are dealt with in the Bill.

It is interesting to examine the progress that has been made in freeholding land in Queensland. In the term of the coalition and the National Party Government, the area freeholded in Queensland has more than doubled. In Labor's day the area under freehold was 11.2 per cent. The latest official figure I have is that the figure had more than doubled to 22.5 per cent. In that year, 1981, 10.4 per cent of New South Wales was under freehold, only 3 per cent of Victoria, 12 per cent of South Australia and 32.9 per cent of Western Australia.

It has not always been easy for Queensland. When it separated from New South Wales it ran into great strife financing itself. A financial crisis occurred in 1866. The banks lending finance for ventures felt the effects of a depression and could not honour their commitments. That in turn led to the failure of the first Queensland bank, with disastrous effects on the early settlement of this State.

I raise these questions on the basis that, when any venture to use the State's resources is commenced, there is a need for finance. The whole reason for development is to bring together the resources of the State to form a productive unit for the future. In the early days of Queensland, overseas funds were used for development. Lack of performance of an investment can lead to trouble for investors.

Queensland is still developing and is a long way from reaching its full potential. Mining is an example of a resource industry that was never developed in the days of Labor Governments but has been recognised by this Government. Developments of that sort have contributed to the higher standard of living and welfare not only of Queenslanders with many years of residence but also of those who have recently moved to Queensland. Those people are welcome because they are another form of resource that will help in the development of the State.

Further development requires funds from both Queensland and overseas. In the early days funds came from overseas. That is a prime example of the dependence of Queensland on people from other places to provide finance, other resources and expertise for the development of Queensland.

Mr Davis: For many years we were under bondage to the British land-owners.

Mr SIMPSON: Had it not been for the investment that came from the country of those people who formed the major part of the population at that time, this nation would not have had railways.

Mr Davis: We were under the thumb of the British capitalists for many, many years.

Mr SIMPSON: Yes, and they were buying our gold and wool.

That recession was ended by the breaking of the drought and the discovery of gold in Gympie. The discovery of gold had an important influence on the progress of this State. It increased the amount of finance available and caused an influx of people who were needed for the development of Queensland and, in fact, the whole of Australia.

Mr Davis: Do you support absentee landlords—yes or no?

Mr SIMPSON: When they contribute something towards production that cannot be contributed in any other way, I do. That is what I have been trying to tell the honourable member, but he does not realise that the State would have been developed at a very slow rate—which is what happens when the Labor Party is in power—had it not been for the risk capital invested in Queensland before federation.

The Labor Party, had it been in power in the very early days, would have put two people in Queensland and expected them to produce railways out of the bush. The Labor Party has no idea of development or productivity. The socialists in the Labor Party suffer from tunnel vision and would not have had the ability, vision and inspiration needed to make this country what it is today. Members of the Labor Party look down into the gutter, are tunnel visioned and have no idea of how to use the State's resources. The Labor Party does not seek to help people to be productive. Rather, it tells them, "Do not get out of line or show initiative, or you will show me up because I am dumb." That is the basis of the thinking of many socialists.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr SIMPSON: The honourable member should go to see his comrades in Russia where primary producers are given no incentive. That country cannot feed its own population, whereas this country and many others that believe in free enterprise and the incentive to produce do feed their own population as well as people in many other countries. That incentive has been responsible for sustaining a very much higher population than would have been the case under the socialists.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The member for Cairns is interjecting from other than his usual place. If he wishes to interject, he should return to his usual seat.

Mr SIMPSON: It is apparent that security of land tenure is the basis of productivity in any country. The move that this Government is making to reward people for their endeavours by giving them security of freehold title is in keeping with this Government's support for the productive people of this State. I commend the Minister for introducing these amendments, which will reward those people.

Mr KRUGER (Murrumba) (12.36 p.m.): I want to refer to some of the amendments that have been made to this Act over recent years. Of course, a number of the provisions in the Bill are machinery amendments, but I want to deal with a number of other problems that have already been dealt with by my colleagues.

The last major amendments to the Act were made in 1981. On that occasion I was very pleased to be able to open the debate for the Opposition. I raised what I believed were some very pertinent questions. Some of the answers have been very successful, whilst others have been less successful.

The big success story of the 1981 legislation related to some of the major land-holders in this State. I said at the time that the legislation had been introduced to assist the major land-holders and, in many cases, to assist National Party members and those people who are generally recognised as supporters of this Government. The legislation was framed in such a way that it could be argued that the Government had done the right and proper thing. However, it was certainly contrary to the policies and philosophies of the Labor Party. I believe that some notice has been taken of the points made by the Opposition in the 1981 debate.

The major provision of the 1981 legislation allowed great opportunity for the freeholding of leasehold land. Since then, an enormous amount of freeholding has taken place. I will refer to that later when I quote from the answer given by the Minister shortly after the Act was amended.

The Opposition is worried about the land deals that have occurred over the years, particularly those related to company take-overs. "Hansard" will indicate that the present Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs has made several references to the problems of company take-overs in his area. Some of the worst offences were committed in the area round Hughenden, and most of them related to companies involved in the beef industry. Such take-overs make it possible for companies involved in the beef industry not only to assist themselves but also to use the take-over as a trade-off for other favours.

Opposition members are worried about the aggregation of blocks and believe that the problem will get worse. The usual response by Government members to Opposition criticism about the aggregation of blocks is that the Foreign Investment Review Board will overcome the problem. Unfortunately, the board looks only at transactions over a certain value, and this gives the land-holder the opportunity to aggregate a number of blocks each valued at less than the specified amount.

Absentee ownership is another major problem about which I am very concerned. Overseas companies can invest money in Australian properties, often through Australian subsidiaries, although they have no real interest in Australia, or role to play in Australia. The companies get a rake-off by taking money out of Australia without making any great input into Australia. That amounts to lending money to the larger companies, and the matter should be investigated.

It is apparent, Mr Deputy Speaker, that you are wondering how my comments are relevant to the Land Act. They are very relevant because of the areas taken over. The Land Act should be drafted so that that cannot be done.

That brings me to the registration of foreign ownership of land. Over the years, this matter has been discussed at length. The majority of the members of the Queensland Government agreed that a register of foreign ownership should be set up. That was not done because the Premier said that he did not want a register of foreign ownership of land. He said that it was good to have people from overseas investing in Queensland. It is unfortunate that the decision on the register of foreign ownership of land was made by one man.

When the matter was last discussed in depth in Queensland, the then Minister for Lands was reasonably keen about taking some action. Some people objected to the idea because they thought that Labor would kick foreigners out of the country. Under the Government's policy that will not happen; but under Labor's policy foreigners may be prevented from coming here to buy land.

If a register was formulated, one could determine who owned what land, and where. That would be a great advantage. Establishing the register would not be difficult or costly. An application form for change of ownership would simply spell out where people came from. The details could be registered easily, without any hassle. It could not be claimed truthfully that the register would be too costly to prepare.

I will deal now with the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme. The funds available for the scheme are insufficient and it has helped very few young people. Generally, those who have been helped have been sons of graziers or young people with reasonable means. To benefit under the scheme, applicants have to prove that they have reasonable means and that they have exhausted other avenues of getting money to complete land purchases. Some blocks of land are still either too big or too small. If the scheme is to work funds must be available to enlarge its scope. Labor Party policy has always been aimed at getting young people on to the land.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr KRUGER: Some of the unemployed people in the city would never make graziers or farmers; but others would like a chance to go onto the land. It is up to the Government, by way of this scheme, to assist more people. Perhaps the Minister can tell us how many people have gone on to the land under the scheme, what were the values of the property involved, and so on.

Mr Davis: I think there have been exactly four.

Mr KRUGER: The Minister can tell us whether or not the statement by the member for Brisbane Central is correct.

So far, the scheme has not helped many young people to get back on to the land. The large number of take-overs that I was talking about earlier has prevented the scheme from working properly. Companies often take up land that is very suitable for settlement by young people. The aggregation of blocks also prevents young people going on to the land in a small way. Later, through the legitimate amalgamation of blocks, they could increase their acreage as they increase their know-how.

I come now to what the Cattlemen's Youth Union had to say about this scheme. I cited certain statements when I made a speech on this matter some time ago. I will now read what appeared in "Hansard", under the heading "Beefmen seek land ballots" The quotations are in these terms—

"The Cattlemen's Youth Union convention in Mackay yesterday carried a motion urging the re-introduction of land ballots as current leases expire.

Delegates said there were a number of large grazing properties, particularly in north Queensland, which if sub-divided when leases expired, could offer more land for young cattlemen

The convention noted that funds available under the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme, formulated this year, were generally insufficient to meet the cost of land purchase and establishment.

Delegates said the reintroduction of land ballots would be a valuable adjunct to finance available through the scheme.

The Cattlemen's Youth Union convention yesterday condemned absentee ownership of grazing properties."

A large number of young National Party members and young graziers attended that convention. Their concerns can be found in long-standing Labor Party policy. That policy suits the man on the land, particularly young farmers who have witnessed the results of National Party Government in Queensland.

In that same speech, I quoted from a media release by the Minister for Lands which said—

"The Lands Department is to write to more than 11,000 Crown lessees advising them of their rights under amendments to the Land Act passed by State Parliament this week.

The Lands Minister and Member for Gregory, Mr Bill Glasson, said today that under the amendments, lessees of auction perpetual leases and perpetual lease selections would no longer be subject to re-assessments of rent.

These leases had been placed on a final 'monetary' rental period beginning January 1, 1981, with rents based on capital values for the current rental period."

When that amending Bill was introduced, the Minister said that the amendments would affect 5 400 auction perpetual leases and 5 600 perpetual lease selections, which was a total of 11 000 properties. An enormous number of properties were involved in that scheme and a large number will be involved with the changes to the types of leases that this Bill creates. As the Minister said in his second-reading speech, he does not want anybody to lose out on a scheme in which he is already involved.

I have always been concerned about the amount of freeholding that is taking place. When I asked a question of the Minister about that some time ago, he said—

"The records available show that, between 1 July 1981 and 30 June 1982, 4 864 auction perpetual leases and perpetual lease selections with a total area of about 470 000 hectares were freeholded. The greater percentage of these leases would have been freeholded under the 1981 legislation."

The Minister said also that he had no knowledge of transactions in land after the issue of the deed. People on large properties actually had an advantage at that time, and their rights were pointed out to them by the Minister. Unfortunately, nobody else in Queensland in any other circumstances has been advised in the same way. They were given the green light and the Government made sure that they did not miss anything. If the 1981 legislation had not benefited those people, it would not have been introduced. The Minister set out to fulfil his party's policies and went to no end of trouble to advise the people of the advantages available to them. The statements that I made at the time backed his actions.

As my colleague the honourable member for Bundaberg pointed out last Thursday, certain land values were frozen at the 1981 valuations and the value of some rural properties that were not revalued on a 10-year valuation basis remained at the figure fixed in 1972. Certainly, the land-holders in the latter category were very lucky.

A land use study is needed if Queensland is to make maximum use of its rural sector. That study is long overdue. In some areas the same production could be achieved from half the area of land that is currently used. Many parts of the State are overstocked and others are understocked. In a good season, a property can carry the additional stock; in a bad season, it cannot. That is one reason why so much of Queensland is becoming a desert. Leasing arrangements give the best control over the land; but all control is lost when land is freeholded.

If the Government had listened to the calls that were made to implement soil conservation measures and if it had listened to the complaints that had been received, it would have seen the sense in retaining large suitable areas of land as leasehold. Until a land use study is undertaken the Government will not know in which way it is heading.

I am deeply concerned about Government interference in the Lands Department. A short time ago, during a tour that I made of western Queensland, I spoke with many officers in the Lands Department who expressed concern. I hasten to add that I do not include the Minister in the category of Ministers to whom I am about to refer. Over many years, he and I have spoken together on land matters and we seem to understand each other fairly well.

Departmental officers have complained bitterly to me that on many occasions after they have carried out valuations for lease arrangements certain Ministers have interfered and suggested that the minimum rental of \$30 a year, or whatever the figure is, ought to be the rental that is paid. I have spoken to the Minister about this matter, and he has told me that if I could provide him with concrete evidence, he would check the matter. Unfortunately, it is hard to provide him with concrete evidence without dobbing in certain officers within his department. That is not my way of doing things. Certainly the situation needs to be watched closely, and I am sure that the Minister will keep a close watch on it.

The Government should not interfere in the valuations that are arrived at. The valuers are quite capable of arriving at a correct assessment for rental purposes, and the rentals they arrive at ought to be the rentals charged. Interference by certain Ministers should not occur. Therefore, I ask this Minister to try to stamp it out.

I turn now to a matter that I have mentioned on previous occasions and one that backs up my contention that problems arise in land matters. On earlier occasions I asked questions concerning the Premier's land dealings. Those questions appear in "Hansard", and it is worth repeating the general tenor of those questions, because it is relevant to this debate.

On one occasion I asked about the visit of the Japanese Finance Minister, Mr Watanabe, to Queensland and to the Premier's property. I also asked about the purchase by Mr Watanabe of land that previously was owned by the Premier's son. In answer, the Premier denied that any property owned by his son had been sold to any citizen of Japan.

I checked on the matter and referred to it again in a later speech. In fairness to the Premier I must say that, although the names of the foreign people concerned are Japanese names, the people may have come from somewhere else, such as Hawaii.

I mention this matter only to point out that for as long as the Premier is pleased to accept foreign ownership of land without compiling a register of foreign ownership, problems will arise in land dealings. Because I canvassed that matter to a great extent whilst I was shadow Minister for Lands and Forestry, I shall not go into it to any great depth on this occasion. I simply want to keep the people of Queensland aware of the problems that will arise.

One major problem that may not be directly connected with the Bill is residential and resort development. It is tied in with the Bill to some extent because certain resort development has occurred on areas of Crown land. The Iwasaki development has given rise to concern. I shall not go overboard on the subject, but it does highlight the need for a register of foreign ownership of land.

I am concerned that foreigners engage in a resort-type development merely for the purpose of sponsoring the take-over of rural properties. That is what will happen and, in fact, has happened already in certain areas. Foreign ownership of land must not be allowed to get out of hand. It is quite simple for foreign owners to offset losses incurred by their resort developments by selling cattle when prices are high. I am quite sure that that is a way in which foreign owners will operate in Queensland.

I turn now to another problem that arises, namely, the inundation of properties that follows the construction of dams. A shemozzle is taking place in the Barkers Creek area. The Government will submerge a considerable area of good land to make farming areas available to purchasers.

That area already has plenty of water. However, from discussions I have had in the area, it seems that the Premier is very keen to have a dam built in that area. Because of the large deposits of limestone and the limestone caves in that area, the project will not be a success. Water will run down through the holes; it will not be held as it should be. The major problem is that good properties will be inundated to make water available to farmers in the Barambah Creek area. I understand that a number of influential people in that area want that to happen and that is why the Premier is involved in doing it that way. The Premier's interference in bank loans and land deals in that electorate is well known.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The honourable member has imputed improper motives to the Premier. As that is contrary to Standing Orders, I ask him to withdraw his statements.

Mr KRUGER: That is unfortunate. I am trying to be reasonably kind. I am tying my remarks in with the land deals and the inundation of the area. Mr Deputy Speaker, if you insist—you are entitled to do that and I am not trying to back away from your ruling—I will bow to your ruling on that matter and withdraw the imputation.

Land tenure and land valuation are great problems in this State. Many people are no longer able to purchase properties. I return to the matter of foreign ownership. Because foreigners are able to obtain lower interest rates, they are able to buy land which most Australians cannot afford. Their activities have forced property prices to increase. Valuations, which are made on a regular basis, show that land prices are increasing. That is happening except where people have been able to freehold under the scheme to which I referred earlier.

Until an examination is made of land dealings in this State, a return should be made to good, solid lease arrangements. Later the Minister will say that most of this State is subject to leasehold agreements. Although in terms of hectares that is correct, it is not correct in terms of production. A sensible situation will not exist while properties are valued in the present way. The National Party policy is designed to benefit a greedy few, including big companies and National Party supporters. The Government is giving them every opportunity to advance themselves. It is time that the people of this State were again given some say in the handling of land, so that it is available when our children want it. They should not be kept off it. It is incumbent on the Government to get young people back onto the land by whatever method it can use. The Young Farmer Establishment Scheme is not working. It should be more effective so that more people can be encouraged to return to the land. If that is done, the State of Queensland will again rely heavily on primary producers.

[Sitting suspended from 12.59 to 2.15 p.m.]

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (2.15 p.m.): In technical terms, the Bill has much to commend it. It does remove some illogical distinctions based upon the types of tenancy available. Generally, it is a Bill for the technicians. It clears up points which needed some tidying up. This afternoon I will not devote a great deal of my time criticising the mechanical nature and operation of the Bill.

The second reading allows members to refer to matters which relate to the area covered by the Land Act, and to take a point of view. In his second-reading speech, the Minister quoted Bernays's comments—

“A session without a Land Bill is as welcome as an oasis in the desert.”

Bernays went on to say that very few people understand the Land Act and the frequent changes to it. Despite their technicality, many of the changes are prompted by some real interest base. The history of the development of land tenures in Queensland reflects one of the most basic human drives, that is, to own and utilise land.

The Minister's second-reading speech contains reference to the traditions of the squatter. I suggest to the Minister that, working on the basis of the squatter and his successor, he might not be occupying the Government benches today. The Land Act has reflected a battle between the person who could historically be described more accurately as the squatter and the person who sought to break down the type of run to which the squatter became accustomed. I refer to the smaller farmer and the smaller grazier—the cocky. The Act has reflected the change from the vast, open runs and initial early grants and, through the operation of a system of leasehold, the constant breaking down of those large runs for a social purpose. That social purpose was predominantly related to the living area for a man and his family. Indeed, if it had been left to the squatters, the broad view was of vast, open spaces. Consequently, there was not much room for other people.

In the nineteenth century, much of the politics and the changes to the land laws revolved round the battle between those who wanted to get onto the land and those very lucky early beneficiaries of major grants of property. Certainly, a great deal of hardship ensued for who ever took on the opening of land in this nation. Nobody suggests that land in this State was not opened up without a great deal of blood, sweat and tears—and risk. The history of the decentralisation of Queensland and the reason so many people are involved in primary industry hinge on the operation of a social policy through the vehicle of the Land Act and, from time to time, other related moves. As the very large aggregations were developed and became capable of supporting more people, usually because they could run more sheep or cattle, they were split up to give other people access to the land.

Other socially based exercises are to be found in Australian history. Some followed war and the desire to benefit the returned serviceman by giving him areas of land. Some, of course, were disastrous. The areas were not sufficiently fertile and the area of land granted was not sufficient. Really, however, when we are considering the Land Act, we are not looking at the spirit of the squatter, but rather at the spirit of the little man who demanded the right to be given land.

Because the Crown was the residual owner, it was possible to fit that into a free enterprise and developmental system, and there was nothing wrong in the Crown, as the residual owner, from time to time reapportioning its ownership and increasing its number of tenants or lessees. That was very desirable for the maximisation of the use of land in this State and for ensuring that the maximum number of people had a direct stake in it.

Clearly a time comes when freeholding becomes a logical and desirable consequence of the ultimate development of the land, although perhaps that is not so in all cases. When land is to be alienated from Crown leasehold to private ownership, it should be done at a cost that reflects the fact that the public is deprived of something. Fair money has to be paid to the public purse when a private person is getting something from every other Queenslander. Certainly, there is at least the right to the rental that has always gone into the coffers of the State.

As I have pointed out in this House before, some private people have, either accidentally or deliberately, gained a small bonanza through the extraordinarily favourable timing of freeholding, especially when freeholding has been based on valuations nine and a half years old. That occurred with some very rich lands on the Darling Downs, and it meant that the public purse of Queensland lost an amount equivalent to that bonanza. It was a loss to everybody else who had the right, through the Crown, to the ownership and possession of that land, which should have been alienated from the Crown on just and proper terms.

It is easy for lessees to say that they developed the land and therefore have the best right to it. Undoubtedly, that is the basis of their entitlement to freehold tenure. They have put something into the land; therefore they have the right of the first option. However, whenever freeholding takes place, it must be on a proper basis of valuation, with the correct amount of money being paid to the Crown.

Leasehold could achieve other purposes. I concur with the statement of many honourable members on both sides of this House that the greatest national problem in Australia is that of soil erosion. Because primary industry is, and always was, fundamental to the economy and life of this country, the removal of the productive soils of the country—in many cases, they are comparatively poor by national or international standards; but they are on a vast scale—is a national calamity. As Bernays said—

“A session without a Land Bill is as welcome as an oasis in the desert.”

Mr Booth: Would you agree that it should be a national Government's responsibility to help in that regard?

Mr INNES: A scheme should be devised through national organisation, and, indeed, every sovereign Government in this country must do its bit. The State cannot say that it is a Federal problem; the Federal Government cannot say that it is a Queensland problem. It is a national obligation involving all sovereign Governments, and even local government will have to play its part.

An estimate made four or five years ago was that steps that could be taken to combat soil erosion would cost over \$1 billion. Undoubtedly that was a gross underestimate. The scale of the problem is enormous. Perhaps programs such as the one recently screened on ABC television magnify the problems. The spokesman involved pushed a case. Those who are very concerned with, or who work with, the problem of desertification and erosion will see that as a very important problem.

No matter how one looked at that ABC program, it showed a very serious problem that demands attention. It is when one gets round to the attention that the difficulties start: first the cost, and, secondly, the minefield of vested interest—how the sort of techniques and remedies that are currently available are to be enforced. They involve either the co-operation of an extraordinary number of people or the more vexed question of telling people what they will do. And telling a person what he will do with his own land is more difficult than telling him what he will do with Crown land. There was in the leasehold system, and there is in the remaining leasehold system, through the legitimate use of conditions, the capacity to carry out some parts of a national or State scheme to combat erosion.

No doubt many members saw the powerful documentary program recently—again on the ABC—on the life of Sir Sidney Kidman. In a way, Sir Sidney Kidman's grand plan was an attempt to carry out something which is very difficult to carry out nowadays. He attempted to string together so many properties that he made himself and his herd immune from the natural variation in and vicissitudes of Australia's inland climate. His idea was that, if there was no water on some of his runs, he would drive his stock to other properties that would not be affected by the inevitability of drought.

When all land-holdings are in some aggregations—a small aggregation that might have been cut up at a time that was prudent, having regard to a run of good seasons—there are, of course, terrific difficulties. Some people have no other properties to which they can take their stock; no properties sufficiently remote to be in another climatic area or in an area that had rain when the original property did not. Even Sir Sidney Kidman's grand plan came unstuck twice in his life.

But the problem of insufficiency of size in some parts of the State is clear, and the problems that result from the enormous increase in running stock—and I leave aside farming for the moment—are such that the pressure is on to increase the number of stock—in short, to overgraze by carrying too many stock for the size of the run. One is in a tremendously difficult bind in getting round to telling people that they are running too many stock or that they cannot run more stock. That situation has not yet been arrived at, and it is very difficult in a freehold situation; but, clearly, if erosion is to be combated and if overgrazing is to be combated, and because the development of new grasses and new pasture is not sufficient at this stage to allow—

Mr Davis: You are obviously the rural spokesman for the Liberal Party now.

Mr INNES: No, I am just worried, as a person who has lived in the outback and is worried about this State and nation, about a problem about which we should all know something. It is a major problem, and I am just pointing out that there are available, and were available, more so in the past using the sort of possibilities in the Land Act, ways of assessing a State or national erosion policy. Overgrazing must be one of the very major and fundamental causes of the pastoral areas having acute erosion problems.

The human problem is enormous. I do not say that I can supply the answer. I appreciate the problems with which the Minister has to grapple, and they must be grappled with at some time. Because the problems are real, they cannot always be left for the next Government. If nothing is done, people will be forced to walk off their blocks but not before they have lost four to five inches of soil. That will make it all the more difficult, if not impossible, for the next owner to revive what was productive country.

Research is going on, and it should be going on, but it needs much greater financial support. The amount made available through the Minister for Primary Industries is not sufficient to cope with the enormity and importance of the job. It is crazy to consider schemes such as the Bradfield scheme at a cost of over \$1 billion when there is such great technical doubt about them. It is crazy and hare-brained to propose schemes to increase the number of farmers by several hundred, when \$1 billion would go only so far—some years ago it was suggested that it might go far enough—to cope with the erosion problems nation-wide. If the Government has \$1 billion to spare it should be put towards the preservation of existing graziers and farmers, not into the totally unjustified economic proposition of supporting 700 farmers who are not yet on the land.

If the Government is considering the expenditure of vast sums of money, the schemes that are good for the State and the nation should be supported, and the Government should look first at erosion. It should not put that problem aside because it is so difficult or because it involves so many people and must involve, in the end, the cutting across of a few people's bows and some of the rights they believe they have to freehold land. Without an element of persuasion bordering upon compulsion the Government will not get anywhere with this enormously important national fight.

I did not enter the debate to advance minute or pedantic criticism. The reduction in the types of tenure is rational, depending on where a lease exists. Depending on the accident of history, some of the distinctions between farm leases, grazing leases and grazing homestead leases are illusory or nonsensical. The leasing system has some potential as part of an overall scheme of things to assist in solving some of the very big problems.

The brigalow scheme was ambitious and, in a way, has been an enormously successful settlement scheme. However, it has brought with it enormous problems, including the breakdown of the traditional vegetation and the opening up of opportunities for erosion. It is interesting to note that experts working for the Government have started to recognise these features, and that progress can be made in one area and backward steps be taken in another. Perhaps such schemes should have been attended by less of the historical compulsion to clear land. It is easy to be wise in hindsight but some of the conditions of the leases should have provided for the retention of significant areas of the natural vegetation to prevent erosion by water and wind.

To move to a slightly different area—I should say that the whole of the State would have been delighted and proud of the opening of the Cairns Airport. It was a major event of great significance in the history and development of the State. The airport is enormously important to the tourist industry because tourists will not fly into cul-de-sac situations in the modern world; if they fly great distances, they want to be able to travel through. The availability of the Cairns Airport allows tourists to move from the north of the State to Brisbane and other southern ports and vice versa.

What must be pointed out is that tourists come to see the natural beauty of north Queensland. That is exactly what any reasonable member of this Chamber finds so appealing up there. The tourists come to see the Great Barrier Reef, the conjunction of the water and the fertile coastal strip fringed by the mountains, and the spectacular rain forests. In many terms it is a spectacular sight. Visitors from overseas come to see the reef, the rain forest-covered mountains and, as they fly over the drier parts of Australia, the kangaroos and emus. The destruction of any significant parts of north Queensland, the further removal of significant portions of rain forests, and the resulting damage to the Great Barrier Reef and the Pacific Ocean, will jeopardise the very purpose of the Cairns Airport. People do not fly across the Pacific to gamble in casinos; they can do that better in Las Vegas or Hawaii. People fly across the Pacific to see natural Australia, and its preservation is very important.

The Crown has an obligation in that preservation. Tourist accommodation is necessary and it is quite proper that Crown land be used for that development. But the prime areas of Crown land must not be alienated to cater for it. In my view, places such as

the Kennedy landing should be preserved for their historical value and because of their natural environment. The Government does not need to flog off the farm, the coast or the reef. There is plenty of room to develop sensitive, modern, appealing accommodation without encroaching on the prime land, which is Australia's prime attraction.

I fear that the Department of Lands is losing much of its reason for being. It is losing the lands that are its prime concern and which form the major work for its officers. To keep themselves in work people tend to direct themselves into other areas. The rewards to Lands Department officers do not depend on the rate at which land is flogged off. The rewards are not dependent upon their level of activity or upon how often they participate in development deals. The Lands Department officers will always have valuable Crown land to supervise, value and administer. Their expertise can be used in other areas. However, they do not do Queensland any credit by setting out to achieve for themselves a reputation of being great entrepreneurs.

Crown lands that are available may be offered for lease on terms that are extraordinarily favourable. I am worried about the rate of excitement—it is almost a state of excitement—concerning the possibilities. People from all over the world would flood into this State looking for a piece of the action. If they got too much of the action, they would destroy the reason for their coming here in the first place.

We should not be interested in this generation or in this year's aspiring multimillionaire; we should be interested in the long-term welfare of the State, which involves the type of thing that the farmers and graziers do—the husbanding of resources. We must make sure that the deals that this State obtains ensure the maintenance of the attractions in the tourist areas that possess such tremendous potential at this time.

All sorts of exciting possibilities exist, but there is also a need for some self-restraint. The Minister's department is in a very good position to help to exercise that self-restraint and to look at the future, to the next century, in terms of what this State will need and what it will need to maintain. I hope that that fact is borne firmly in mind in the department's planning.

It might seem great to have 10 international resort developments currently on the books. However, certain questions arise: Are they in the right place? How many can the State take? How many need to be undertaken now? Are any of them cutting across the long-term tourist attractions that should be maintained?

There are plenty of questions that the Land Administration Commission and the Lands Department have to consider. Many long-term decisions will have to be made, such as whether they are to try to prevent problems such as soil erosion or whether they are to try to ensure that our tourist attractions are preserved, so that in a hundred years' time people will be interested in maintaining our resorts.

Mr PRICE (Mt Isa) (2.42 p.m.): I rise to draw attention to the small rural dweller on the one hand and the large land-holder on the other. I refer particularly to my electorate in the north west of the State. The small rural dwellers, the small rural holders or the acreage dwellers—whatever they might be termed—are springing up on the outskirts of almost every city in Queensland.

Mr Hartwig: The hobby farmers.

Mr PRICE: That term probably says it all. They are springing up on the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast, just north of Bundaberg—where, I understand, hundreds of hobby farmers are looking for small acreages—in the forest regions on the Atherton Tableland and, in my own electorate, in Mt Isa.

Many such farmers are taking up quite valuable arable land. This could pose a danger that should be avoided. The attention of the Minister for Lands should be drawn to what is happening in the areas that I have mentioned. The Lands Department and the Local Government Department should liaise to determine a policy that will control the development of small holdings. I would refer to it as land administration, but the Department of Local Government certainly needs to have a good deal of input.

The area round Mt Isa that is used as small acreage plots came to a high point last year when rural valuations were increased. The owners of the property that was zoned rural found that their rates were increased, whereas the urban rate in the city was retained. The sudden increase caused quite a furore among the local small land-holders. They were

looking for an in-between situation in which they could be classified as both rural and urban, what might be termed rural residential. The demand for those blocks grew out of the growth of the city in such a rural oriented area.

The growth of the mine attracted workers from all parts of the world and, in particular, from the property holdings in the area, which in those days were mostly privately owned or singularly owned. That is quite a contrast with the present position in which one or two companies hold almost the whole of the Gulf region. The workers from those properties were attracted to the mine and to the city.

The rural areas benefited also from the decentralisation, the growth of the mine and the city growth. They enjoyed the benefit of closeness of materials for their properties, transport, the other town facilities, entertainment, shows, rodeos and even the influx of other industries to take advantage of the labour market provided by the city.

The rural workers who were attracted to the mine generally brought what I might term their rural mentality to the city and were looking for acreage on which to house and husband animals, mostly in small lots. From what I can ascertain, the attitude of the Government and the Minister is that viability is the keyword in land-holdings. If it is not viable, it should be broken up and parcelled out to larger land-holders to endeavour to make their land-holdings viable.

I suggest that viability is not the only consideration, particularly when it comes to smaller blocks. The person on the smaller block is not looking for the viability of the block but really——

Mr Innes: Somewhere to live.

Mr PRICE: Somewhere to live. He is concerned about its usefulness to himself and his own life-style.

Mr FitzGerald: Are you suggesting that this Government is socialistic? Surely we would not control all the land in the State like that?

Mr PRICE: I am taking up one of the Government's policies in determining the flexibility of land. I will refer shortly to the question of freehold and leasehold and indicate how leasehold gives that flexibility.

The blocks to which I have referred still have a rural zoning. Some form of liaison between the Lands Department and the Department of Local Government could determine the matter one way or the other. Perhaps a zoning that would suit those people could be applied so that their land taxes or their taxation in the form of rates would not be so severe. The rate increases could be imposed at a time different from when the urban rate increases occur.

To encourage those people and to look after the influx of animals into the city of Mt Isa, the council decided to create some other forms of land tenure. It used the treated effluent from the third stage of its sewerage scheme for irrigation. It subdivided the irrigated area into horse paddocks and rented them out to people interested in looking after their animals in that fashion. It was a great success. The scheme is expanding. The city is still looking at getting rid of the animals that are being housed on Crown land in the city and in the bed of the river because they are causing all sorts of problems for council inspectors.

Mr Hartwig: It causes untidy development.

Mr PRICE: At the moment, it is extremely untidy. The council is doing its best to handle the matter. I am sure that other cities have similar problems with such people and with such holdings. In view of the number of cities affected by it, there are probably numerous reasons why it should be investigated.

The other rural holding in the north west is vast. Many stations, as honourable members have been told many times before, are as large as some European countries. Much of the land in the Gulf region is not very productive. Quite a bit of flexibility—and I adopt that word used by the honourable member for Mt Coot-tha last Thursday—ought to be retained. Freeholding in areas such as the north west deters that flexibility by tending to stabilise the status quo. Probably there are similar problems in the Minister's electorate.

Most decentralisation in Queensland in the last 20 years has occurred for reasons similar to those that brought about decentralisation in the north west: a mining company has established a township—I instance Mt Isa—that has grown into a city. Problems have ensued from that point. If such a mining phenomenon occurred in the electorate of Gregory, I am sure that the growth pattern would be the same. The demand by people for land-holdings around that residential development increased. Local government authorities are able to re-examine the needs of those populating their regions when land comes up for subdivision or for re-examination by the Lands Department at irregular intervals. In each case, the needs of the individual can be ascertained.

Along with that stabilisation of the status quo, as I prefer to call it, some areas of land in the north west would not be taken up simply because they are not viable. Again, the flexibility of the land becomes important. Vast areas are presently held by absentee landlords. That land is not being used productively at all. If those areas were allowed to be freeholded, the present position would continue. At least under leasehold, when the time for lease renewal arrives the land can be broken into areas and given to other land-holders who have lived in the region and have committed their lives to the region. Parcels can be made available to others so that the land becomes more productive and more viable.

I ask the Minister again to look at the matters that I have raised. The Lands Department and local government must co-operate and enter into some form of agreement for rural residential holdings adjacent to all cities in Queensland, but particularly in my own electorate.

Mr FitzGerald: Wouldn't most of those be freehold?

Mr PRICE: No, they are not. As a matter of fact, they are all miners' homestead perpetual leases—a different form of tenure again, and I doubt that the honourable member would understand.

The implementation of a land register is a political commitment of those on this side of the House. Once such a register is established, the Government will know the ownership of all land. When the tenure on a piece of land expires, the Government will have some say in how the land is subdivided to make it most productive.

Mr NEAL (Balonne) (2.55 p.m.): I have much pleasure in supporting the amendments to the Land Act proposed by the Minister. They are both necessary and timely. The history of land settlement in this State has been one of trial, error and general evolution of policies to suit changing circumstances. Policies have not always been enlightened; many mistakes have been made along the way. However, one must always be mindful of the old adage that a person who has never made a mistake has never done anything.

I was very interested in the contribution made last week by the honourable member for Salisbury. He certainly spoke well. However, he indicated clearly that, although he may know what is contained in the Bill, his knowledge of the actual ownership and practical working of rural land is sadly lacking. As he is a lawyer by profession, it is quite understandable that he would have an academic approach to land matters. With any Act or law, it is the practical application that counts.

A whole host of variables—seasons, commodity prices, lack of communications, to name only a few—necessitate an ever-changing, flexible administration. In my opinion the present Land Administration Commission has an enlightened approach to these matters and has demonstrated a flexibility that is necessary when lessees are faced with adversity, as is more often than not the case in rural areas.

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a point of order. Under Standing Orders, is the honourable member allowed to read a brief from the Minister?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Menzel): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr NEAL: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I do not really need your protection against clowns.

The Minister has pointed out that periodic subdivision by the Crown has virtually come to an end and that, generally speaking, there are few problems associated with viable size in the overall land picture. In the case of many substandard Crown leases, where circumstances would permit, the Government made available additional areas. The natural

evolution of land aggregation by which the strong survived and bought out those who fell by the wayside, for whatever reason, solved many substandard living area problems. In this regard, Government finance schemes organised by the Rural Reconstruction Board, as well as farm build up and the Marginal Dairy Reconstruction Scheme, played, and will continue to play, an important role.

The Minister stated that the rural land scene has stabilised to the point where, on the one hand, the State has what might be termed a pastoral region with some limited subdivisional possibilities and, on the other hand, the inner areas in which further subdivision by the Crown would no longer be practicable or proper. Although I agree in general with those sentiments, I urge a very cautious approach to what the Minister sees as the limited subdivisional possibilities of the pastoral region. The possibilities of subdivision in that area are extremely limited. Subdivision into uneconomic units or to enable occupancy by persons who lack the necessary know-how or financial capacity can create problems greater than those it is hoped to solve. Many land-holders on inadequate areas have endeavoured to survive by overstocking, which invites not only financial disaster but also degradation of the land itself, with all the associated problems. As well as that, in the inland areas of Queensland, droughts are the rule, not the exception, and overstocking causes erosion.

Another problem that must be faced up to is the overclearing of land and the lack of consideration given to conservation measures. It is a shame that more money cannot be made available for erosion control and soil conservation. When large-scale clearing takes place, especially for cultivation, consideration should be given to the adequate contouring of the land and the retention of shade strips, wind-breaks and what have you.

Mr Davis: Why don't you do it on your own land?

Mr NEAL: The honourable member is not qualified to talk about what I am doing on my land. If he went out and had a look at it, he would find that it is a pretty good place, with sufficient shade timber and other timber.

I have always believed that it is far more desirable to have fewer people on the land than to have inadequate living areas for a large number of people. It is far more desirable to have two land-holders making a reasonably good living, with money to spend on employment and the better things of life, than to have three people trying to eke out a living on the same area and barely surviving, or going out backwards.

I would like to touch on the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme. It is a very good concept, although I would like it broadened and much more money made available for it. A large number of young people have the expertise, the background and the capacity to make a go of it on the land, but they lack the financial capacity to get themselves onto blocks. The Young Farmer Establishment Scheme is playing a part in getting young people onto blocks, but I would like greater emphasis placed on the scheme and more money made available for it.

Those young people who have already received finance through the scheme have a problem raising carry-on finance. When farmers face adversity, such as low commodity prices, droughts and floods, the Government has come to the fore in introducing schemes to assist them and to overcome their difficulties. But, as with all schemes where taxpayers' money is being used, of necessity guide-lines have to be followed. Of course, those schemes have a cut-off point for assistance. It always seems to be the case that a person might be suffering because of localised flooding, yet no general flood relief scheme is available. A property might be in an area that has just lost its drought-declared status because of a marginal breaking of the drought. However, the property-owner would still be in financial difficulty. Problems such as that need to be looked at in conjunction with the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme. Where do young farmers obtain carry-on finance to tide them over when they strike difficult times? The Young Farmer Establishment Scheme is a success—

Mr Davis: How many people have been put on the land—four?

Mr NEAL: The honourable member is quite wrong; there have been more than that. He does not know what he is talking about.

As I said at the outset, it is a very good scheme and has the capacity to go on to bigger and better things. It should be widened. More finance should be made available to it. Like anything else in its infancy, it has to crawl before it can walk. I do not

believe it is right to make a tremendous amount of money available for a scheme and then find all sorts of problems arising. This scheme is shaping up well and, as I have said, I would like more money made available to it.

Under the amendments relating to the major settlement tenures, settlement farm leases, grazing farm leases and grazing homestead leases, all of which can be converted upon application to grazing homestead perpetual leases, will become grazing homestead perpetual leases. That will consolidate all of the tenures into the one form of lease and eliminate a great deal of paperwork. In other words, it is simply tidying-up legislation.

The amendments relating to the control of the sale of larger grazing selection freeholdings are sensible and practical. Presently, these properties cannot be transferred in whole or in part to a corporation without the prior consent of the Governor in Council. However, there are always exceptions to the rule. It is only reasonable for provision to be made to allow transfer under certain circumstances. To do that, a 2500ha limit has been set. Properties involving areas larger than that have to have the consent of the Governor in Council. That provision should assist to overcome some impediments. In doing so, the necessary controls against aggregation will be maintained.

The honourable member for Bundaberg, who is not in the House, raised a host of matters in the debate last week. His approach to land problems was academic. He referred to foreign companies and non-residents being able to freehold Crown land, how much land they should be able to hold, and so on. Many foreigners have made a very significant contribution to the development of land in Queensland. Their contribution should be recognised. Only 60 or 70 years ago, virtually all persons on the land were foreigners. Their descendants are good Australians who are now working the land. I see nothing wrong with that. Before anyone buys Crown land he must receive the approval of the Minister and be subject to the terms and conditions of the lease. When land is freeholded, the normal procedure has to be followed. Companies cannot freehold land but individual, non-residents can. In doing so, they must abide by the same terms and conditions as those that apply to anyone else. The land is subject to valuation at the time of application. The applicant can accept the valuation but it is usual for the matter to be taken to the Land Court. The applicant has a further right of appeal to the Land Appeal Court. The checks and balances apply.

The freeholding of land over 2500ha in area will require the consent of the Governor in Council.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr NEAL: It is very easy to be a back-seat driver. The honourable member for Brisbane Central used to be a taxi-driver. I do not know how he piloted his car round Brisbane. He knows nothing about land, but I am sure he knows a great deal about back-seat driving.

Unfortunately the member for Bundaberg falls into the same category. He claims to have all the answers in land administration. Many people know all about how to run land, but what really counts is when they put their money where their mouth is. What counts is when a man's money is at stake and he has to make the decisions. In those circumstances it soon becomes obvious how good a man is. All the theory in creation will be of little use. Ideas may seem good in theory, but the difference between the theoretical and the practical application could amount to thousands of dollars. That could well be the difference between success and a forced sale of land. Land management is all about the administration and practical operation and ownership of land.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr NEAL: At one time I had friends who owned a pet parrot. They had to dispose of it because it kept talking and they could not get any sleep.

The amendments by which the expiry date of pastoral leases can be put back for a short period to permit the issue of new leases is commendable. In the present circumstances many a lessee has found himself between the devil and the deep blue sea.

Quite often, a lease is expiring and the bank manager is getting very nervous. That happens especially in times of adversity when commodity prices are low and droughts are occurring in inland areas. The farmer tries to get carry-on finance but, because the bank

manager must have security for that finance, he is only interested in the lease and how many years it has to run. The amendment is very commendable because it overcomes the gap situation in which the new lease has not issued and the old lease may have expired. It is also commendable because many of these situations arise through no fault of the lessees themselves.

The provision in the Bill to ensure the lessee's rights to have his application considered with respect to the whole of the land in his lease will not be imperilled because surface occupancy rights have been provided with respect to part of the land. That is also a step in the right direction. It is only reasonable that the superimposition of these rights pertaining to mining leases does not prejudice the issuing of new leases under the Land Act.

With respect to the recording of transmission of interest without grant of probate, except in certain circumstances such as the death of the lessee, the provision to increase the monetary limitation on the value of the estate concerned merely keeps pace with inflationary trends. No one could argue with that provision, and I am pleased that the amount is being increased from \$50,000 to \$100,000. I am also pleased that the future power to vary such value limitations will be vested in the Governor in Council by Order in Council. That will give far greater flexibility.

The amendment to put all stud leases on equal footing so that they expire on a common date will overcome anomalies that arose when, in 1981, the terms of stud leases were extended to 75 years. At that time, the extension of 35 years applied to some stud leases that had just been renewed, resulting in leases of nearly 75 years' duration; but those that had not expired at the date of the legislation received only a 35-year extension of the portion of the tenure that remained. In other words, a lessee who held a stud lease with two years remaining was given a 35-year extension, or a total of 37 years. Another lessee whose lease had just been renewed received almost the full 75 years. The amendment to allow for a common date is very worth while.

As I said at the outset, it is most important that Queensland's land administration be both enlightened and flexible. Crown lands must be of good economic size and carry a security of tenure, because those factors are most important. With a viable unit and an economic living area, a lease-holder is half-way to succeeding, but a good solid tenure is needed to back him up. The Crown keeps an eye on tenures in the pastoral region. To be deficient in either security of tenure or economic size invites disaster; it is neither desirable nor sensible, and lease-holders may become impoverished.

I congratulate the Minister for Lands and his officers on the introduction of the legislation and I have much pleasure in supporting it.

Mr VEIVERS (Ashgrove) (3.15 p.m.): I raise a matter of grave concern to the people of this State in relation to the acquisition of freehold land by the Government and the way in which it has ignored the established principles of land acquisitions by the Crown. In a moment I shall refer to a particular case.

The principles of land acquisition in relation to freehold land are well established by law. The right of a person to own freehold property and the civil rights and liberties attaching to that are engraved in our society.

This afternoon I refer to a Bill that was passed through all stages by this House on 21 December, namely, the Nerang River Entrance Development Bill. It was brought in by the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services, and it provided for the vesting of certain lands in the Crown. It was rushed through on one evening, with little time given to the Opposition—or to anyone else, for that matter—to study its implications.

I warn the Government that trouble is brewing, because the people concerned with that land legislation are considering taking legal action in the highest courts of the land. The principle of freehold land and compensation is under attack by this Government.

At the time of the passage of that legislation, the Government must have known that complicated issues were at stake. Nevertheless, the Government chose to ignore those possibilities and proceeded at haste with the legislation. No doubt it was a Christmas present for someone, and later in my speech I shall name a person who could be very deeply involved.

I raise this matter during the debate on this Bill because very important principles that affect the total land legislation are at stake and because it is directly concerned with Government policy on land-ownership, land use and the control of land.

The land to which I refer is owned—or was owned—legally by Mr Pat Tuesley of Southport. I have with me copies of the deeds of the land involved, which, incidentally, is on The Spit at Southport. I table the copies of those deeds.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the documents on the table.

The land in question was originally purchased in 1881 for the sum of £115 from the Government of the day by Mr Alexander Smith-Lang.

The deeds, which bear the seal of Queen Victoria, state clearly that the land, after the sum of money for its acquisition has been paid, is to be granted in perpetuity to the owner, heirs and successors.

I shall retrace the history of Mr Tuesley's property and business, which I am sure the Minister will find interesting and relevant. In 1912, Mr J. C. Tuesley purchased parts of the land from the trustees of that estate and, in 1919, made further purchases. His son, Mr Pat Tuesley, has in his possession the original deeds.

It is not known how much money was involved in the purchases, but based on the original price it would be reasonable to assume that several hundred pounds would have been involved. Needless to say, today the value of the land would probably run into millions of dollars. The Minister's guess would be as good as mine.

The interest of Mr Tuesley senior in acquiring the land stemmed from his ownership of Tuesley Ferries, which he began back in 1895. Up to the 1940s, when the sea broke through, Mr Tuesley was using the land as part of his ferry service from Tuesley's Jetty, Southport. The land in question, at Moondarewa, consisted of a kiosk, large fuel shed, tourist buildings, toilets and other facilities.

I am advised that in those days the land-holding was approximately 11 acres. Mr Tuesley has not recently had the land surveyed, but a large portion of it has now re-emerged above high-water level on The Spit.

On 17 August 1955, Mr Tuesley senior left the business, which included the properties in question, to his three sons, Cliff, Loch and Pat.

The background to this case has other interesting historical aspects. In 1933, a tourist operator offered Mr Tuesley £1,000 per acre to start a hotel at Moondarewa. In those days, that was a lot of money. Mr Tuesley refused the offer because of his business and the fulfilment of his desire to provide a much-needed tourist and recreational facility in the area at that time. He was the only tourist operator of his type conducting a tourist service by boat from Southport to the island.

When the break-through occurred—I hope that the Minister finds this interesting—all lease-holders of the land were given equivalent land tenure around Picnic Point, which is further north. Mr Tuesley, however, as a freeholder, did not receive any land from the Government, and, in fact, ultimately purchased additional land at Picnic Point and Tipplers to maintain his tourist business. That was a requirement as far as his activities were concerned.

I have outlined some of the history. I turn now to present events. The Government has acquired the land without compensation, in spite of a very important principle. On 21 December 1983, during his second-reading speech on the Nerang River Entrance Development Bill, the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services stated—

“The payment of compensation for freehold lands acquired by the Crown or a statutory authority for public purposes is a well-established policy embodied in statute law.”

I sincerely hope that no-one in this Chamber would argue about that principle.

The grounds for not paying compensation are stated by the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services in the following terms—

“However, the principles upon which the payment of compensation are based in the usual land acquisition are not present in this land acquisition. The area, although subdivided many years ago, is devoid of any development. Any development or use of the area by registered proprietors has long since become right out of the question.”

I now ask: Has it? Because of the haste with which that legislation was passed through the House, it is questionable whether the Minister had sufficient information to enable him to make that statement.

The Minister stated—

“Owners have for all intents and purposes vacated any interest they may have had in the subdivided lots.”

I have certainly not been given that information. The Minister made a very broad, general statement.

The Minister further stated—

“Taking all these matters into consideration, including the fact that the lands were lost by a natural process, it is considered this is a situation where there is no case for the payment of any compensation to the remaining registered proprietors and where, in any case, the difficulty of tracing registered proprietors or their successors would make normal procedures for the taking of land of the Crown impossible to follow.”

The first question that needs to be asked about that legislation is: Were sufficient searches undertaken to find out whether there were registered proprietors of that land? How much searching was done to find any registered proprietors?

I now raise one very serious implication as a result of that question. The Minister for Mines and Energy and member for Albert (Mr Gibbs) held discussions with Mr Tuesley, at Mr Tuesley's request, before the Bill was introduced. The Minister for Mines and Energy cited the deeds in question. He made no commitments, but he left Mr Tuesley with an impression that the matter of compensation was by no means out of the question.

Another matter that is critical to this issue is that for many years prior to the breakthrough, the Tuesleys had paid regular rates on the land to the relevant local authority. For 60 years the land has been rateable.

Mr Borbidge: When was the last time that rates were paid on the land?

Mr VEIVERS: Approximately in the 1940s, before the breakthrough. From 1881 to that time the land had been rateable and rates had been paid.

Mr Borbidge: Forty years ago.

Mr VEIVERS: The rates had been paid by the previous owners as well.

The second question that needs to be asked is: Was the proposed acquisition of the land adequately advertised? Mr Tuesley claims that he found out about it by word of mouth, hence his approach to the Minister for Mines and Energy. Mr Tuesley was also informed by a member of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority that the authority expected compensation to be paid. So much for the lip-service the Queensland Government pays to free enterprise! It would not know what free enterprise is all about. What is being discussed is the established principle of land-ownership—of freehold tenure. Members on the other side make a great deal of noise about free enterprise. So many issues are involved. The so-called free enterprise attitude of the Government is a joke.

Inherent in our way of life is a person's right to own property. It is an established principle that if a person has to surrender land to the Crown he must be treated fairly and justly rewarded. That is a simple principle of justice. This Government does not know what free enterprise is all about. It really is the most bureaucratic, authoritarian, dictatorial Government Queensland has seen. It has so many boards, advisory boards, subcommittees and quangos, but the facts are there. I am referring to free enterprise and the protection of civil rights, liberties and land-ownership.

The Government is not interested in people as a priority. Labor puts people first. Time after time in Queensland favouritism has been shown to big business, big government and big speculation. It is there that the Government's friends—the speculators—can be found. People and their fundamental rights take second place.

I suspect what is behind all of this. The Government obviously has some motive for acquiring the land in this way, without compensation and without adequate concern and research. My guess is that the eventual beneficiary will be Mr Keith Williams of “Sea World”—one of the Government's highly favoured friends.

Mr Cahill: Throw in the CIA, too.

Mr VEIVERS: I might have to do that.

The Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services attempted to explain the so-called highly principled attitude of the Government to compensation for freehold land. I again quote from his speech on 21 December—

“Obviously, leaving aside any of the town-planning, access and legal hurdles which would be faced by any person now attempting to assert a proprietary interest in the land, it is quite clear that public opinion would not countenance any private development on that land, so that the allotments in the hands of private owners have no market value.”

What a lot of rubbish that is! It is just not on to claim that “it is quite clear that public opinion would not countenance any private development”. We all know the way in which public relations campaigns can be used to sway public opinion. There is no guarantee that development will not take place north of The Spit on the land which was legally owned by Mr Tuesley. There is no guarantee about that in the Bill.

Mr Borbidge: Under the proposal there are no development plans north of “Sea World”

Mr VEIVERS: That statement by the Minister does not guarantee that there will be no development north of “Sea World” Nothing in the legislation protects the area north of “Sea World”

Mr Borbidge: Have you seen the plans?

Mr VEIVERS: I have read the Bill and read the Minister’s statement relevant to the matter that I have raised. There is no guarantee about any protection. I am fearful that the land that has now been acquired by the Government—

Mr Cahill: It is under water.

Mr VEIVERS: It is not under water. The member for Aspley has not been listening to what I have been saying.

There is no guarantee that, after the stabilisation of the bar, that land will not be sold back to someone such as Mr Williams for the development of a hotel. I do not believe that; nor do many other people on the Gold Coast or in the rest of Queensland. I have heard many people speaking about it at the Gold Coast.

Mr Tuesley deserves better treatment than that. His contribution towards making something from nothing on the Gold Coast deserves recognition and courtesy. His family’s pioneering spirit, when things were tough and no-one had heard of tourist services, deserves reward. Mr Tuesley is not against progress and not against the proposed plans. All he wants is justice.

Mr Cahill: \$8m.

Mr VEIVERS: I said that he is not against the plans.

Mr Prest: Is it worth \$8m to Williams?

Mr VEIVERS: Under this legislation, it could be, yes.

Whilst I have been a member I can sincerely say that the Minister has examined matters that have been raised. I hope that saying that does not result in his being given the kiss of death. The Minister is one of the few Ministers who answers questions to the best of his ability. Quite a few of them will not even answer questions; they do not know what is being asked of them. I had an example of that this morning. This Minister is responsible and fair and I believe that he will consider that proposed legislation and this issue. I ask him to look into it as a matter of urgency.

Mr HARTWIG (Callide) (3.32 p.m.): I rise to comment on the Bill before the House and say that, over the years, the Minister has done a pretty good job with his lands portfolio. Of course, he is backed by men such as Paul O’Gorman and Wally Baker. Mr Baker is now the chairman of the Lands Administration Commission. Those men have given the Minister a tremendous amount of assistance and have provided great guidance in land administration matters.

It has been said that man will brave all hardships and perils to acquire land and that he knows few restraints in the struggle to retain it. That provides a fair example of the people who selected land in Queensland in the early days and went out to brave the elements and carve out a way of life. To many people today, to live without electricity, bitumen roads, motor cars, radios and television would be a unique experience. As I said, people went out to the land, built their homes and reared their families in that environment.

It has been stated authoritatively that Aborigines were here for 35 000 years prior to the white man coming to this country. I have travelled the world and I can state confidently that Australia is one of the youngest nations to have developed its land. Because Australia is a young nation, various Governments have made many changes to the land laws and to the policies on land and its development.

Throughout many nations in the world today, land is the most prized possession. Wars have been fought over the acquisition of land. Currently the world has 4.9 billion people who depend for their very existence on what the land produces. As is generally said and acknowledged, all things come from the soil. The people of this State and nation are blessed with large tracts of good soil from which, combined with reliable rainfall, food is produced.

Approximately 80 per cent of all land is administered directly or indirectly by the Land Administration Commission. The State is divided into approximately 45 land agents districts.

One has to go back to about 1916 when the principle of leasehold tenure was extended to exclude generally the future alienation of any land. The system of perpetual lease was introduced at about that time. In fact, in 1910 my father took up 80 acres of land on the Burnett River south of Eidsvold, for which he paid 2/6 an acre, or £10.

This legislation is the result of a genuine desire by the department to simplify titles of leases, and that has much to commend it. Today, the leasing of land is a primary function of the Land Administration Commission, which is also charged with surveying, redesigning, subdividing and leasing such land as reverts to the Crown by resumption or by the expiry, surrender or forfeiture of existing tenures.

Grazing selection or grazing homestead leases usually have a tenure of up to 30 years; but I well remember—a Labor Government was in office at the time—that on asking for a new lease on my 10 000-acre property, I was granted a 14-year lease. If there is one thing that is frustrating to anybody connected with the land, it is lack of security of tenure. Land-owners must have security of tenure. Banks need it, and the occupier needs it. I can only say that if one is in the last 10-year period of one's lease of a block, the value of one's land falls accordingly because one has not acquired a new lease.

In recent years, particularly since 1957, many leaseholders have converted their properties to freehold tenure, and I am pleased to state that this Government generally has contributed to that policy. As a result of that policy, the greater part of the land in Queensland—about 72.6 per cent of all land—is still held under lease. I note that today land held under freehold title makes up 19.6 per cent of the total area of Queensland, and unoccupied unreserved land, roads, stock routes and national parks make up 7.7 per cent of the total land area of Queensland.

As well as selection tenures, there are pastoral tenures, stud leases, special leases, development leases and occupational leases. A few years ago, when a person selected his land he had to go and live on it for a number of years before he acquired a lease. That type of tenure was called an occupational lease. The Lands Department decided to change that policy and convert all land to leasehold in order to make it possible for people to acquire leasehold land. But not all leasehold land can be acquired in that manner. Miners' homestead leases are also mentioned in the Act. Crown land and private land, as defined in the Mining Act, may be held for mining purposes under mining lease tenures. Crown land may also be held under the mining lease tenure, and, in some instances, miners' homestead leases can now be converted to freehold. I think that provision was introduced by this Government some years ago. There are also miners' homestead perpetual leases, but they are generally small in area.

Recently I heard of the case of a miner's homestead lease of three acres that was valued not by the Valuer-General's Department but by the mining warden. The land, which is at Mt Chalmers, had a capital value of \$100 and the annual rental was \$3. When the man decided to freehold, the mining warden increased the valuation of that land from \$100 to \$12,000. The rental for a three-acre block covered with lantana increased from \$3 to \$360 a year.

How can the valuation of a three-acre block increase from \$100 to \$12,000 without any improvements? The block was part of a title, but the man concerned did not pay any more for the 45 acres of which it was a part. The valuation was increased not by the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police, but by the Minister for Mines and Energy. When I asked for redetermination of the valuation, the Minister for Mines and Energy wrote to me and said that the only thing he could see wrong with it was that the \$100 was an anomaly in the first place, that the valuation should have been much higher.

I rue the day when the Minister for Mines and Energy can make such a statement that has to be forwarded to people on the land who know the value of land and what it costs to clear it, fence it and improve it. The practice of a mining warden, with the approval of the Minister, savagely increasing mining homestead lease values needs nipping in the bud. I was very surprised when the Minister said that the only anomaly was the valuation of \$100 in the first place. The people in that area are having a hard enough struggle to carve out a living without being penalised by higher rentals. It is ridiculous that that three-acre block of land is costing the man over \$500 a year in rent and rates.

Today, land that is well managed and well cared for enables people to enjoy a good way of life. In recent years, two great influences have affected land development. Firstly, in the 1940s, Queensland had about 24 000 dairy farmers. That number has been reduced to 2 400. A big factor contributing to that decline was the rapid rise in beef prices in the 1960s and early 1970s. In those days, when a milker calved, the dairyman could sell a three-to-four-month-old calf for as much as he could make by milking a cow for six months. Dairy farmers became small graziers, but when the meat market collapsed many of them did not have enough land to carry on. That is why many of them went to the wall. In those days, because most small farmers ran a few head of stock, the number of cattle was far too great. The bottom fell out of the beef market. Today, it would be hard to find a beast on a cane farm or a small agricultural farm.

Land utilisation is very important. I become riled when I go to areas such as Redland Bay, which was once declared to be the salad bowl of Brisbane, and see land subdivided into building allotments, with the result that the area is lost to the production of food. The world population is increasing by one million people every six days. In the last decade, world food production declined by 2½ per cent. A serious situation faces the world and its people.

I am also concerned about the large amount of erosion of the marvellous topsoil in the State. The Government has attacked this problem in a weak way, treating it with kid gloves. I am too ashamed to state the Budget allocation for the prevention of soil erosion. The Government has merely paid lip-service to the problem. It must come to grips with the problem of repairing the damage.

Much soil erosion is caused by bad management. Many land-holders plough up hillsides that have very little topsoil. When there is a heavy storm, the topsoil is lost and the Government is asked to pay compensation. That happened a few years ago in the Goomeri district. That type of land should never be cultivated. The good land in areas such as Redland Bay is being sold off. Dams such as the Wivenhoe Dam are covering up some of the best fattening, vegetable-growing and food-producing country in the State. The country is inundated with water and the hills are left sticking out. Although houses can be built on hills, cabbages cannot. Balanced development is needed.

I have not heard the conservationists talking about the good arable land that is being built over in Redland Bay and other places. They are not worried about it being lost to food production. They are clearing the land for more national parks. But what do national parks produce? They produce wallabies, goannas and dingoes. That is what can be found in national parks. Queenslanders should be making the good country produce. The high country and the ranges should be declared national parks. The good arable land should not be wasted because future generations will need it.

As the Minister for Lands is a land-owner, he would be aware that many land-owners, through ring-barking, tordoning and clearing, have destroyed millions and millions of super feet of beautiful hardwood timber that has taken years to grow. There is an old adage that there is no grass if there are trees. I cleared trees and had grass; but my cattle did no better on the cleared land than on the land with trees.

People need educating about the value of timber. I have flown over a number of countries and have not seen a tree; every one has been removed. How the cattle in those countries manage for shade, I do not know. The land is left to the wind, sun and frost. It is open country and the topsoil blows off quickly. Cattle hang on better in paddocks with timber and with a bit of shelter.

Dieback is killing off millions and millions of super feet of narrow-leafed gum-trees, iron-bark and other good millable gum-trees. I would like to know what is being done about the disease because it is creating a serious problem.

Australia is not making any more land. When I was in Holland, I inspected 45 000 acres of land that had been reclaimed from the Zuyder Zee. The sea water was pumped off the land, dykes were built around it and the soil was desalinated. An area that was once ocean is now producing beautiful wheat and barley. That is typical of what is done in other countries.

The area of arable land that is left in Japan is down to 14 per cent of the total area of the country and is shrinking annually. The whole country is being built up, as is happening on the perimeters of Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. In Japan, which has a population of approximately 140 million, land is worth \$A7m an acre. Japanese come to Australia and invest in land because they are paying as little as \$500 or \$1,000 an acre. Australians believe that that is a high price for land, but we are virtually giving the land away for nothing.

As for a register of foreign ownership of land—what does it prove if a man woke up one morning and found that a foreigner had bought out his next-door neighbour? Before a foreigner is allowed to invest in Australia he should be asked what he wants to do with his money and why he wants to buy land. He should be asked whether he wants to construct a motel or a block of flats or whether he wants to run a cattle station. He does not need 5 000 to 10 000 acres for a block of flats or a motel. The time will come when foreign development in Australia will have to be looked at very closely. There is no doubt that Iwasaki has gobbled up an area in excess of 30 000 acres. There is talk of his buying even more land, but I do not know whether the rumours are correct. However, I cannot see why he needs 30 000 acres for a tourist resort.

Mr Davis: Why didn't you say something about it?

Mr HARTWIG: I did. The honourable member for Brisbane Central should read "Hansard". We invited him up to the opening, but he did not even have the manners to come up and look for himself. He has never been there.

Mr Prest: What do you mean by "we invited him up"?

Mr HARTWIG: I chaired the function on the afternoon in question.

Young people must be encouraged to go on the land, but they will not be encouraged if, as happened at Rolleston, they are asked to pay \$29,000 to the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board to have power supplied to their property. Unfortunately, the chap at Rolleston has since died, at the age of 46 years.

Mr Prest: He should have died from shock.

Mr HARTWIG: It is no joke; he did. If he had sold his land and come to live in the city, he would have had power connected for nothing. However, a man who goes out into the country to try to make a future for himself and his family is penalised. The Minister condones that sort of thing.

The people in country areas should be asked to lend money to the appropriate electricity board, and I emphasise "lend". When I was chairman of the electricity board in Rockhampton, I introduced a rural extension deposit scheme under which a person who wanted power connected to his property contributed to the cost of the line by way of a loan at a minimum rate of interest. There is nothing wrong with that. If members

of the waterfront unions were asked to contribute \$1 of their earnings to a board or a local authority, they would go on strike. However, because country people are not militant the Government gets into them. In country areas a cost of \$20,000 for the connection of electricity is not uncommon.

I turn now to roads. If the Premier had to buy a property in my electorate, I wish he had bought one a bit closer to Rockhampton, because, if he had, we might get a decent bloody road out of it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Menzel): Order! I ask the honourable member to withdraw the word "bloody".

Mr HARTWIG: I apologise for that unparliamentary remark.

We should get our priorities right. I deny nobody a road. When one road carries between 2 500 and 3 000 vehicles a day and not one cent can be spent on it because there is no money available, and a 13-km section of another road is being constructed at a cost of \$400,000 to carry 20 cars a week, somebody has his priorities wrong.

Recently a man drove over the Mt Morgan range towing a caravan that was approximately 20 feet in length. He said that he would never do that again. I asked him why. He replied that he did not think he would make it down the range. That range road follows the first dray track that was built at the turn of the century. It has not been altered. It is a disgrace. Before long a tragedy will occur on the Mt Morgan range road. In some places visibility is no more than 20 feet. Because of the sharp turns in the road, large semi-trailers have to use the full width of the road and any oncoming traffic could be wiped out. This is 1984. We have big dozers and gelignite. The work can be done if only the Main Roads Department would say, "Yes. Let us improve the visibility on that road."

In the 12 years that I have been a member of Parliament, not one cent has been spent on maintaining the roads leading into Rockhampton. It is one of the worst roads round Rockhampton city. The Minister should have a look at the Alton Downs Road, the Yeppin Crossing to Gracemere Road and the Bouldercombe Road. If it was not for the Bruce Highway on which a great deal of Federal money is spent, I do not know what would have happened. Those roads are very bad.

Yesterday I rang the ABC, "The Morning Bulletin" and Channel 7 in Rockhampton. I will show their representatives, within three miles of Rockhampton, bitumen that is not 10 feet wide. The section between Westwood and Gogango, which is on the western highway between Rockhampton and Longreach, is in the same state. People are expected to take their children to school along that road. That is not good enough. I will be putting forward a strong case to have that road upgraded.

Earlier I listened to the member for Ashgrove bowling a few wrong 'uns down. He did that pretty well at cricket and I think he has continued to do it pretty well in Parliament. However, he failed to recognise the good work done by the Lands Department for landholders generally. I owned land under a Labor Government and own land under the present Government. I can only say, "Thank God I was able to convert my grazing homestead leases to freehold." It meant the difference between \$5 an acre and \$35 an acre.

The southerners who come to Queensland are not interested in leasehold land; they want security of tenure. They want freehold land. That is the way it goes. I commend the Minister and his department for trying to simplify the title of grazing homestead leases, because it is most desirable in this State today.

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (3.59 p.m.): I join in this debate to make a few comments additional to those already made by Opposition speakers about the difference between the policies implemented by the Government during the time that it has been in power in this State and the policies espoused by the Australian Labor Party. I recognise and accept some of the historical aspects that were raised last week by the Minister during his second-reading speech. He said that some lands that were split up were later found to be too small for living areas, mainly because of climatic cycles.

Following the war, major leasehold blocks in so many areas, particularly in western Queensland, were split up into farms and grazing properties for ex-servicemen. When a series of good seasons prevailed, everything was fine, but when a series of bad seasons occurred, it was realised that the living areas were not large enough. Amendments had to

be made to the Land Act, and variations and agreements were entered into to allow amalgamations of and changes to some properties. However, that is a constant and ongoing development.

Unfortunately, under this Government's current legislation, it is very expensive for people on the land to change direction under the Land Act. This Bill once more makes it much simpler for people who have land—some of it has been in families for a long time—to convert it from leasehold to freehold. For evermore, that land will be locked into a system that will prevent it from being subdivided into smaller blocks and allowing more people to be put on the land.

Earlier in the debate the member for Balonne spoke about the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme. That is an absolute farce. Today's generation of young Queenslanders has been denied the opportunity to obtain land for farming, agricultural or grazing pursuits. That opportunity has been denied because of the type of legislation introduced by the Government and the changes it has successively wrought to the Land Act.

In the late 1940s and into the 1950s, young ex-servicemen, who had given some of the best years of their lives to the defence of our country, found a sympathetic Government which assisted them to get onto the land virtually for nothing. They were able to show they could make a fist of it. In both agricultural and pastoral industries, they vindicated the stand taken by the Government. Some of the leaders in our grazing and farming communities today had their start in that way.

The brigalow land development scheme was funded in the 1960s. That was another way in which assistance could be given to people who wanted to establish a family farm or grazing property. Larger blocks were once more split up so that smaller family groups could move in. Townships blossomed in areas where there had been none before. Further development emanated from that policy. Unfortunately, the direction changed. Since the 1970s, after finalisation of area 3 of the brigalow scheme, no further scheme has been adopted by the Government to help put young people on the land.

The Government was offered an excellent opportunity with the Burdekin Dam proposal. However, it has been more interested in making millionaires out of a few families in the area who have strong and close affiliations with the National Party. The Burdekin Dam would have provided an excellent opportunity to bring younger people onto the land and help development.

On another occasion I have spoken in the House about a joint report in the early 1960s by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and the Commonwealth Department of National Resources, I think it was at that time, about developing the Suttor River basin as an extension of the brigalow scheme. I have asked questions about it in the House. The present Minister has said that it is not viable. That is not what the report said. It can be made viable. It is an area that I know only too well and it offers another opportunity for the further development of land in this great State.

Somebody has already said in the debate that new land is not being made. That may be true, but no-one in the House can deny that thousands upon thousands of hectares of land in Queensland are not being fully developed and have not reached their full agricultural and grazing potential. In many instances, the land is still held in large aggregations by very wealthy groups. Both unfortunately and tragically, many hectares are held by overseas combines and companies and some have even been destocked to be held for some future overseas investor.

That is what has been happening in Queensland and those are the changes that have happened under the auspices of the Land Act and the various amendments that have passed through the Parliament in recent years. In recent years there have been great rackets.

One problem is that many people have had to seek rural reconstruction and rural adjustment loans after they have purchased properties that have been freeholded by a previous owner at a very low rate from the Government. The previous owner has sold at a very high price and those who have purchased it have needed financial support from the banks, lending houses or lending authorities, only to find that dry seasons and marketing problems have substantially reduced their incomes. Under previous legislation, the Government of the day could waive the rental fees or reduce them for a specified time.

Mr Glasson interjected.

Mr CASEY: The Minister laughs!

Mr Glasson: The rental factor would not be one-half of one per cent of the running costs of a property.

Mr CASEY: The rental costs would not be, but that reduction helped the lessees considerably. I guarantee that at some stage the Minister benefited personally, under either this Government or a Labor Government, on that basis. I am sure that when the Minister experienced tough times through drought or other problems, his lease rental was waived by the Government. If it did not happen to the Minister, it would have happened to some of his neighbours, because the area from which he comes had severe problems in the 1950s, 1960s and even in the early 1970s.

Those who purchase land at a high price from someone who has freeholded it from the Government at a low price are the ones who get into trouble, because they have to meet high interest rates and repayments. Because of that, both Federal and State Governments have had to provide a tremendous amount of money for rural reconstruction and rural adjustment schemes in order to tide the new owners over to prevent the lending authorities repossessing the property. That is how the high cost of operation has come into many of the grazing properties in this State.

The conversion of land from leasehold to freehold has been a great racket, especially for the supporters of the Government. I wish to quote two examples. One, which I raised in the House on 8 February this year, involved a \$20 company known as Ciasom Pty Ltd. A moment ago the member for Callide said that he would not mind certain families owning properties close to his area, because that would bring about considerable improvement. That is for sure! In 1969, the Lands Department entered into an agreement with the then owner of the property subsequently brought by Ciasom for him to buy his land at \$2 per acre over a period of 40 years, which was \$848.60 per year and a total of \$33,944. Within 10 years of the date of freeholding, when 30 years of repayments at that low rate still had to be made, the owner was able to sell to Ciasom Pty Ltd. As I revealed in this House on 8 February, that is the Bjelkie-Petersen family trust company, the one which bought the land for \$1.45m. The company has borrowed \$3m using that same land as security. I do not know whether it is still paying \$848.60 a year to the Lands Department, but under the legislation it would be entitled to do so. That is the value that lending authorities place on that land, plus the added benefits received from various Ministers following decisions taken in Cabinet for and on behalf of their leader and his family—and it is still going on!

Last week, we saw the gazettal of a further amount of \$43,000 for pipes for another 6.3 km of road on the Duraringa-Apis Creek Road leading directly to the Premier's family property. So, in a short period, a little-used road that services about 15 properties is suddenly being upgraded over a distance of about 14 km. It has led also to the acquisition of part of the Foleyvale Aboriginal Reserve. That resumption was carried out prior to the Aboriginal land rights legislation being passed by this House. It was handled in that manner by Executive Council so that the actions of the Premier's family company would not be exposed in this Parliament. Those are the sorts of things that this Government does. I will not be like the member for Callide and be diverted from the provisions of the Bill, but there is a lot more I could say on that subject.

Let us look at another very close friend of the National Party, already mentioned in this debate by the honourable member for Ashgrove, and that is our good friend from the Gold Coast, Keith Williams. Let me say at the outset that I believe Mr Williams is building a wonderful resort on Hamilton Island and injecting badly needed capital into the tourist industry. He is the pace-setter for the tourist industry in that area, but he has had a nice start from this Government.

I know the island well. I remember when it was the subject of a grazing lease, but the lease has gradually been changed. The terms of the original grazing lease that Mr Williams took over stated that there could not be any tourist operation on the island. But what do we find? When Mr Williams took over he was able to virtually reverse the terms. He was able to have tremendous areas of the island converted to special lease. Incidentally, he is the first man to donate \$25,000 to the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation. The special lease virtually means that he is paying only \$6,456 a year, which is about the amount he would be paying in rates, to be able to continue to develop the island.

We all know and this cannot be denied—that last Thursday, after the opening of the new port at Dalrymple Bay, the Premier flew over to spend the night on Hamilton Island. He went to see how things were progressing and also to have a look at his own unit. He was the recipient of one of the first condominiums built on the island. It is available to him at any time. The Minister can shake his head—perhaps he does not know about it—but that did happen. I know it, and the Premier knows it.

One other point I want to touch on very quickly—it has been referred to already—is the business of foreign land ownership. Why should we not have a register? A lot of people have asked, “Why should we?”

Mr Simpson interjected.

Mr CASEY: I say, “Why shouldn’t we?” Almost every other country wants to know who owns or leases property, and who is developing property. There have been allegations that Opposition members are knocking the cane-farmers in north Queensland. That is a lot of rot.

Mr Simpson: You will not answer it.

Mr CASEY: That is a great lot of rot. One thing I learned very early in the piece about the honourable member for Cooroora is that he is one of the biggest nongs I have ever seen come here.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Menzel): Order!

Mr CASEY: It is no wonder that the Premier has not promoted the honourable member. Every time a promotion is made to Cabinet the honourable member gnashes his teeth and hides his tongue that is brown because of the efforts he has made to try to get a position. But still he never makes it, and he will never make it because he has not got it. It is because of the way he behaves so often in here and out in the community.

Mr Simpson: You haven’t answered it.

Mr CASEY: The answer is simply this: I do not care about New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania or Western Australia. I care about Queensland and Queensland’s legislation.

Mr Simpson: You are a hypocrite.

Mr CASEY: If the honourable member cares to make inquiries he will see that under amendments to the Land Act the Government has made it far easier for foreigners to buy land in Queensland than in any other State. In fact, foreigners are encouraged to buy in secrecy, as became obvious under some facets of the Iwasaki legislation. Similar occurrences happen time and again.

Why should not Queensland have a foreign land register? Why should not we know the purpose for which a foreigner is buying land? Why should not we know what benefits or otherwise will flow to the State of Queensland from the purchase of land by a person from Malaya, Singapore, the United Kingdom or the United States? Why should not the people of Queensland know what benefits will flow to the State from the approval of such an application? Why should not Queenslanders know who is buying land that may be important to our defence? Why should not we know if people from a country that is not particularly keen on us have purchased land, and that that may be detrimental to our defence?

It is no secret that, prior to World War II, Japanese pearl divers in the Torres Strait and beche-de-mer fishermen on the Great Barrier Reef had charts which showed parts of our coastline that were not available to Australians. They depicted rocky outcrops off shore that were not on any of our charts.

Why should not we know if such people are moving in again? Why should not we know the decisions of the Foreign Investment Review Board that affect the sale and transfer of land to foreigners? Why should not we have the right to say what the long-term usage of land will be for the people of Queensland? Why should not we determine that in our own way and have knowledge of foreigners who own land?

We are not saying that we refuse to sell land to foreigners. We are simply saying that there should be a register of non-residents or foreigners who own land. Why should not we know how areas can be affected if land is bought by foreigners? We are concerned about our land, our future and the future of our children. It is only a capital investment on the part of these people. Why should not we know the employment that may be generated by a foreign person's applying for land in Queensland? Why should not we know the effect on valuations of any sale or transfer of land to foreigners?

We all know the rackets that occur in land sales; we know how one company can sell to another, and how false valuation factors can be used in inter-company transfers. The Act still covers the transfer of leasehold land to companies, but I am concerned about the freeholding of land. When land is freeholded, it is a different kettle of fish altogether. Why should not local authorities know the options that they have about land being purchased by foreigners? It is essential to have a foreign land register. As I understand the recent rows in the Government and between the Government and its former coalition partner, only one person is really standing in the way.

The present Minister for Lands and the former Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services, in consultation with the former Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, had actually taken the first steps to establish a land register. The Premier was overseas. When he returned he put the lid on it and stopped Cabinet from proceeding any further. The same situation exists today.

I now want to turn my attention to Crown land held adjacent to provincial cities and close to the metropolitan area within the Moreton region. Many years ago Crown land on the fringes of provincial cities was deliberately classified as special lease areas so that it would be available to the Government for future expansion. However, because of legislative changes to the Land Act, people entered into agreements with the Department of Lands, took out special leases on Crown land, and subsequently took advantage of the freeholding provisions that were introduced and, in many cases, subdivided it. What that means now is that the cost of obtaining land for recreational, sporting and educational purposes, as well as for other Government purposes such as the construction of State Government buildings, has to be met by the Government. In some cases the Government is buying back, at very high prices, the land that it sold almost for a song. Much of that special lease land around the provincial cities has gone. The people who bought that land subdivided it, and the people who subsequently bought the allotments have demanded from local authorities areas for parklands and for recreational purposes. It is becoming very expensive for the Government to buy from its budget new lands for schools in developing areas.

I ask the Minister to conduct immediately a survey of every provincial city in Queensland to ensure that all special lease lands are held for all time on special leases so that they cannot be freeholded. That will mean that the Government has land at its disposal.

People who have purchased allotments from special lease lands that have been subdivided are now paying between \$600 and \$1000 per allotment to local authorities as contributions towards the provision of parklands. Sporting bodies cannot obtain sufficient land on which to develop ovals and other sporting areas. The higher cost of land that is caused by demand indicates that the Government has been penny wise and pound foolish in the way in which it has disposed of special lease land. An immediate clamp should be put on the transfer of special lease land to freehold land, particularly in the expanding areas.

I am not talking about development leases in which the natural state of the land is such that much work has to be done before it is suitable for sports areas, parks or subdivisional allotments. Much of the land around cities such as Mackay, Innisfail and Cairns that was freeholded became cane farms, and it is very expensive to buy that land back now. The Government should take a close look at the situation and ensure that it has land available for its purposes. If none is available, the Government should consider taking up land now on the fringe areas of the provincial cities so that as the cities grow and develop, land will be available for the future young sports men and women of Australia. Land will be available for recreational areas and parks for families and for Government purposes. I ask the Minister to investigate that suggestion.

Mr McPHIE (Toowoomba North) (4.25 p.m.): I was surprised by some of the comments of the honourable member for Mackay regarding a foreign land-ownership register. He knows as well as I do that such information is already recorded in three places and that the information is available to anyone who wants to pay the necessary fee. Even the stickybeaks on the Opposition side can find out who owns our land. A foreign ownership of land register is a political football that Opposition members like kicking about. But surely it will be worn out in the very near future.

The whole aim of Opposition members in arguing for the creation of a register of foreign ownership of land is the establishment of another department. Opposition members are obsessed with the creation of more departments and a bigger bureaucracy.

Other comments made by the honourable member for Mackay were in total conflict. He said that it is far easier to buy land in Queensland than anywhere else in Australia. However, prior to that he said that in this State young people are denied the opportunity of holding land. He suggested that that situation arose because of the land tenure. It has not arisen because of the land tenure.

Mr CASEY: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Toowoomba North is completely misinterpreting my comments. I specifically said that it was far easier for foreigners to buy land in Queensland than in any other State.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Menzel): Order!

Mr McPHIE: The denial of land to young people has nothing to do with tenure; it is associated wholly and solely with costs. Although at times costs of land might be associated with different tenures, they can be related directly to the economy of the country. They can be traced to the inflationary trends that were introduced about 10 or 12 years ago by the Whitlam ALP Government and are continued today by the Hawke Government.

The Bill covers many of the problems to which the honourable member for Callide referred, but I am afraid that it does nothing for the submerged lands that were mentioned by the honourable member for Ashgrove. He is certainly on a sticky wicket—in fact, worse than that, he is on a wet wicket. His remarks were just that—wet. I notice that a short time ago he left the Chamber. I am sure that he went out to go swimming round the bottom of the harbour to look for some of these title deeds that do not exist.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr McPHIE: This Bill has nothing to do with tax legislation; it amends the Land Act, and it is designed to simplify existing provisions in the Land Act while at the same time paying due acknowledgment to differing needs and circumstances in rural areas.

My intention is to explain briefly the differences between the present land tenures and to highlight the ones that will come into effect after the enactment of this legislation.

Previous speakers have said that Queensland contains approximately 172 800 000 ha of land, of which approximately one-fifth is freehold. The remainder is held under broadly two types of tenure: pastoral leases and selection leases.

As to pastoral leases—this category encompasses pastoral holdings, preferential pastoral holdings, pastoral development holdings and stud holdings. Pastoral holdings and pastoral development holdings may be held by corporations as well as by natural persons. There is no specified maximum area in respect of any such holdings. There is no provision in law to freehold such holdings.

Preferential pastoral holdings may be held only by natural persons; corporations are not eligible or qualified to hold them. A preferential pastoral holding is limited to 94 square miles or 250 sq. km. There is no provision in law to freehold a preferential pastoral holding.

The tenure scene in the pastoral region has remained relatively static for many years. For example, in 1956 there were 2 357 pastoral leases comprising about 100 million hectares, whereas today there are 1 805 pastoral leases comprising 94 million hectares, excluding the stud holdings. Of them 415 are registered in the name of corporations and 1 196 are regarded as being less than a living area. Behind all this are facts that have a great bearing on the viability of pastoral leases. They include the tyranny of distance, the paucity and uncertainty of rainfall and other adverse factors which preclude subdivision of expiring leases into owner/driver type farming units. All of these problems do very much to detract from the viability of leases.

As to stud holdings—in 1927 that type of tenure was introduced and is distinguishable by the fact that any stud holding is required to be conditioned, amongst other things, to the production and sale of stud merino sires or sires of a breed of cattle as the particular case requires.

Shortly stated, the term of a pastoral lease or preferential pastoral lease may not exceed 30 years. The term of a pastoral development holding may extend, if the Minister so decides, to 50 years and, in the case of a stud holding, to 75 years. There are presently 22 stud holdings registered in the books of the department. Of them, 13 are sheep studs and 9 are cattle studs. Stud enterprises are otherwise conducted, of course, on other leasehold lands and freehold lands.

The second broad category of tenure is the selection. The current-day type of selection encompasses settlement farm leases, grazing farm, grazing homestead and perpetual lease. Where a block is opened as a settlement farm lease, a condition of personal residence may be imposed. The usual term of personal residence by lessee is seven years. A grazing farm connotes something less than a living area, and a grazing homestead connotes a living area. A grazing farm is not subject to the condition of personal residence, but in the case in which a block is opened as a grazing homestead, the condition of personal residence is imposed for the period of seven years.

Mr Davis: Would you insist upon the Minister requiring larger print?

Mr McPHIE: No. I can read the print quite OK. It is just that I am plodding along on statistical information and definitions which, I am sure, would be interesting to Opposition members if they paid attention and listened.

A grazing homestead perpetual lease is a derivative tenure to which any of the three other tenure types can be converted. Traditionally these tenure types can only be held by natural persons; corporations are excluded from holding them. The term is 30 years and, of course, the difference between the first three-mentioned and a grazing homestead perpetual lease is simply that in the latter case there is no expiry of lease—it is what it says, a lease in perpetuity. Incidentally, it is sometimes understood that a perpetual lease is a 99-year lease. There is no such thing under the Land Act in Queensland, nor has there ever been such a thing. The Bill converts all settlement farm leases, grazing farms and grazing homesteads to grazing homestead perpetual leases. That simplifies the number of different types of tenure in this area. All of those leases are capable of being converted to freehold. The present range of freeholding tenures is represented today in a number of different leases which are represented by agricultural farm, grazing homestead freeholding lease, purchase lease, special lease purchase freehold, auction purchase freehold and auction perpetual lease (convertible).

The purchase lease was designed for the purpose of the brigalow scheme and is distinguished from other freeholding tenures in that the purchase money was obtained by way of a loan from the corporation—in this case, the Government—and was repayable over the 25-year term of the purchase.

Auction purchase freehold is the name given to a situation in which land is sold for an estate in fee simple either for cash or upon terms. Except in the area of the brigalow scheme, rural land, as a matter of policy direction, has not been made available by this means.

It is interesting to note these two points about the grazing selection tenures—

- (1) Because of non-availability of suitable land for opening under these tenures no land has been made available since 1971; and
- (2) the total area of selection is in the order of 20 million hectares and, as previously pointed out, these selections can be freeholded at the election of the lessee.

The total area of freehold/freeholding in the State is now in the order of 35 million hectares.

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a point of order. I note that the member for Toowoomba North is reading from a paper. I would like the paper to be tabled.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Menzel): Order! I ask the member for Brisbane Central to finish his point of order.

Mr DAVIS: I would like the document to be tabled.

Mr BORBIDGE: I have a further point of order. Members of the Opposition have been adopting this practice time and time again. There has certainly been no request from the Government side for any such nonsense.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Toowoomba North may continue.

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a further point of order. I ask for your ruling on whether the member should table the document; otherwise I will have to move that the document be tabled.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have just ruled that I will not order the honourable member for Toowoomba North to table the document.

Mr McPHIE: It may be of interest to the member for Brisbane Central to know that I am not reading from a paper. I am reading from notes that I prepared for the speech. It might interest him to know also that the total area of freehold land in the State now is of the order of 35 000 000 ha and that applications to freehold are being submitted regularly.

Another type of tenure that is dealt with in the Bill is special lease. At times it has been much in vogue. As the title rather indicates, a special lease is designed to cover a multitude of circumstances. At the discretion of the Minister, it can be granted in priority or made available by way of auction over Crown land, or it can be granted in priority or made available over land set apart and reserved, provided the purpose of the lease is reasonably compatible with the purpose of the reservation.

A special lease does not contain a covenant to renewal on the expiration of the subsisting lease; nor does it contain a covenant to a right to a more secure form of tenure. However, in certain circumstances a lessee is permitted to purchase the land on the basis of an estate in fee-simple or be granted a perpetual lease thereover. In the vast majority of instances, the lessee, if he so desires, is granted a new lease on the expiry of his special lease. The circumstance of the availability of freehold and/or perpetual lease in respect of special lease lands, however, is a rather involved matter, and a comprehensive explanation would not be appropriate in this debate.

The number of leases within the various tenure types and the respective aggregate areas are illustrated on page 18 of the last published annual report of the Land Administration Commission, a copy of which is readily available in the Parliamentary Library. I suggest that the member for Brisbane Central peruse it. He would then be able to extract speech notes for himself. I have made no specific mention in my speech of perpetual lease selections and auction perpetual leases, which are really tenures of a bygone era and have been phased out as operative tenures.

The Bill aims at converting all existing grazing selections to a term in perpetuity. Their status is not otherwise affected. Particular attention has been given to preserving the rights and entitlements of all the lessees. The Bill reduces the type of lease to two. The first is an agricultural farm lease, which is a freeholding tenure, with the purchase money being payable over 40 years at no interest. The second is the grazing homestead perpetual lease, which at any time in its term may be converted to a grazing homestead freeholding lease, with the purchase price again being payable at no interest over 40 years.

Where in appropriate circumstances the Minister decides under the powers vested in him by Part VI of the Act to offer other than a pastoral lease in respect of an expiring pastoral lease, he would be permitted to offer a grazing homestead perpetual lease. He is not empowered to offer an agricultural farm. The lessee, again at any time during the period of the lease, could apply to convert his lease to a freeholding tenure.

In summary, this Bill is designed to simplify the existing Land Act provisions but give true acknowledgement to differing needs and circumstances. It has been well thought out and is sensible, timely and practical legislation brought before the House. I congratulate the Minister.

Mr JENNINGS (Southport) (4.40 p.m.): I wish to speak briefly to the Bill, which covers many matters upon which I will not touch because they have been mentioned by other members. Of course, anything to do with land is vitally important because so much of Queensland is so fertile.

Mr Prest: Don't you know a bit about land in Victoria?

Mr JENNINGS: Yes, I do know quite a bit about it.

The member for Ashgrove mentioned land owned by a Mr Tuesley from the Gold Coast. The member stated that the land described in the titles held by Mr Tuesley was above water but the Government had passed legislation that disfranchised Mr Tuesley and negated any rights that he might have had.

The first I knew of Mr Tuesley's problem was when I read about it in a local newspaper. Because 18 months ago an old female friend of mine gave me a title from the old Moondarewa township where this property was purchased in 1881 for £12/8/2, I knew of the type of problem. That lady's title was hand-written on parchment, and no doubt Mr Tuesley's is very similar. At that time, I checked on the land covered by the lady's title and it was well and truly deep under water.

I wish to make quite clear that no-one in the Government would have any intention of disfranchising anyone of their rights to ownership of any land in the State. The whole matter is a fascinating piece of history. The land was inundated some years ago. Mr Tuesley's statement that the land is worth \$7m is based on a number of quite unusual assumptions.

I raise this matter because the entire speech of the member for Ashgrove was based on the simple assumption that Mr Tuesley's land is above water. That is not a fact.

Mr VEIVERS: I rise to a point of order. In an endeavour to refresh the mind of the member for Southport, I point out that at no stage did I state that Mr Tuesley claimed that all of his land was above water. Mr Tuesley's information to me was that he thought a large proportion of his land was above water.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Will the honourable member for Southport accept the explanation of the honourable member for Ashgrove?

Mr BORBIDGE: I wish to speak to the point of order, if I may.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am determining the point of order raised by the member for Ashgrove. Will the honourable member for Southport accept the explanation given by the member for Ashgrove in connection with what he allegedly said?

Mr JENNINGS: From an interjection, I gained the impression that that was the interpretation of the honourable member for Ashgrove. However, I accept the honourable member's explanation.

The whole tone of the speech of the member for Ashgrove was that Mr Tuesley's rights to that property have been destroyed and that the property is mostly above water. I still have the title that I mentioned from the old Moondarewa township, but today that land is deep under water. Quite a number of titles were granted over land in that area. I was surprised that this matter was suddenly raised when the stabilisation of the Southport Bar was agreed to. The titles deal with an area in my electorate, but no-one other than the lady to whom I referred earlier, who produced the title because she thought it was an amusing historical piece of parchment, has come to my electorate office to discuss the matter. I agree that the parchment is of historical interest, but the matter has been discussed for years. No-one came along after the article was published in the newspaper.

I want to make it quite clear that I had two telephone conversations with Mr Tuesley. I asked him where the land was to which his titles referred, and was it covered. He was not sure whether it was under water. I said, "Are they titles from the old Moondarewa township?" He said, "Yes, they are." So I arranged for him to come to my office at 9.30 on Monday, 26 March. He was to be accompanied by a legal adviser. But he did not show up; nor did he telephone. So my secretary rang his home, and Mrs Tuesley said that he had gone to the doctor and that he would ring back later on. My secretary rang him again later in the morning to ask whether he was coming in.

I want to make it clear also that Mr Tuesley said that he could not afford to pay a surveyor to go out and survey the land but I had already arranged with a friend of mine who is a licensed surveyor to go out to The Spit with Mr Tuesley to check out the land. This was to be done at no cost to Mr Tuesley. That is what I agreed to do——

Mr Veivers: This is since the legislation has passed the House?

Mr JENNINGS: I had never heard of Mr Tuesley until I read in the newspaper that he said the land was worth \$7m.

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr JENNINGS: The legislation was passed before Christmas. It was quite clear, and everyone knows about it. The map at the back of the Bill showed the area in which the walls were to be erected and the areas to be filled, and I was concerned about that because most of Moondarewa township was a lot deeper into The Broadwater than that area that is to be filled.

Mr VEIVERS: I rise to a point of order. I do not want to take up too much of the honourable member's time, but my point is that he is talking about the period since this legislation was passed. He says that he has offered to go out and inspect the deeds and so on. Mr Tuesley's point is quite simply this: Was sufficient effort put in by the department for a search of titles?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I advise honourable members that a point of order can be considered by the Chair only when it relates to an irregularity in the debate or an offence by a member. I do not consider that the protracted discussion between the member for Southport and the member for Ashgrove can possibly amount to a valid point of order. I cannot accept the point of order on that basis.

Mr JENNINGS: The member for Ashgrove might be upset, but all I am doing is stating the facts and outlining what has occurred since I heard of Mr Tuesley's land for the first time. I went out of my way to help Mr Tuesley. I had a licensed surveyor who was prepared to go with me and Mr Tuesley out to The Spit and check out his titles. I wanted to see whether he was fair dinkum, and then take it from there. I could not do any more than that. But he knocked back that offer. He has given the member for Ashgrove a lot of information. He is entitled to do that, and I am not complaining about it; but I want everybody to know that the offer was made. I was going to check it out.

It must be said that this is a very unusual situation, and always has been. It involves a number of factors. For instance, who owns the titles? In whose names are those titles? Mr Tuesley could not tell me that over the telephone, but I was going to look at those titles and then obtain proper advice on them. It is one thing to have possession of the titles; but in whose names are they? When the land was inundated, what steps were taken? We do not even know when it was inundated. Surely at that time anyone who owned a title to valuable land would have negotiated with the Government or the council to try to preserve the land. We know what happened a few years ago when a cyclone affected people's land. Negotiations took place immediately with the council and the Government to protect the properties. What steps were taken in those days? What documentation is there of those days?

Quite obviously the Government's responsibility to freehold ownership rights are sacrosanct. I repeat that the responsibility to freehold ownership rights are sacrosanct. No-one on this side of the House would do anything to destroy them, and no-one on this side would disagree with that.

On the other hand, the Government has an obligation to the public purse. Should it be responsible for an act of God that took place years ago?

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr JENNINGS: Many factors are involved. What attempts have been made to save the land? The stabilisation of the bar has been under discussion for years. The member for Ashgrove made a derogatory remark about some part of the stabilisation of the bar development being sold to someone. That was completely wrong. Neither the Government nor anyone else has any intention of confiscating land that is properly owned by anyone in that area. As I said, the Government has a responsibility to the public purse.

Mr D'Arcy: Are you denying that Mr Tuesley owns the land?

Mr JENNINGS: I am saying that we do not know whose names the title deeds are in.

Mr D'Arcy: What is this?

Mr JENNINGS: I made an offer to him to come along. The honourable member has those documents. I have not seen them.

Mr Burns: I think you are in deep water.

Mr JENNINGS: I think some of the land may be in deep water.

My offer to Mr Tuesley stands. He can come to my office at any time. If he makes an appointment, I will arrange to go out on The Spit with Mr Tuesley, with his title, and with a surveyor. We will try to see where the land is. That offer still stands. The Government always regarded freehold ownership rights as sacrosanct.

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (4.52 p.m.): I am very pleased to enter the debate, because I think that the member for Southport stopped far short of justice as far as Mr Tuesley is concerned. Mr Tuesley has a deed for the property that was there, and the Queensland Government, the free enterprise Government that boasts about its commitment to freeholding and all the land it has freeholded, intends to take that land away from Mr Tuesley so that some of its mates in the Bayview Harbour and the other developers—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! There is far too much shouting and audible conversation in the Chamber. If it does not cease, I will send someone out.

Mr BURNS: I agree, Mr Deputy Speaker. They are provoking me.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am about to rule that pointing in the Chamber is unparliamentary.

Mr BURNS: In that case, I will nod at them. Honourable members opposite are provoking me and causing me concern because they are showing no interest in the ordinary battler. The Tuesley family has been around The Broadwater for years.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr BURNS: The honourable member need not worry about that. Some of the men who developed Chevron Island and the other islands were in a similar position. They had land under water. When I was a lad, I often went crabbing on a lot of the present land on Chevron Island. I used to take my boat up through the creek in the middle of Chevron Island. The creek has been pump-filled and sold by the land developers, and the land developers were allowed to own the land under the water. Nichols, the man who is a friend of the honourable member for Southport and donates to his campaign fund, the bloke with the mirrors on the ceiling of the motel—and I do not know why he put them there—at which the honourable member continually stays, developed underwater land or sold land of that type on Russell Island. By an act of God, a split occurred at Jumpinpin and a lot of farming land went under water. Mr Nichols had a surveyor survey that land. The surveyor was standing up to his knees in water. Nichols sold the land to unsuspecting people and the Government did nothing about it. It finally made a half-hearted attempt to prosecute him, but he is still selling land today. There is no difference between the underwater land that Nichols sold and the land that Mr Tuesley wants to have restored to his family. There is no difference between that and the development on Russell and Chevron Islands. Bruce Small, the bloke with the \$30,000 false teeth and the sun-glasses—

Honourable Members interjected.

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

Mr BURNS: I will, Mr Deputy Speaker. I have again been provoked. Government members are trying to stir me up and get me angry about the way in which they are treating this man who has the deeds and who owns a block of land. The Government wants to rip him off. It is daylight robbery. Ned Kelly was a gentleman compared with the National Party members on the Gold Coast who are supporting this nefarious robbery.

Mr Fouras: They are johnny-come-latelies.

Mr BURNS: That is right. Some of them are motel owners on the coast who have a photo of Joh on the wall and who now claim that they stand up for the battler. The National Party member is changing his name to Bjelke-Petersen now that there is talk about the Premier's son becoming a politician. The only way in which many National Party members are going to make their name and gain endorsement in the future is by using the name Bjelke-Petersen. The House will have members called Billy Bjelke-Petersen-Glasson, Robert Bjelke-Petersen-Borbidge and Billy Bjelke-Petersen-Kaus. They will have to use the name Bjelke-Petersen or they will not be allowed to be candidates for National Party endorsement.

Mr Casey: It will be just like Moir's cartoon's; they will all have to look like him.

Mr BURNS: Yes. They will all have to have a hat with corks on.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am amenable to the mood of the House, but the joke has gone far enough. I ask the member for Lytton to return to the Bill before the House.

Mr BURNS: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, that you called the member for Southport a joke, but I think that, in his speech, he went far enough to deserve it.

I was surprised that the Minister for Lands would come to this place without implementing in this Chamber the promises that the National Party has made over the years to introduce a foreign land register. In May 1972, Mr Wally Rae—now Sir Wallace Rae—said that something must be done about foreign control of land in Queensland. At the same time in 1972, a bloke by the name of Bob Sparkes—he later also received a title when he was president of the Country Party—said that the Country Party's land committee had decided to seek a new law to provide legislation aimed at preventing foreign colonisation of Queensland land. That was 12 years ago.

It is true to say today that that policy has not been implemented only because one man, the Premier of Queensland, has decided that all the Bjelke-Petersens in the Government, all of the name-change people on the Government benches, have no right to make a decision, that they must do as they are told. Joh Bjelke-Petersen has made it quite clear that he does not want a foreign land register because there is something to hide. What has the National Party to hide that it is not prepared to register the ownership of the State's land and let the people of Queensland know who owns the State? Why does the party not want the people to know how many Asians, Germans and Arab sheikhs control Queensland's land?

When I was a lad, a bloke named "Black Jack" McEwen, who was the Leader of the Country Party at the national level, had a higher popularity rating than any National Party Leader since. He talked about buying back the farm and about the day when Australians would have to buy back their own land. I worry about the day when the Mitsuis or someone else from overseas can make decisions about the land in which I was born and in which my daughters will raise their kids. Those decisions may not be made here.

The Premier's involvement with Mr Iwasaki is a good example. Every time the Premier goes to Japan, he snivels off to Iwasaki to get instructions about what Mr Iwasaki will allow. On 1 April 1979, a five-year plan for the Iwasaki land was started. What is there today? Show me the 30 units of the international village; show me all the development that was contained in the proposal that went through Parliament during an overnight session; show me the things that the Government is supposed to have forced Iwasaki to do. And then tell me that, since then, Iwasaki has not tried to buy property round the place and has not tried to pressure the farmers and the cattle-owners in the area to sell their properties to him so that he can expand even further. Tell me that that is not so, and then tell me why the National Party refuses to set up a register of foreign ownership of land and refuses to let us know who owns this country, who is running this country, who is manipulating this country and who is using this country. Foreign land-owners are buying and controlling our land while sitting overseas.

When the National Party was the Country Party and represented country interests, most of its campaigns were directed against foreign land-owners and overseas—what shall I call them?—bludgers.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order!

Mr BURNS: I realise that that may be unparliamentary, Mr Deputy Speaker, so I shall use the word "landlords".

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw the word.

Mr BURNS: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, I withdraw it. It is my way of describing the people involved who do nothing for Queensland.

I do not need to state what happened after 1972 at the various State conferences of the National Party, or the Country Party as it was at that time. In the old days, every Country Party supporter was against the running of this country by foreign interests. They argued against foreign interests in the sugar industry, in the beef industry and in every other rural industry. Not so with the new National Party. It brought the smoothies up to Queensland; it brought here the blokes who were kicked out of Melbourne and New South Wales, the con men who were running the operations down on the Gold Coast, the blokes who could not exist in the political climate down there. Those blokes came up here, and they are dominating the National Party today.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I think the honourable member again used the word "bludgers". If so, I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr BURNS: No, Mr Deputy Speaker. On this occasion, I said "con men".

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member used another word.

Mr BURNS: I said "con men", Mr Deputy Speaker. As it is not unparliamentary, I do not think I have to withdraw that.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. I may be incorrect, but I thought the honourable member said that con men were running the National Party on the Gold Coast. That is quite offensive and unnecessary. I ask the honourable member to withdraw it.

Mr BURNS: I am sure that the honourable member does not mean to imply that he is running the National Party on the Gold Coast!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Lytton to accept the point of order of the honourable member for Surfers Paradise. The honourable member for Surfers Paradise has said that the remark made by the honourable member for Lytton offends him, and the honourable member for Lytton will accept that.

Mr BURNS: I understand that, in line with the forms of the House, anyone can ask that a comment be withdrawn. I accept the forms of the House. In the past, I have argued with occupants of the chair that the forms should apply to all honourable members. I withdraw. I do not think that the honourable member for Surfers Paradise is the man who runs the National Party on the Gold Coast. I think that he was drawing the long bow. In accordance with the forms of the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, I withdraw.

To move on—at one stage in 1981 there was a good deal of hoo-ha when the National Party was eventually going to produce a register of foreign ownership of land. I kept some newspaper cuttings. I think they are incredible. The first one, which appeared in "The Queensland Graingrower" of 12 August 1981, states, "Premier supports call for land register". Beneath that headline this appears—

"A register of foreign-owned land in Queensland is likely to be set up following support from State Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen."

Suddenly Mr Bjelke-Petersen was on side. Why did he change his mind?

Mr Casey: Because he was going to give everything to Dr Oskar.

Mr BURNS: I have not come to Dr Oskar yet.

That article was followed by a series of articles. For example, in the "Cattleman" of 23 September 1981, under the headline, "Way open now to land register", this appeared—

"Queensland is to have a register of foreign ownership of land following heavy pressure on the Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, who has resisted moves for the register for several years."

So back in 1981 the Premier was supporting the establishment of a register.

On 29 August 1981 "The Courier-Mail" carried the headline, "State plans register of foreign land owners." The article under that headline stated—

"Queensland is expected to establish a register of foreign land owners later this year. The Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, last night undertook to implement the register following a call from the National Party management committee that it be established as a matter of urgency."

Is that the same bloke? Is that the same Bjelke-Petersen who later on said, "We can't have that. It will stop free enterprise. It will let people know what is going on. What happened to the National Party's secrecy provisions?"

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr BURNS: The honourable member is running the National Party down on the Gold Coast. I will stick to telling him what is happening in the National Party all over the State.

Throughout 1981 articles appeared in the press about this matter. One article was headed "Queensland to check foreign land speculators". A photograph of Bill Glasson, taken when he was about 18 years of age, was published. The article stated—

"The State Government is to move against people living abroad speculating in Queensland land. Foreign and expatriate Australian nationals could be required to declare all property holdings in Queensland under a proposed state register of foreign land ownership.

State Cabinet yesterday ordered a report on what could be Australia's first monitor of foreign land interests.

The proposed register would record holdings and future purchasers by foreign interests in urban or rural real estate."

In 1981 our friends in the National Party had seen the light. Perhaps I should not say that they had seen the light in 1981; they had seen the light all along, and I refer to Bob Sparkes and other persons. The Premier had seen the light. He is the only person who counts. He is the only man who makes policy in the National Party. All through early 1982 we kept hearing new stories.

An article on 22 January 1982 stated—

"Foreign landowners who fail to declare their Queensland interests could face forfeiture of their properties under the State's proposed register of foreign land ownership."

The Premier does not change his mind very often. That statement would have been an aberration. After the stories of approval for the land register, this statement appeared on 14 July 1982 under the heading "Approval for land register"—

"State Cabinet last week approved draft legislation—"

the Government is fair dinkum now; it is even drafting the legislation—

"to set up Australia's first register of foreign land ownership."

What happened? At that stage people started to take credit. An article appeared in the press under the heading "Q.G.G.A. instrumental in land register". The members of the association said, "We take the credit. We are the blokes who talked him into it." They started to produce stories about how they influenced people to produce this land register that the Premier was to implement. Then along came a funny little situation. An article appeared in the press headed "Joh rules out foreign land owners list" What he said was, "What you don't know won't worry you." That is quite true. What the people of Queensland do not know will not worry them. He does not want the people of Queensland to know what is happening.

Sitting behind me are six Liberals. Once in the Government was a Minister named Norm Lee who skited to the heavens that the Arabs were going to take over Queensland. At one stage the Premier himself invited the Shah of Iran to Queensland. There was a suggestion that he would buy islands off the coast. We know what happened to him. As a result of that we would have been inviting to Queensland most of the problems of the Arab countries.

I do not mind my colleagues having a fight, but I suggest that they have it in their own time. I am trying to make my speech.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr BURNS: The factions are lining up, and I am having trouble trying to get my story over.

The situation is that since 1965, the Premier and the National Party have been proposing through the newspapers and by carrying motions at their conferences that they want a foreign land register. They no longer want the register. That shows clearly that one cannot take any notice of anyone on the Government benches other than the Premier. We can ignore anything said by people who attend National Party meetings, people who carry motions at their little branches and people who attend State executives and State conferences. They find that the motions that they carry at their conferences are ignored. The Premier says, "I am not telling the people of Queensland who owns this State. I do not want the people of Queensland to know how much Japanese money has been invested in this State. I do not want them to know how much Arab money has been invested in this State. I do not want them to know how much Chinese money from Singapore or how much German money has been invested in this State."

I have attended conferences arranged by grain-growers and representatives of the cattlemen's union at which the people whom they allegedly represent have complained bitterly about foreign meat interests buying land in the country and about German farmers buying large areas of land on the Darling Downs. The Queensland Grain Growers Association complained bitterly that those people were forcing up prices by paying inflated prices. Those inflated prices resulted in new valuations. New valuations meant higher rates. The people did not want that to happen, but the foreigners wanted to control it themselves and the Government did nothing to stop them.

Why have the Premier and that National Party decided to sell out the people of this State? Why have they refused to let the people of this State know who owns the land here? I would not be surprised if more than half of this State is owned by foreign interests. I do not make any bones about it. I say to anyone who comes to this country, "If you want to come and live here, if you want to be a citizen here, you should be allowed to buy land. However, if you are going to live overseas, if you intend being an Iwasaki and running a Japanese colony in Queensland, you have no chance with me."

When this Government changed the Aliens Act in 1965, when it changed a law that had been on our books for many years, it took a retrograde step. A third of the States in America have laws controlling the foreign ownership of land. Canada, some of the South American countries and many other countries throughout the world are taking this issue very seriously. In copies of "Time" and "Newsweek" magazines people throughout the world are expressing their concern about foreign land-ownership.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr BURNS: Let me say to the parrots on the other side that they in the National Party have to do what Premier Joh says. When Joh says, "Pretty cocky, jump through the hoop.", they will jump. They are not allowed an opinion of their own. The member for Lockyer has never once risen in this place to say that he disagrees with the Premier. Let him tell me the last time when in his electorate he said, "I think Premier Joh should go. He is a bit nutty and it's about time he retired." When has he ever said it? He does not have the guts to say it. He knows damned well that if he does not change his name to "Ginger Bjelke-Petersen" he will not win his seat.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (5.11 p.m.): The matter of the Gold Coast land, which was raised by the member for Ashgrove and replied to by the member for Southport, highlighted the National Party's attitude to freehold land. One must look critically at that point of view. In real terms in Queensland, under the National Party, land is only worth what the National Party says it is worth. Freehold title is not worth the paper it is written on in this State—unless the Government decides otherwise. The Gold Coast is probably the best example of land anywhere in Queensland.

The member for Southport said "my electorate". I represented that area long before the member for Surfers Paradise represented part of it and the member for Southport represented part of it. They are, as the member for South Brisbane has said, johnny-come-latelies. In fact, they are not even Queenslanders. When I represented that area in the Parliament, they were not even living in Queensland. They do not understand the problems of that area. The real problem is that, because of the great wealth of the land in that area,

the land has been manipulated by developers over the years in conjunction and in connivance with the National Party and by friends of the National Party who have paid off the National Party as a result of what happened with and in that area.

Mr Tuesley owned land under water. The member for Southport did not even know that he owned it. However, the deed is in Mr Tuesley's name.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr D'ARCY: The parrot from Surfers Paradise, who does not know anything, asked when he last paid rates. Would that matter to the National Party?

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr D'ARCY: It is time the member for Surfers Paradise listened to some of the facts and figures about the area. I will refer to other Gold Coast land that was under water and rated. Some of the most valuable land on the Gold Coast, as the member for Lytton pointed out, is under water. Tremendous income is generated by marinas at the Gold Coast. Land that has been resumed by sand being pumped up has become some of the most valuable land in Queensland. The National Party, through this Government, seems to be able to acquire title to that land for selected people. However, the Government totally ignores a person whose family has had freehold title to land since before the turn of the century. Does he know that Andy's Island and Griffin Island on the Gold Coast were Crown land when the Minister's electoral predecessor (the then Mr Rae) was Minister for Lands? The present member for Albert was then a Gold Coast city councillor. Those two islands were Crown land and comprised 150 acres. They are still partially under water. However, they changed hands recently for many millions of dollars. In 1969 one of the Minister's predecessors actually freeholded that underwater land for \$50 an acre. At that time it was worth half a million dollars. When we hear the parrot from Surfers Paradise—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I will not tolerate any more of these facetious references to members. Honourable members will be referred to by their proper title.

Mr D'ARCY: The members for Southport and Surfers Paradise do not understand what has been occurring on the Gold Coast for a long time and is still occurring. By this simple little act of disowning and disinheriting a citizen of freehold title of land, which had been owned by his family for almost a century, the National Party has left Queensland in a fairly sad state. If the Government wants to say that freehold title does not mean anything, fair enough. Areas should be put forward on their merit. A number of times I have spoken about what has happened with places such as Andy's and Griffin Islands, Crown land that was denied to the people of Queensland and sold to developers. That land has been under water and no rates had been paid on it. Every argument put up by the member for Surfers Paradise is negated by what happened with those islands. The developers did not keep their pumping and dredging equipment functioning and broke every rule regarding conservation.

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order. I understand that Standing Orders provide that a member may not refer to a Bill that has been debated in the same session. The honourable member is obviously referring to the Nerang River Entrance Development Act.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is not sufficient evidence to substantiate the point of order but, nevertheless, I ask the honourable member for Woodridge to return to the provisions of the Bill.

Mr D'ARCY: As the legislation refers to land in Queensland, I believe that I have been keeping to the rules of debate.

A member has already referred to the fact that from the northern end of Bribie Island to the New South Wales border underwater islands do exist and the Government has had to deal with them. I do not envy the Minister the task of trying to administer some of the old leases and freehold titles, etc.

In one instance, under a previous Minister, a family occupying an oyster lease was granted freehold title. That was fair and reasonable, but the point that has to be made about the speech of the member for Ashgrove is: Does the Government of Queensland

uphold freehold title and regard it as sacrosanct? Certainly the member for Southport did not understand what he was talking about. If the Queensland Government believes in freehold title, it should compare the way it treats the small people of Queensland with the way it treats the large developers, the johnny-come-latelies and the overseas people who come into this State. Often on the basis of political favour, those people have been able to treat the land of the people of Queensland as their own goods and chattels and put it to their own particular use. If the Government does not examine what it is doing in that regard, it will be losing what the State set out to do, that is to create a fair and equitable society and a fair and equitable land tenure in the State. The Government has not done that, and the Parliament of Queensland has not done it because it has not been allowed to do it by a circumspect Government.

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police) (5.19 p.m.), in reply: The debate on the Bill has taken approximately 7½ hours. That obviously indicates the interest in land tenure in the State of Queensland. Regrettably, only three members, the members for Toowoomba North, Burdekin and Balonne, actually spoke to the Bill and the implications of the recommendations.

I appreciate the contributions of all honourable members. The honourable member for Salisbury had obviously studied the Bill in depth. In opening his remarks he stated that the Opposition fully favoured the amendments, as did almost every member in the Chamber, regardless of the party to which he belonged. Each one gave his support to the amendments which, I believe, are commonsense in their application to the alteration of the meaning of the Act, and should assist many people.

The member for Salisbury expressed concern at what he felt was a lack of published information on the incidence and extent of land ownership in Queensland by other than resident Queenslanders. Of course, the need for a foreign land register was the theme of nearly every member of the Opposition. The member for Mackay said that he did not give a continental what happened in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia or Western Australia, but that a register must be established in Queensland. Indeed, it was said by many members on both sides of the House that the creation of a land register would be of great benefit because we would then know which foreigners owned Queensland land. But if there is to be any land register in Queensland, it should be an overall land register. I say without any fear of contradiction that it would not be too long before we knew who was the biggest land-holder in Queensland. It would, of course, be the Commonwealth Government through the Aboriginal Development Commission, which is buying land in this State at a rate unprecedented in the history of Queensland since white settlement. If that does not concern the Northern Territory Government now, it should——

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr GLASSON: Was that interjection from the member for Cook?

Mr Underwood: No.

Mr GLASSON: Oh, the member for Ipswich West is not worth talking about, particularly after what he did last week in the Chamber.

Be that as it may, in this regard I think it is necessary to differentiate between the actual monitoring of the situation and the giving of publicity to individual transactions. I think that is a tremendously important point.

The law ensures that the Governor in Council cannot be denied access to all information relevant to any proposed transaction and the community can rest assured that matters could not and will not be allowed to get out of hand.

Ownership of land, be it leasehold or freehold, is identified in the respective land registry systems.

As the member for Toowoomba North said, if any person wishes to find out the ownership of any parcel of land in this State, he can do so in 10 minutes. I assure members that that can be done. So if Opposition members are really sincere about finding out who owns any given area of land, they will very soon find that out.

It would be out of the question, of course, for a variety of reasons, including the invasion of privacy, to publish the reasons behind every land transaction.

I explained in my second-reading speech that the thrust of the Bill is to simplify the procedures and to excuse the smaller subdivisions from the imposition of the transfer restriction. Experience has clearly established that any proposition for subdividing a large block into a host of smaller subdivisions with a view to then reassembling them is just not on.

The honourable member for Burdekin was highly supportive of the provisions of the Bill. His attitude was not unexpected, as he is a man with vast experience of the outback and can appreciate the basic necessities of security of tenure over adequate areas of country if the people who brave those regions are to survive. He is certainly qualified to speak with authority on the need for an enlightened land law and policy, administered with common sense and sympathy.

The honourable member for Bundaberg, supported by the honourable member for Cairns, was critical of the freeholding provisions under the State Housing (Freeholding of Land) Act, and in stating his case made comparisons with the freeholding of auction perpetual leases pursuant to the provisions of the 1981 amendment to the Land Act. The administration of the State Housing (Freeholding of Land) Act is, of course, not my specific responsibility and I do not propose to take issue with him on the figures he has quoted to establish what he claims is discrimination against clients of the Queensland Housing Commission. I will duly draw his comments to the attention of my Cabinet colleague the Honourable the Minister for Works and Housing, but there are a couple of points that I would refer to.

There is no reference in the Bill to the freeholding of auction perpetual leases but the debate has resurrected the 1981 legislation which put those discarded tenure-type leases on a final rent term at 1980 valuations. I do not think I need traverse the basic background to that legislation as it was quite a major measure and was the subject of protracted debate at the time. I would, however, emphasise that by no stretch of the imagination could it be classed as sectional legislation. It made good common sense then, as it does today, to all sorts of people of all political persuasions scattered across the land.

I said at the time and I repeat that any talk of "giving away \$100 million" was a hypothesis derived from ignorance of the facts of the totality of the situation. No workings were ever produced to even begin to support the allegation. On the contrary, of course, proper projections established that taking all aspects into account, including future administrative costs, the whole issue was physically and financially in the proper public interests. I gained the impression, though, that the honourable member was not so much condemning what happened in 1981 but was proposing that clients of the Queensland Housing Commission were not getting, but should have got, the same sort of treatment.

As I have already mentioned, the law on freeholding of perpetual leases under the State Housing Act is another issue, but I make the point that perpetual leases dealt with by the 1981 legislation were issued prior to 1957 and were not caught up in the scheme of things where the funding of houses was thereby associated.

The operations of the Land Administration Commission and the Queensland Housing Commission are quite distinct in nature. The Queensland Housing Commission is involved with the purchasing of land and property and subsequent disposal and a variety of funds have to be serviced. It is not quite valid, really, to compare the freeholding costs in this narrow context. It would be more appropriate, I suggest, to make comparison with the sale of land under the Land Act under current land sales policy, that is, the purchase, by a lessee, of land comprised in a special lease and the purchase of land which has been developed by the Crown for disposal, at auction, to prospective home site purchasers.

In the case of a purchase of land comprised in a special lease, the term of purchase is for a period of 10 years and the purchaser is required to pay a deposit of the balance with interest, currently 12 per cent per annum, in equal annual instalments compounded of principle and interest.

Where land in a developed state is offered for sale by public auction, a variable mode of purchase is available depending on the amount of money that the purchaser is prepared to pay by way of deposit at the time of sale. Currently the situation is this—

Upon payment of 50 per cent of the purchase money as deposit, the term for the payment of the balance is three years with an interest rate of 10 per cent.

In the case of payment of 30 per cent deposit the term is five years with an interest rate of 11 per cent.

Upon payment of 15 per cent of the purchase money as deposit the term is for 10 years with an interest rate of 12 per cent per annum.

It will be seen that alleged disparities shrink when the two sets of land-purchase procedures are looked at in this manner but, in any case, as I said, I will draw the honourable member's comments to the attention of my Cabinet colleague the Honourable the Minister for Works and Housing.

The honourable member for Townsville West dwelt at some length on the Burdekin Irrigation Scheme which for the most part is not a matter which comes directly within the ambit of the Bill or indeed my ministerial jurisdiction generally. The implementation of the works and the timing of acquisitions and subsequent land redispersions are much the primary responsibility of my Cabinet colleague the Honourable the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services. In a similar vein, I will ensure that the comments by the member for Townsville West are brought to the attention of the Minister.

I do point out, however, that as to freeholding of leases under the Land Act, resumption of leasehold land under that Act and resumption of freehold land under the Acquisition of Land Act, all parties have access to the Land Court and I assure the honourable member, whether he chooses to believe it or not, that there are not and could not be favourably negotiated deals with the privileged few. I hope that that clarifies the situation.

I would also like to comment on what was referred to as the pegging of land on Jimbour Plains. Prior to 1957, Government policy was to make home lots available only at public auction as perpetual town leases. These were generally referred to as auction perpetual leases or APLs. Shortly after the Country/Liberal coalition assumed office in 1957, it put an end to that policy and, among other things, directed that such lots were to be offered for sale only as freehold—estate in fee simple. That was in 1958. Payment was to be by way of a deposit and by equal annual instalments over a period not exceeding 10 years, with an annual interest rate of 5 per cent calculated upon yearly rests. That 5 per cent was eliminated in 1964. The Government also legislated for the conversion of the auction perpetual leases to freehold tenures at the same time as provision was made for the freeholding of perpetual lease selections or PLSs. The terms and conditions of purchase were modified over time and culminated in the situation in which leases of rural lands could be converted to freehold by 40 equal annual instalments without interest and leases of town lots could be converted to freehold by 30 equal annual instalments without interest.

The 1981 legislation took perpetual lease selections and auction perpetual leases out of the scope of provision for conversion to freeholding tenure. Those leases were put on a final rent commitment and a lessee, having paid that amount, could elect to take a deed of grant or simply retain the lease and continue to hold the land as leasehold without any monetary rent commitment.

Under that legislation, a lessee of a non-competitive perpetual lease pays rent at 3 per cent of the unimproved capital value, which is reassessed every 10 years, and can freehold the residential land over 30 years free of interest. A lessee can also pay out the present value of the land at any time. I will table a document setting out those figures.

I now turn to Housing Commission blocks. The old workers home perpetual town leases are now all absorbed under the State Housing Act and the relevant freeholding provisions can be found in the State Housing (Freeholding of Land) Act. In summary, a lessee makes application to freehold. The valuation of the land is determined by one of these three methods—valuation by the Commissioner of Housing, valuation by the Valuer-General or valuation by the Land Court. Upon determination of the value, the payment plan is 5 per cent of the purchase price by way of deposit and the purchase term is 10 years payable by monthly instalments at an interest rate of 11.5 per cent reducing monthly. That interest rate is at 1 April 1984.

Interest is payable on the unpaid balance of the purchase price under the Land Act in respect of the purchase of land in a special lease and the purchase of land under the Crown Land Estate Program. That, of course, is the land development housing block run by the development branch of the Lands Department.

Housing lots are not made available under perpetual lease under the Land Act. Auction perpetual leases were all dealt with in the 1981 legislation, but there can still be the case of what is known as a non-competitive perpetual lease, which can come under application in respect of a block used for residential purposes. This would be the result of land having been granted way back as a special lease and then the lessee being granted, upon application, a perpetual town lease thereover. This is known as a non-competitive perpetual lease.

In that case, if the lessee applied to freehold, he would have 30 years over which to pay the purchase price by equal annual instalments without interest. If he elected to pay out the purchase money immediately, he would be allowed to do so on the basis of present value of the purchase price, which, over the 30-year period, is \$51.24 for every \$100 of purchase price.

I hope that throws some light on the different methods of valuation adopted for land under the Housing Commission and land dealt with by the Land Administration Commission or the Lands Department.

The honourable member for Lockyer quoted figures in relation to the availability of land that is still held under leasehold tenure. I shall refer to that later. Most importantly, he said that the man who tills the land should be master of his own destiny. That comes back to the freehold policy of the Government and members of the Liberal Party, as indicated by the honourable member for Mt Coot-tha, whose contribution will be referred to later.

The honourable member for Townsville West spoke about equality of opportunity. He adopted the typical socialistic attitude of taking from those who endeavour to build an empire and giving to those who want everything for nothing. That is the ingredient for the total destruction of any progress in any country in which that attitude has been adopted.

More importantly, I refer to the comments made in relation to Sir Robert Sparkes and Jimbour Plains. The honourable member did not understand the position. He claimed that the National Party, in support of our State president, Sir Robert Sparkes, introduced legislation to cover Jimbour Plains. The honourable member specifically mentioned Sir Robert Sparkes.

I shall explain the position as it applied to the land on Jimbour Plains. After this Government came into power, it was decided at first, by way of a 1958 amendment, to offer that land on a 15-year term, which took it from 1958 to 1972. The second lease period was 10 years.

Opposition members spoke about pegging prices to 1972 valuations. There was no pegging of prices. The contract entered into between the Lands Department and the lessee at the time determined that the rental would be set for a 10-year period. Try as we might to get everybody on the same basis, it would be virtually impossible. Obviously those people who were on the 1982 valuations enjoy an advantage over those who had a revaluation at the beginning of 1980. But, try as we might, we could not eliminate the variation in relation to the land values. It was nothing more and nothing less. The land prices were never pegged to 1972. The contract between the department and the lessee of the land was honoured. If a lessee has a lease for 10 years, it is up to the Government to honour it.

The honourable member for Gympie and the honourable member for Mt Isa referred to mining homestead perpetual leases and the problems that arise in some areas. Those leases do not come under the control of the Lands Department; they are administered by my colleague the Minister for Mines and Energy.

The honourable member for Cook expressed concern about the sufferings of people who live in isolation when application is made on a freeholding basis or for the purchase of a piece of land and a delay occurs between the application and when one of the officers of the department is able to carry out the inspection, make the report and finalise the proposition. I realise the extent of the isolation problem, but I hope that, as a result of the restructuring and recent changes that have taken place in the Lands Office in Cairns, a better service will be offered to those people who live on the Torres Strait islands and in the more isolated areas.

The member for Cooroora referred to early development and the requirements for finance to be injected into the development of any land. Associated with that is some security of tenure and the power that enhances the borrowing power of those persons who carry out the development.

The member for Murrumba referred to the 1981 amendments. He referred to the beef industry. He was aware of the difficulties experienced in that industry. Surely the actions taken by the Government have lessened to some degree the burden of the people who suffered the drought conditions and the down-turn or trough within the industry that made survival difficult. Any type of finance or borrowing must be associated with some sort of tenure so that the lending authority can say, "We have security for our lending."

The member for Murrumba referred to the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme. He was supported by the member for Mackay, who said that it was a farce. I do not share that view. I do not know how anybody could make such a comment. So far, 165 applications have been received. In 1982-83, 57 applications were received, seven of which were approved. During the early stages of the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme a lack of understanding was displayed by many applicants. Some persons did not know that under the scheme it was possible to purchase a house in the Redlands area.

Between June 1982 and June 1983, 67 applications were received, 28 of which were granted. Between June 1983 and April 1984, 41 applications were received, 17 of which were granted. Out of 165 applications, 52 applicants have been put on the land in various industries, and nearly every industry has been involved. If anybody is interested in the matter, I can show him an analysis of the scheme that deals with every facet of industry from chicken-farming to cattle-grazing. A total of \$7,353,300 has been expended in putting those 52 young farmers on the land. That is a great achievement. The number is probably not as large as one would like. I have received figures that indicate the repayments and honouring of contracts taken out in relation to borrowings. Most of the 52 applicants have been successful. Because of the drought and a down-turn in industry commodity prices, some farmers are behind with one or two payments. Hopefully, with an early up-turn in the industry, an increase in grain yields, the breaking of the drought that is affecting the cattle industry, and sound wool prices, young farmers will be able to meet their commitments and become successful.

Mr Casey: I am interested. Will you send me a copy of that?

Mr GLASSON: Yes. Should anybody else like to obtain a copy, I will make one available. Should anybody express interest in the information I would be only too happy to table it.

Two or three members, including the member for Mackay, referred to the period since World War I and World War II. Many people were placed on the land because expiring leases were cut up into selections of viable areas. Ballots took place. In many instances they were restricted to returned soldiers. A happy situation existed when the Government had land banks of large areas and large leases that expired. The companies were told that at the expiration of their leases they would not be granted renewal of their leases. The leases then became selections. The land banks have long since gone. Because no large areas remain, no-one can establish himself economically and viably on the land that is available. Many people speak about the large areas of leasehold land held in northern and western Queensland. It would be virtually impossible to repeat the action taken in regard to the land banks held in the more favourable areas where country could be cut up into smaller viable areas for settlement.

The brigalow scheme was entirely different. The brigalow lands were cleared, surveyed and subdivided into economically viable areas basically for grazing purposes. Farming was regarded very much as a sideline. The reverse is now the case. Many stories could be written about the hardships of the early brigalow settlers who endured the cattle depression and drought. Their tales would bear documenting. It was a very difficult time. Some of them were able to hang on. Now, fortunately, they are enjoying the transition from grazing to farming supported by grazing. Most of them, thankfully, are in a very happy position today. However, many of the original settlers went to the wall.

Mr Casey: Land is available for use in conjunction with water resources development.

Mr GLASSON: That is very questionable. It might be so for land closer to the larger water storages.

Mr Lee: Many went into farming to control the brigalow suckers.

Mr GLASSON: That is true. It was for that reason that the transition took place. At the time of the brigalow settlement, there was little farming on the Central Highlands at all. Following the collapse of the British food scheme on the Central Highlands, there was a general withdrawal from agriculture to grazing. What the member for Yeronga has said is exactly what happened. Because of suckering, they had to put a plough in. If a person incurs that cost, he might as well try to get a return from a crop. He paid for his investment and beat the sucker. However, it is an ongoing cycle.

The member for Sherwood was one of the early speakers to express a concern that we all share about the soil erosion in our nation. The Government has made a start under the auspices of the Department of Primary Industries. We all share the hope that further funds will be injected into the protection of our land. I spoke to a very learned gentleman who is an authority on land study. He said that in some of the marginal agricultural land it costs 7 tonnes of soil to grow a tonne of grain. If that is correct, it must be of concern to each and every one of us.

I offer a very sincere welcome back to the member for Maryborough. It is very nice to see him here.

I have covered the main concern of the member for Mt Isa about the APLs.

Reference has been made to the development of hobby farms throughout the State of Queensland. It has to be of concern to us when we can drive from here to Mt Tamborine and hardly see a productive hectare—that is to say, one producing a commodity that is an export-earner. It is a way of life—and a very lovely way of life—but it is regrettable that so much of our land is being diverted to that type of development. The chairman of the commission at the time that I became the Minister said, "They are too big to mow and too small to run a cow on." That just about sums it up. It is a way of life and a transition. However, it is of great concern to see 50-acre and 100-acre farms in semi-arid areas with no water and no power.

The member for Balonne, as I said, was one of the few members who spoke to the legislation and showed his sound knowledge of the land as a whole. He also spoke favourably of the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme, but expressed the view that if the Government could do more in that area it would be much appreciated.

I will not enter into the debate sparked by the member for Ashgrove about the land title of Mr Tuesley. To find that land one would need a snorkel, as most of it is presently inundated. The matter is not covered by the Bill and, therefore, I do not wish to comment on it.

I wish to record in "Hansard" the exact distribution of land held in the State of Queensland at this time. Of a total area of 172 million hectares, 35 million hectares are freehold land, 96 million hectares are held under pastoral lease and 21 million hectares are grazing selections. By far the biggest category of land-holding is the 96 million hectares of pastoral lease.

The member for Mackay spoke of the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme, the Brigalow scheme and the Burdekin scheme. The Burdekin scheme seems to have given rise to a conflict of opinion on the Opposition benches. The member for Townsville West, when speaking about the Burdekin scheme, gave a general theory of land values in north Queensland that could have totally scuttled the scheme. Indeed, for a time that certainly hindered the injection of Commonwealth funds into the State of Queensland. Senator Walsh had been very ill advised by comments and letters from members of the Labor Party in the north. Only after the recent conference held by my colleague the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services (Mr Goleby) and attended by Senator Walsh were funds allowed to flow into that very crucial and critical area of the Burdekin scheme, which is essential to the area. The policy of the Labor Party seems to be to take from those who have initiative, drive and foresight and to give to those who do nothing. The same old principle applies: don't ever get on or those who are not prepared to work themselves will be jealous.

The member for Toowoomba North supported the Bill and obviously knew a great deal about it. The member for Lytton gave a great display of his ability to put over a story, but, because some of his comments are relevant, I take them seriously. He referred to the land at The Spit and I make no comment on that. The member for Woodridge spoke in the same vein.

I thank each and every member for his contribution. Quite obviously the Bill engendered a great deal of interest in the subject.

I hope that when further amendments are introduced, as they will be in the next session of Parliament, they will again command the same interest from honourable members, because the most important commodity in the world today is land, and productive land is the most important of all.

Motion (Mr Glasson) agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 61, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Glasson, by leave, read a third time.

FAUNA CONSERVATION ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 8 March (see p. 1982) on Mr McKechnie's motion—

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

Mr UNDERWOOD (Ipswich West) (5.56 p.m.): That part of the Bill dealing with the amendment of the National Parks and Wildlife Act has become necessary because of concern that that Act does not protect national parks that were originally gazetted under the Forestry Act. The Opposition agrees with and welcomes these amendments, and trusts that the House will support them. It is necessary that those national parks that were proclaimed and gazetted under the Forestry Act are designated as such so that there is no doubt about their existence and their purpose. So we support that part of the amending legislation.

There is concern not only within the Opposition but within the Queensland community in general, and particularly amongst those people who are concerned about our national parks and their development, about the Government's attitude since the member for Carnarvon took over this portfolio. Since then there has been a definite change in Government policy on national parks. One has only to instance the two debates that took place a couple of weeks ago concerning the alienation of two national parks. I refer not so much to the parks themselves but to the attitude taken by the Minister in the House on that occasion, and outside the House on other occasions when he has made public speeches and announcements.

I would like to hear the Minister's comments on and attitude to the future of the Cooloola National Park. As members well know, that national park was born amid much debate, gnashing of teeth and bashing of heads within the then coalition Government. Fortunately, although it was a very torrid birth, the park now exists. Fairly soon a problem related to the nature of human access will occur within the park. I refer specifically to Cooloola Way which, at the moment, is a dirt and gravel track through the park. It is a reasonable, acceptable, traditional access, and was previously a forestry track. Another excellent gravel forestry road runs along the western escarpment of the park. As members know, the western escarpment area was added to the park after it was initially gazetted. The addition was much welcomed by anyone who knew anything about the area.

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

Mr UNDERWOOD: I was starting to address the question of management, the standard of roads and the development of roads in and around the Cooloola National Park and, in particular, the future of the Cooloola Way.

The Cooloola Way is the name given to the gravel road that leaves the Wolvi Road at the site of the old Como forestry barracks and then runs along the crest of the Como Scarp, past Tarangau, to Lock's Pinch. At that point it divides, and the forestry road continues to follow the Como Scarp until it eventually reaches Tin Can Bay Road near the Toolara forest station.

The Cooloola Way descends the Como Scarp into the western catchment at Lock's Pinch. From there, until it reaches the Rainbow Beach Road, 17 km later, it passes entirely through Cooloola National Park, traversing the western catchment for about half that distance before descending into the Noosa Plain and crossing the Noosa River and Tewah Creek.

Originally, it was a forestry road but, having been in general use since before 1962, it is now officially regarded as a public road. It therefore comes under the control of the local authority, namely the Widgee Shire Council, and not under the control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The Widgee Shire Council is attempting to take advantage of this anomaly and proposes to seal the road and include it as a part of the Maryborough to Noosa coastal highway. Therein lies the essence of the current controversy over this road.

Over the years, the Widgee Shire Council has shown no feeling for Cooloola, which it has always regarded as being subservient to the convenience and promotion of the townships of Rainbow Beach and Tin Can Bay. That is a subjective opinion, anyway.

Mr Stephan: Do you know what you are talking about?

Mr UNDERWOOD: It is somewhat strange for the local member to say that. I have quite a deal to say about the matter. It would do him well to listen. He can then comment on it.

Mr Stephan: The area is well represented.

Mr UNDERWOOD: The honourable member has not been there. He would not know. He has not been outside the Nerang River area, let alone the Noosa River area.

The Noosa River is vital to the whole concept of the Cooloola National Park, so much so that recently, the Government, on the advice of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, spent \$5m in purchasing alternative pine plantation areas to ensure protection of the upper Noosa River catchment.

The inclusion of the western catchment in the national park has been a major part of the strategy of the National Parks and Wildlife Service for the management of Cooloola National Park. However, that is now at risk because the National Parks and Wildlife Service lacks control of the 17 km of the Cooloola Way that lies in the park. The Cooloola Way is an important management tool for the Cooloola Park.

Mr Stephan: It lets people get into the park, doesn't it?

Mr UNDERWOOD: It certainly does. If the honourable member had been here earlier he would have heard me say that. It is a pity that he is not in the House more often.

The Cooloola Way is an important management tool for the Cooloola Park. A large part of the park through which it passes has been classified by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, in its Cooloola Park management plan, as a primitive area. The plan recommends that it should remain in its present state. It also refers to the need to manage Cooloola's resources without affecting its long-term viability to survive as a national park where nature predominates and man is the privileged visitor. That is consistent with section 40 of the Forestry Act, which states that the cardinal principle to be observed in the management of national parks is the permanent preservation, to the greatest possible extent, of their natural condition.

Section 40B of the same Act, which deals with the declaration and management of primitive areas, prohibits new road construction within them. The existence of the Cooloola Way as a secondary gravel road within the western catchment is not inconsistent with the intention of this legislation, but an upgraded Cooloola Way, carrying large volumes of fast, through traffic, certainly would be.

The section of the highway from Maryborough to Tin Can Bay has been completed to Main Roads standards. It therefore conforms to the 100 km/h design speed specifications and is capable of bringing heavy traffic into the area.

Any continuation of this road system to the south would therefore have to be built to the same standard because it would have to carry the same traffic load. For logistical reasons, sealing of the Cooloola Way would need to be at 100 km/h standard, which is absurd in a national park.

The Widgee Shire Council's determination to use the Cooloola Way as a direct link between the Tin Can Bay/Rainbow Beach area and Tewantin has been the subject of numerous news items. Last year the council resolved to seek funding under the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Program for the southern section of the south coastal highway scheme.

Mr Stephan: Did you know that the road goes through the national park?

Mr UNDERWOOD: It certainly does; that is right. It was there before the national park, actually. That is a surprising statement to come from the local member. He does not even know that simple fact about his own electorate.

The Widgee Shire Council approached the Noosa Shire Council for joint discussions to decide the route of the proposed road between the two shires. Realising that the use of the Cooloola Way as a traffic artery would be both controversial and harmful to the national park and that there were practicable and preferable alternatives, the Noosa Shire Council decided to adopt a neutral attitude over the route outside its shire boundaries. One of the alternatives is the road that continues along the crest of the Como Scarp, which is the western boundary of the park, and then passes through the Forestry Department's pine plantations to link up with the Tin Can Bay Road near the Toolara forest station. The other is the continuation of the Wolvi Road that continues along Tagigan Road and meets Tin Can Bay Road at Goomboorian.

The two councils then decided to instruct their respective shire engineers to prepare a map showing all possible road links between the Tin Can Bay/Rainbow Beach area and Tewantin. Following this, the Widgee Shire Council backed down on its plans for the Cooloola Way to be a main traffic route and is now talking of an 80 km/h design speed standard road to enable travellers to appreciate the features of the national park. Serious park visitors do not need a bitumen road to see the park. A good secondary gravel road is all that is necessary and it is obvious that a sealed road would bring the volume of the traffic through the park up to an unacceptable level for park management.

Sealing the Cooloola Way to any standard would, in fact, be disastrous to the park. Quite apart from the effect of the roadworks themselves on the park environment, the road, no matter to what standard it was sealed, would immediately attract a heavy flow of traffic of all descriptions seeking a short-cut to the south. To most drivers the national park would be of little interest. That traffic would inevitably be to the detriment of park values and a source of annoyance and danger to serious park visitors. Road kills of animals, especially low-flying birds such as the ground parrot, would occur and alien weeds would be introduced.

Work has already begun on the most northerly section of the Cooloola Way, at its junction with Rainbow Beach Road. About 200 metres of bitumen flanked by deep drainage ditches has been laid on the plain and the spoil from the ditches has been thrown up on either side of the road. The effect is deplorable and comparable deterioration of park values can be expected for the rest of the 17 km of the Cooloola Way within the national park. Roadworks such as these must have a major environmental impact on the national park.

Mr Borbidge: You said the same thing about Cape Tribulation.

Mr UNDERWOOD: That is typical of the National Party's attitude towards this whole issue. It is not surprising to hear it coming from the member for Surfers Paradise.

The Widgee Shire Council does not regard road construction on the Cooloola Way as a major development; nor does it expect the work to affect the park detrimentally. Therefore it says that an environmental impact study is not warranted.

The following questions are relevant at this point. If the National Parks and Wildlife Service, with all its expertise and experience in national park management and administration, considers that the Cooloola Way should be retained as a secondary gravel road, what competence does the Widgee Shire Council have to proceed otherwise? On what basis has Widgee determined that road construction on the Cooloola Way will not detrimentally affect the national park? How can the Widgee Shire Council assess whether or not there would be any environmental impact from the roadworks if it has not carried out an environmental impact study? How does the Widgee Shire Council expect to restrict the use of an 80 km/h design speed road to light traffic? If there is a need for

a 100 km/h design speed road to service the future needs of the Tin Can Bay/Rainbow Beach area, why does not the Widgee Shire Council give immediate priority to an alternative road that would avoid the national park?

That last question becomes all the more relevant in the light of a news item from "The Gympie Times" of September 1983, which stated that the Widgee Shire Council had obtained Government approval for a road and bridge connection between Rainbow Beach and Tin Can Bay across Tin Can Inlet. The route of this proposed link would shorten the distance between the two townships by about 30 km. When constructed, it would certainly be the route of choice for traffic leaving Rainbow Beach for Maryborough and Gympie. Southbound coastal traffic leaving Rainbow Beach would similarly find it more convenient to take the new route and then continue by way of the perimeter road on the Como Scarp rather than taking the East Mullen deviation and using the Cooloola Way.

The second alternative, namely, the route using the Wolvi and Tagigan roads is longer, but answers the criticisms of rate-payers in the Widgee shire who question the motives of the Widgee Shire Council in seeking to maintain roads through unrateable Crown lands when a road passing through rateable land would better serve the interests of residents and tourists.

However, it is more than a question of maintenance. The capital cost of the road has to be considered, and for the 17 km of the Cooloola Way that traverses the national park, it is likely to be at least \$150,000 per kilometre, even for a lightly constructed road. In fact, the 200 metres of the road that have already been constructed at the junction of the Cooloola Way with the Rainbow Beach Road must have cost at least \$20,000 to the rate-payers of the Widgee shire. Bear in mind that there was also a contribution by the Main Roads Department.

The whole of Cooloola is now listed on the National Estate, so any application for bicentennial funding would have to be approved by the Australian Heritage Commission. As long as prudent and feasible alternatives exist, this is not likely to be granted. The cost of upgrading the Cooloola Way would therefore become a matter for the rate-payers of the Widgee shire, and as the shire has now decided to slash its borrowing because of concern over spiralling loan and interest repayments, the scheme could founder for lack of funds.

On the other hand, a good case could be made for bicentennial funding to seal one of the alternative roads outside the national park to 100 km/h design speed standards, in which case construction of the missing link could proceed without undue delay.

The Widgee Shire Council has a range of options. In the absence of Government funding, it can obtain approval in principle to upgrade the Cooloola Way to an 80 km/h design speed standard, hoping to secure funds to build it at some future date, or it can proceed with the work piecemeal, using shire moneys as and when they become available. In either case, the result will be lengthy delays and an inadequate road.

Alternatively, it could recognise that the scheme is illogical and impracticable as well as damaging to the national park, and it could resolve the conflict very simply by transferring its claims for control of the Cooloola Way back to the Government.

Opposition members favour the scarp route and recommend it, for a number of reasons. Firstly, it would be the cheapest route to upgrade. Already it is a road similar to that which exists between Maryborough and the Tin Can Bay Road and which has been upgraded through the forestry area to a 100 km/h standard.

The Opposition recommends the route also because, as I have just outlined, it is the one that creates the least damage to the park and allows the best road design for through traffic. On the other hand, the Wolvi road traverses terrain that would make it very expensive. It is also an unwieldy route to follow and, therefore, longer both in distance and in length of time for through passengers. The Opposition believes also that the escarpment route would be of most benefit to the people who use that road as a through road from Tin Can Bay. It would also benefit the residents of Maryborough and the people who will reside in the future developments around that area. The Opposition believes that, on all counts, the scarp route is the one to take for a through road, not the Cooloola Way.

I understood that the Forestry Department has objected to portions of the scarp route because it says that the road has been upgraded by it for use in the extraction of timber from the area. That argument was advanced against the upgrading of the road

between Maryborough and the Tin Can Bay road. The upgrading of that road has not created any problems. The Opposition believes that the upgrading of this road to a 100 km/h sealed road will not create any problems. Although the Opposition takes on board the Forestry Department's argument about the use of heavy vehicles on that road and the problems that that may create, it does not accept it as being sufficiently valid to make the choice of another route desirable.

I would like the Minister to reply to this question: What obligation does he consider that the Government has to protect its investment in the Cooloola National Park, more particularly the western catchment that has recently added to the park, by preventing the development of the Cooloola Way as a major traffic artery? The western catchment is a primitive area, and it would be inconsistent with that design to allow a major traffic artery to be built through it. The Government should insist upon the preparation of an environmental impact statement before embarking on any move to upgrade the road. I ask: From what sources would the Government hope to obtain funds for the construction of any road in the area? I ask the Minister to at least refer to those four matters in his reply.

The final point that I would like to make about the escarpment route, which is the Opposition's preferred route, is that it is the more scenic for distant vistas. Those persons interested in distant vistas will obtain excellent views from that area as well. There is a natural charm about bush tracks and gravel roads. As I stated before the dinner recess, the Cooloola Way is a charming road, so much so that the former Minister for National Parks (Mr Elliott), on his visit to the area, formed the opinion that the Cooloola Way should be kept in its present state and should not be upgraded.

In an address to local tourist operators in the Cooloola coast region, the Minister made a statement, which was reported in the press, that he would like to see the road upgraded to an 80 km/h standard sealed road. I suggest to the Minister that that can be done. I further suggest that the traffic will not be kept to 80 km/h. Most of the people who use the through roads in those areas run to a very tight time schedule. Many of my constituents and people who reside in Ipswich go fishing and spend their holidays at Fraser Island and in the Cooloola coast/Rainbow Beach/Tin Can Bay area. It is a long drive from Ipswich and other areas. If a person has only a week-end to visit the area, time is of the essence. It will be impossible to restrict people to 100 km/h. The argument that there will be no problems in restricting people to 100 km/h is not acceptable.

By creating an 80 km/h sealed road, lives of travellers are being put at risk. Anyone who has traversed the old Tin Can Bay road to Gympie would know that it is probably one of the most dangerous roads in Queensland because of its loose gravel edges, the very narrow, thin strip of bitumen, the high speeds and the high centre of gravity of four-wheel-drive vehicles, caravans and trailers that use that road, as well as panel vans and other vehicles on the roof of which luggage is stored.

Because the majority of people who use that road are on fishing trips and have limited time—and, in addition, their vehicles have a high centre of gravity—the possibility of fatal or serious road accidents occurring is increased. I have seen a number of vehicles tipped over on the narrow stretches of bitumen. The road system winds over hills and dales. There are many bends; there are many blind spots.

On behalf of the people of Queensland, and on behalf of the future management of Cooloola Park, I ask the Minister to reconsider the statement that he made to the tourist operators. I hope that, in his wisdom, he will take on board my comments about the escarpment road being the preferable route. I would hope that he and his officers would encourage and advise the Widgee Shire Council to accept that that route is preferable from every point of view—financially; beneficially for development of the area; to tourists; and to the national park. In no way can the Cooloola Way be seen as a better route.

I wish to raise with the Minister another matter relating to national parks. As I understand the Act, oil-drilling is allowed on national parks. Oil-drilling is allegedly taking place in the Carnarvon National Park. I ask him to give me an answer, as best he can with his present knowledge of it. If oil-drilling is being carried out in or near the national park, by whom is it being carried out and for how long? Is it being carried out on a national park in that region? It is known that there is oil in that area of Queensland. Many stories have emanated from people who have lived in that area about oil oozing from

the ridges and bubbling out through artesian leaks. I ask the Minister to answer that question for the House this evening.

That brings me to the fauna aspects of the amending legislation. The Fauna Conservation Act seeks to protect our native fauna.

Mr Borbidge: That is the legislation that is before the House.

Mr UNDERWOOD: It is quite clear that the member for Surfers Paradise has not read the amending Bill. He would see in its latter part a section dealing with national parks, particularly those declared under the Forestry Act. Once again, he is caught out by his own foolish interjection.

Mr Stephan: You didn't mention Cape Tribulation.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I am happy to debate Cape Tribulation at any time. That is another fiasco by the Government. The Opposition is asking the Government to take action before another fiasco develops with a local authority.

The Fauna Conservation Act seeks to protect our native fauna. The best way of protecting the fauna within the State's boundaries is a matter for learned discussion. The amending Bill and the original Act are the basis of one opinion. Another opinion is that there ought to be a total ban on dealing in, holding, catching or destroying wildlife. There are those who advocate total abolition of all restrictions, whether within the country or for international trading. The agriculturist organisation lobby group has made submissions to the Minister and his officers, to the Opposition and, I expect, to other members of Parliament outlining its views on the matter. That lobby group sees a problem in the anomalies in the licensing provisions and the movement of animals and birds throughout the State and interstate.

Both fauna dealers and amateur breeders are allowed to deal in up to 180 birds, including Queensland natives. On the other hand, fauna dealers with a B class licence are limited to dealing in non-Queensland birds. That is the first anomaly. Because of that, the aviculturists' lobby has put forward suggestions in regard to the Class B fauna dealer's licence. All persons currently dealing in birds, other than gazetted aviary birds, are illegally dealing and, if they are not in possession of a fauna dealer's licence, Class B, are in breach of section 59 of the Act. Currently, aviculturists are dealing in birds with a permit to keep fauna, which costs \$10. They are allowed to deal in up to 100 birds other than gazetted aviary birds. That number is to be raised to 150 birds. Because aviculturists are not in possession of a fauna dealer's licence, class B, they are illegally dealing in birds, but are allowed to deal in Queensland native birds. A person who is a holder of a fauna dealer's licence, class B, is not allowed to deal in Queensland native birds, because that is the policy of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, not because it is law.

The dealer's licence, class B, costs \$140. Both the permit to keep fauna and the fauna dealer's licence, class B, must be held if a person wishes to deal in more than 100 birds, other than gazetted aviary birds. However, once a dealer's licence, class B, has been obtained, the holder is disqualified from dealing in Queensland native birds. Once again, that is not the law, but the policy of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. That is victimisation of, and discrimination against, the holders of a fauna dealer's licence, class B.

To legalise the dealing in birds other than gazetted aviary birds, the association submits the following recommendations. The permit to keep fauna shall be named "Permit to Keep and Deal in Birds other than Gazetted Aviary Birds". That permit shall have two classes. Class 1 will allow a person to keep and deal in up to 100 birds other than gazetted aviary birds and class 2 will allow a person to keep and deal in more than 100 birds other than gazetted aviary birds. The cost of a class 1 permit shall be \$20 and a class 2 permit, \$40; and the transfer from class 1 to class 2 will cost \$20.

The only restrictions placed on both permits shall be that permanent, protected fauna, of which there are approximately 15 species, will not be allowed. That will eliminate the need for a fauna dealer's licence, class B. Although some people may not want that, it would also eliminate the need for further increases in the number of birds that may be dealt in with a permit to keep fauna.

Those are the views of that particular lobby group, which has done a great deal of work in that area. Its arguments contain much substance and must be considered to be legitimate in any debate on how best to protect native fauna, which can be related to other industries, such as agriculture, that may be threatened by some problem caused by the keeping of birds and other animals.

Recently much debate has occurred over the vertebrates pest control legislation which, on the advice of the Minister, the Government has decided to change. Tonight I can see similar moves being made under the guise of regulations under this legislation. I call on the Minister to elaborate on what he meant by the categorisation of aviary birds and exotic birds as well as the categorisation of non-indigenous birds and the gazettal of a list of aviary birds. I call on him to explain that because, if that is the case, there is quite clearly conflict within the Government over the categorisation of non-indigenous birds. Obviously there will be another fight between the Government and the little people, the bird-lovers of Queensland.

Mr McKechnie: What we are going to do is increase the number of birds they are allowed to keep.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Well, that brings me to another point. Already under regulation 12 a person can keep up to five birds of a particular species. If my memory serves me correctly, they include corellas, galahs and a number of species of sulphur-crested cockatoos. So I again ask the Minister to explain whether there is a difference between the current regulation under which a person is allowed to keep up to five birds of a particular species and what he said by way of explanation of the amendment.

Mr McKechnie: Basically, people can keep up to five birds, but we are extending the range of the birds that they can keep, which is what they asked for. We are trying to help them.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Has the Minister determined how far the range will be extended?

Mr McKechnie: To a fair degree.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Will the Minister be able to inform us—

Mr McKechnie: Not tonight, no.

Mr UNDERWOOD: By this and previous legislation the Government has allowed and is encouraging the farming of deer and crocodiles. That is to be applauded and the Opposition supports it. But I must ask: Why can this not be carried over to the farming and exploitation of our native birds? Quite clearly, as the Minister indicated, a major problem exists with the illegal smuggling of and dealing in birds on the international, interstate and intrastate scene. I refer particularly to the smuggling of birds out of the country.

Mr McKechnie: I have met the people from whom you have had a lobby.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Yes, I said that.

Mr McKechnie: We have reached a satisfactory agreement and we intend to extend the particular list in the class D category on 20 July. If what they say is true, we will extend it further. If it is not true, we will get tougher.

Mr UNDERWOOD: That is fine.

I have a further suggestion to make on that point. Government departments, particularly the National Parks and Wildlife Service, are always looking for more money so that they can improve their service to the people, and that is as it should be. I suggest that this State might take the initiative and encourage the other States and the Commonwealth to look at and seriously consider suggestions that have been made previously regarding the breeding and export of native species. At the moment certain species are, on the one hand, being shot and poisoned on departmental advice yet, on the other hand, people are being taken to court for selling those same species. I know that it is occurring in other States as well. That is an anomaly which surely no-one can justify.

The Department of Primary Industries issues permits for the destruction of cockatoos, corellas, galahs and other species that are regarded in rural areas as pests. On the permits is printed advice to people to do this in such a way that the public are not alarmed—in other words, clandestinely. That highlights the fact that people in authority do realise that an anomaly exists. So would it not be more sensible to allow people in the bird industry to exploit our native birds? In fact, the Opposition proposes that the National Parks and Wildlife Service captures and sells the birds that are regarded in rural areas as pests rather than have them shot and poisoned, and burnt and buried.

There are many expert bird capturers. The price paid overseas for birds that people in rural areas consider to be pests would ensure that such an enterprise was profitable. The money so earned could be used to promote research into the breeding of the rarer species and the development of zoological and botanical gardens where endangered species could be protected in the same way as private charitable organisations in England have established zoological gardens in which endangered species from round the world are kept. Money for the projects has been raised from people in Great Britain and throughout the world, including Australia. There is no reason why Queensland cannot attempt to do the same.

I am sure that the Minister knows that aviculturists have rightly pointed out that in southern States and overseas, the golden-shouldered parrot is being bred successfully in captivity. This very rare bird needs, for breeding purposes, anthills similar to those found in the north. This parrot is very rare in the wild. A breeding program could be developed in Queensland. When the number of birds increases the excess stock could be sold off. Research programs on how to release successfully the birds that are bred in captivity could be developed. In one of the South East Asian countries a species of monkey is being trained to re-enter the wild. I am sure that, with sufficient research, the same thing could be done with our native birds.

The entrepreneurs and hobby aviculturists are proving that native birds can be bred in captivity. A program should be undertaken to protect the endangered species. The exploitation of birds that are regarded as pests in rural industries is a very sensible way of financing such a project.

It is well known to those who have dug round the edges of the bird-smuggling problem that loads of birds are air freighted very easily from north Australia to Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and other places where there is a very free market in smuggled birds and animals. There is no reason why that market could not be exploited.

I refer now to a letter signed by the former Federal National Party Minister for Home Affairs and Environment and the current Federal member for Darling Downs, Mr D. T. McVeigh and addressed to the Western Victorian Cockatoo Control Committee. The Minister writes in relation to the problem of dealing with pest birds and their exploitation overseas.

Mr Borbidge: Did you know that the Federal legislation, the anti-smuggling legislation, has not yet been proclaimed by the Federal Government?

Mr UNDERWOOD: I am about to deal with that.

Mr Borbidge: I will deal with it, too.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Good.

The letter is dated 18 January 1983, and in it the former Minister says—

“The conservation and management of wildlife in Victoria is primarily the responsibility of the State Government, however, the Commonwealth Government has responsibilities for controls on wildlife entering or leaving Australia.

In September 1980, after careful consideration of recommendations of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation and of the views of the Council of Nature Conservation Ministers (CONCOM), the Commonwealth Government decided not to relax existing controls to allow the commercial or private export of live native fauna. I enclose a copy of the statement by the Minister for Science and the Environment on 10 September 1980 concerning this decision.

You will appreciate that the Commonwealth's present approach to the export of native birds reflects the wishes of the States and Territories as expressed through CONCOM and any variation would require State and Territory agreement.

I have drawn to the attention of the CONCOM Standing Committee the recent representations received on this matter. It is proposed that the issue will be considered at the next meeting of the Standing Committee scheduled for March 1983.”

That indicates that moves have been made in the past. As the member for Surfers Paradise said, the legislation is now waiting to be proclaimed.

I now turn to the killing of snakes and crocodiles for one's personal protection. Unless the Minister can advise me otherwise, my information is that there has not been one prosecution for the killing of a snake by an individual or any organisation since the regulations were brought into existence. The same applies to crocodiles. The member for Cairns will speak about crocodiles, so I will not elaborate on that subject.

This amendment, which seems quite commonsensical and reasonable on the surface, could be seen by some as an announcement of an open season for the killing of snakes and crocodiles. The nature of danger to a person by a reptile such as a snake or crocodile is open to interpretation and it is very subjective. Some people can pick up a snake and not be terrified of it; others who see a snake at 100 metres will die of fright. Other people, when driving a car, might see a snake crossing a road as a danger to themselves and skittle it. Therefore, the interpretation of danger is very subjective.

The proposed amendment will only encourage people with a killer instinct who like to kill everything that moves, particularly snakes and crocodiles. The Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services (Mr Tenni) is one of those people and he, as a Minister of the Crown, has made many irresponsible statements about that. He has taken an oath on the Bible to uphold the law of this State, but he has advocated otherwise. The proposed amendment encourages the likes of him, and that should be deplored.

I turn now to open seasons. In this respect, another anomaly appears in the regulations concerning the protection of fauna. The regulations allow for open seasons during which birds can be destroyed. However, no provision is made for the capture of live birds. I cannot see any difference between shooting birds and ducks and capturing them alive as far as taking them from the environment is concerned. In fact, it would not be such a bad thing to allow people to have a certain bag limit on the capture of a small number of birds. People would be able to take birds home for themselves or for their children. After all, people of all ages enjoy keeping birds. People who have pets are more in tune with the environment and with the welfare of animals, whether they be domestic or wild animals. As Parliament allows for an open season in which birds can be killed, it should allow a small number of live birds to be taken for pets. In other words, it should impose a bag limit on the capture of birds. The anomaly that is present in the regulations should be eliminated.

I should like the Minister to tell us how he and his advisers will determine what is a potential agricultural pest.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: The Minister is a perfect example of an agricultural pest.

An Opposition Member: He's a grub.

Mr UNDERWOOD: That is one of the many descriptions that have been given to him since he was appointed as Minister.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order!

Mr UNDERWOOD: That brings me once again to the matter of subjectivity. Whether or not something should be regarded as an agricultural pest depends on one's view. Some people would like to blast every animal off an agricultural area, whereas others in agricultural industries encourage animals onto their properties. Within the agricultural industries, extreme points of view right across the spectrum are held. Similarly, people in non-agricultural industries have views right across the spectrum.

The recent debate and back-down by the Government over its proposed vertebrate pest control legislation and the disagreement that occurred within the Primary Industries Department, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Lands illustrated quite clearly that among the Government's advisers, who are the recognised statutory experts on the matter, extreme disagreement exists over what is a potential agricultural pest and the best way to control it.

Recently in this Chamber the Minister for Lands intimated, even if he did not say, that the current regulations governing pest control, birds in particular, were adequate. However, it was quite clear that, by way of the vertebrate pest control legislation, another attitude was to be adopted. It was clear that a wide net was to be drawn round a whole variety of species on the premise that they might be a pest instead of on the basis that they had definitely become or were a pest. A totally different attitude was adopted,

and Opposition members and bird-lovers and dealers throughout Queensland thought that the Government had reached agreement on it. Even though the Minister's explanation is accepted, it appears that the earlier attitude is creeping back into the Government's thinking, so I would ask the Minister whether the current thinking on agricultural pests is still the Government's policy.

I would question the Minister's figures. He has been questioned on them privately by the lobby groups. In his second-reading speech, he said that of the 70 per cent of birds in aviaries in Queensland, almost 50 percent are gazetted aviary birds for which no permit to keep is necessary. I ask the Minister, as other members have asked him: On what basis does he base the figures to which he referred in his speech? It is important to know whether the Minister is receiving the right advice and whether it is based on sound statistics. I hope that it is. The Minister can enlighten us on that matter in his reply.

The Minister has covered by interjection some points that I intended to raise. The Bill deals with the protection of fauna within Queensland. However, we can have as many laws and regulations as we like and legislate for and hand out stiff penalties, but that will not overcome the problem. In fact, it will encourage more illegal trading and smuggling because prices will become higher as the risks become greater. Experience shows that the current approach to the matter is unworkable. As I suggested, a new approach should be adopted for the protection of native fauna. I have referred to open trading and the lifting of restrictions. The Minister has indicated that the Government is going some way towards that goal, but only on a limited, trial basis. That is not good enough.

Earlier this year criticism was levelled at the Whitlam Government for eliminating taxation deductions for the clearing of land. At that time indiscriminate clearing was taking place in Queensland purely because of financial and taxation considerations and with no real benefit to agricultural industries and to Queensland as a whole. Vast native habitat areas were cleared. All the fauna that lived in those areas was destroyed. It is easy to say that animals that live in those areas can go to the adjacent piece of land next door. It does not work out that way because the adjacent piece of land that is covered with scrub, forest, mulga or saltbush already has a maximum population, unless there has been a disaster such as fire. The action taken by the Whitlam Government was a very welcome move.

The current attitude in the ranks of the Queensland Government should be deplored. It has been shown and recognised by the officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service that the preservation of the habitat is a very important factor. Without the habitat our species cannot be saved, other than by breeding them in captivity, as I indicated earlier. I suggest that that is necessary with a number of species. It is very important for the Government to adopt that attitude.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service ought to be commended for its public education program. However, the reversion to the pioneer spirit of protecting oneself against snakes and crocodiles—"liberalisation" would be a better word to use—is working against the Government's current attitude of educating the community to appreciate the environment in which they live. Under the current legislation, people are allowed to protect themselves from snakes and crocodiles.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise) (8.10 p.m.): In rising, at last, to support the Fauna Conservation Act and Another Act Amendment Bill, I congratulate the Minister on its introduction. I assume from the comments made by the honourable member for Ipswich West that the Opposition supports the Bill. I make the comment that a Bill such as this allows members from both sides of the House to make a positive, if perhaps lengthy, contribution.

I note that the honourable member who preceded me allocated a considerable amount of time to problems as he sees them in the Cooloola National Park. While he was speaking, I had a conversation with my friend the member for Gympie, who has advised me that the Widee Shire Council is in very close co-operation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Certainly, as the member for the area, he does not foresee any problems along the lines suggested by the member for Ipswich West that cannot be solved. I see that the Minister is basically acknowledging the degree of support and co-operation that exists between that local authority and his department.

Mr Stephan: It is a very good local authority.

Mr BORBIDGE: Yes, and one that is highly regarded in the Parliament and, indeed, throughout the State.

The amendments are designed to ensure the effectiveness of existing legislation. It is appropriate to place on record that the original legislation was designed to protect native fauna in the wild and to regulate under a permit system and other appropriate controls those activities that may affect the well-being of fauna in this State. The amendments are designed to make the existing legislation more workable; to preserve, to regulate and to protect within the realistic parameters of a developing State and nation.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Why don't you tell us why your Government won't do anything about the illegal smuggling of birds out of this State?

Mr BORBIDGE: I shall deal with that at great length a little later. I shall give the honourable member for Wolston a certain amount of information which, I suspect from his interjection, he is not aware of.

The legislation before the Parliament tonight maintains a balance in fauna protection that is both realistic and achievable. It clarifies, for example, the killing of a snake or a crocodile when it is likely that personal injury will be suffered. Too often, well-intentioned Governments and well-meaning individuals seek to implement measures that simply do not and cannot work in practice. Such idealistic approaches are more often than not counter-productive. Legislative proposals that seek to appease the radical environmentalists frequently fail to meet the legitimate aspirations of the wider community.

Mr Comben interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: Time and time again we hear that sort of comment from Opposition members who are certainly wide of the mark in understanding the quite legitimate aspirations of the general community that the Government is seeking to serve in legislation such as this. I repeat my claim, for the benefit of the honourable member, that the legislation maintains a balance in fauna protection.

The legislation follows the substantially higher priority given to the National Parks and Wildlife Service in last year's Budget. Honourable members would be aware that the department allocation was increased by \$3.4m to \$11.3m, representing an increase of 42.6 per cent over the previous year's Budget allocation. The legislation covers a number of areas and many of its provisions are machinery amendments. However, it emphasises that the Government has, despite assertions to the contrary by some honourable members opposite, a commendable record in fauna conservation and the administration of the national parks of this State.

The amendments before the House will improve the legislation and make the original Act more practical and more consistent with community needs and aspirations. It makes provision for commercial deer and crocodile farming, although the former will be covered by additional legislation at a later time.

Mr Prest: These amendments must improve, because when the Minister introduced this legislation in the first instance, he was planting fauna and shooting flora.

Mr BORBIDGE: I have been in this Chamber on many occasions when the honourable member for Port Curtis has had trouble with his words. I do not think that he should reflect on any member for such a minor slip.

Mrs Chapman interjected.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! Conversations between members will cease forthwith.

Mr BORBIDGE: I was endeavouring to make a positive contribution to the debate by saying that in the early 1970s and again in 1980 I had the opportunity of spending some time in South Africa, South West Africa—Namibia as it is now—and Rhodesia, which is now Zimbabwe. At that time, I had the opportunity of visiting quite a few national parks and, in particular, a crocodile farm at Victoria Falls. In addition to being a very successful commercial venture, the crocodile farm is a major attraction in its own right. Obviously, as

with any national park, there is a substantial degree of compatibility between fauna conservation and tourism, which comes under the Minister's portfolio and which is of great benefit to this State. Certainly, a degree of co-ordination between the two should be achieved.

When I was in Africa, game farms were becoming more common and more important in the conservation of native fauna, and the relevant national parks services were consulted. Much can be learnt from overseas, particularly from the African experience, in the administration of Queensland's national parks, certainly from the point of view of tying that in with the enormous tourist potential of this State.

The legislation seeks also to tackle the increasing problem of illegal trading in fauna and the overseas demand for Australian animals, birds, mammals and reptiles, which was referred to by the honourable member for Ipswich West and, by interjection, by the honourable member for Wolston. I am advised that, on the market, one bird may bring \$5,000 and, overseas, breeding pairs have been known to yield as much as \$12,000. I am advised also that, in the capturing of these birds, tarpaulins coated with glue are placed on the ground under trees in which the birds roost and seed is scattered around. At first light, when the birds are ready to feed, down they swoop and very few succeed in struggling free from the gooey mess that has been created.

After the birds are captured, they are crammed into tiny, bamboo cages, which, it is alleged, are deliberately made small to prevent the birds flapping their wings and damaging their feathers. I am advised also that the gaolers are often Indonesians who have been ferried into Australia by light aircraft using any of the hundreds of bush airstrips that dot northern Australia, in particular Queensland and the Northern Territory. When an area has been thoroughly worked over, the birds are moved to a secret location in refrigerated vans. They are then drugged with a codeine-based cough mixture, tail feathers are pulled out and wings clipped. Some are transported in tennis ball cans with ventilation holes punched in the top and bottom. Other birds are wrapped up in pantihose and stuffed into overcoat pockets. The lucky ones are transported by lugger or plane to Denpasar, Bali, en route to Amsterdam, which is generally recognised as the main clearing house for smuggled fauna. The clipping from which I have just read is somewhat dated, but it appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 7 August 1980. The article was written by John Larkin and is entitled "Fortune awaits the bird trade beasts".

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What does your Government do about it?

Mr BORBIDGE: I will tell the honourable member, because certain legislation has been passed by the Federal Parliament and certain other action has not been taken. As the evening proceeds, I will take the opportunity to enlighten him.

In his article, John Larkin mentions that a pair of great black palm cockatoos may be worth up to \$10,000. He says—

"A new way to finance an overseas trip was outlined in Melbourne yesterday by a man who opposes it. The idea is this: You drive a few kilometres north of Melbourne and catch a pair of birds called narethra blue bonnets. Then you dope them with codeine cough mixture, having got the required dosage from a chart supplied from Amsterdam.

Next, you put them into some panty hose and put them into pockets on each side of your coat.

When you go to the international airport to fly out, there is almost no chance of being searched."

He goes on to say—

"You will need to take an eye dropper of water with you to give the birds a drink back in the toilet because they become dehydrated. But that's all.

When you arrive at Amsterdam, the 'bird smuggling capital of the world' you will be able to take the birds in legally, and then sell them for \$7 000 to \$8 000. Ten times that and you're in the big money."

He then quotes a Mr Grant, an authority on such matters. He says—

"Indeed Mr Grant says he is convinced that the professional bird smuggling business is connected to the drug runners coming backwards and forwards to Australia.

The returns are comparable. A rare, endangered species called 'golden shoulders' could bring around \$1.5 million for about 200 in Amsterdam, which is not party to the international treaty prohibiting the importing of wild-life.

Great black palm cockatoos can bring \$10,000 a pair, while ordinary white cockies will get \$1,500 to \$2,000 on the American West Coast.

One of the common ways of carrying birds is in tennis ball cans, which are a tight squeeze and require them to have their tail feathers pulled out."

So it goes on. For example, in the eight months to June 1980, 39 000 Australian parrots were imported into the United States from Third World countries. It has also been estimated that 80 per cent of the birdlife died before reaching its destination.

On 23 December 1982, a Canberra press release entitled "Law cracks down on wildlife offences" stated—

"Illegal exporters of Australian wildlife will face fines of up to \$200,000 under federal legislation expected to come into force in March.

The federal Minister for Home Affairs and Environment, Mr McVeigh, said yesterday the Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act would also broaden controls on the importation of animals and plants listed as endangered.

The legislation, which had been developed in consultation with the States, carried a fine of \$100,000 or five years jail on individuals and a \$200,000 fine for organisations found illegally trafficking in wildlife.

Under the bill, possession of illegally imported wildlife would also be an offence.

'Import and export of endangered wildlife will be strictly regulated, and permits for trade in such species will be provided only under certain conditions,' Mr McVeigh said."

The date of that statement was 23 December 1982. Although that legislation has been passed by the Commonwealth Parliament, I have been advised that it has not yet been proclaimed by the Federal Government.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Don't try to blame the Labor Party for that. Twelve months in office federally; 26 years in Queensland, and you are still doing nothing about that.

Mr BORBIDGE: I will expand on that for the honourable member, because to a degree it has to do with international treaties. I again make the point that the then Minister (Mr McVeigh) announced the proposals on 23 December 1982. The legislation has been passed by the Federal Parliament; it has not yet been proclaimed by the Federal Government. The Minister may like to comment on that. Obviously, there is a degree of embarrassment on the part of the Opposition, who like to claim that they are the champions of conservation in Australia; yet when they are in Government, when they have the legislation before them, they cannot even manage to have it proclaimed. That is typical of the hypocrisy practised by the Labor Party from time to time.

If the honourable member wants to know what the Government is doing, I refer him and other honourable members who are getting a little excited to "The Courier-Mail" of 12 January 1984. The report referred to people charged with offences under Queensland legislation and stated—

"An attempt to take 99 dead birds home to Italy to study for a book became a costly holiday expense for a retired Italian law professor and his school teacher son.

...

were fined a total of \$5304 in the Brisbane Magistrates Court yesterday after pleading guilty to charges under the Fauna Conservation Act."

That, again, is a matter on which the Minister may wish to comment.

The fact is that the Queensland legislation has been effective. Tonight, we are seeking to make it a little more workable.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: Despite the interjections and excitement of the honourable member for Wolston, I am pleased to note that the Opposition will be supporting the legislation.

I refer now to an international treaty known as CITES, which is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild flora and fauna. In doing so, I express some concern, in the wake of the Franklin dam experience, about our responsibilities as a State Government and our constitutional responsibilities relative to fauna conservation as a result of that treaty. It is well known that considerable concern has been expressed in the United States about CITES. Indeed, Australia's participation in international conservation treaties worries many people, including environmentalists and politicians, particularly in the light of the High Court decision relative to south-west Tasmania.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Do you support those international treaties?

Mr BORBIDGE: For the benefit of the honourable member for Wolston, I should say that many of these international treaties contain provisions that we should be examining carefully. They may be good in principle; but I trust that the honourable member would not accept a position in which delegates from such wonderfully democratic countries as those from the Third World sit in judgment on our policies and the decisions of a democratically elected Government in Queensland.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! Constant interjections not being accepted by the honourable member speaking add nothing to the debate. I ask the honourable member for Wolston to make his interjections concise. I ask him to stop talking continually or I will have to ask him to do something else.

Mr BORBIDGE: The Labor Party does not believe in State rights or in the rights of this Parliament. Obviously, members of the Labor Party are quite happy that people from all over the world—

Mrs Chapman interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: As my friend the honourable member for Pine Rivers said, Opposition members are told by Canberra what they should do.

Members of this House need to be particularly careful about the effect on the traditional constitutional responsibility of the State of treaties signed by the Commonwealth Government without reference to this Parliament.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: If Opposition members want to throw away their responsibilities as members of this Assembly—and their comments and interjections in this debate indicate that that is their policy—I believe that that attitude will be strongly rejected by the people of Queensland.

Mr Cahill: As it was last time.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the honourable member for Aspley said, that policy was rejected at the last election.

Australia ratified CITES in 1976, using the Customs (Endangered Species) Regulations, which have been replaced by the Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Imports and Exports) Act 1982, which I understand is still to be proclaimed by the Federal authorities. I urge the Minister and his departmental officers to keep an eye on international treaties. Certainly, great benefits can be gained by entering into such arrangements, but we cannot adopt the Labor Party's policy of giving away our rights as democratically elected members of this Parliament to people who are not accountable in their own countries, let alone in Australia or Queensland. That is what happened in the case of the Franklin dam and in other exercises such as that relating to UNESCO, in which the Labor Party seemed to excel at throwing away our birthright by making our Parliament and members of Parliament responsible to people in countries overseas.

I wish to refer briefly to the supply of koalas to Japan. The annual report of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service makes reference to supplying koalas to Japan and I know that the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts has been closely

examining this matter. It has been raised in recent times in this Parliament. The annual report says—

“At the request of the government, Dr Lavery visited Hong Kong and Japan in November-December 1982, to inspect proposals and facilities at zoos considering the import of koalas.

His report reveals a considerable interest in obtaining individuals, though immediate needs are for assurance that animals will be forthcoming and for technical guidance. There would appear to be no reason to object to the venture, but every endeavour should be made to gain maximum advantage from the project for nature conservation.”

I hope that all members will support that project because with regard to goodwill, trade, potential for growth and tourism, such an exercise will be very well received. Queensland has been in the forefront of getting koalas to Japan and the Minister, in his reply, may give some consideration to this matter.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister referred to the constitutional requirements of the States with regard to wildlife conservation. To deal effectively with interstate law enforcement difficulties adjacent to State borders, the Bill empowers the Minister to appoint fauna officers. In the vast, remote areas of the State, such as the Queensland/Northern Territory border, this provision should meet Government responsibilities and, indeed, community expectations.

As I said at the outset, I believe that the legislation will work in practice. It will be welcomed by all responsible members and will be warmly received by the community. It demonstrates the very real concern of this Government in protecting the State's natural heritage. I commend the Minister and I support the Bill.

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (8.33 p.m.): I go in to bat in this debate for the humble crocodile because it does not have many friends. As the spokesman for the Opposition said, the crocodile, together with other reptiles, has been the victim of the pioneering attitude.

Mr Scott: Donkeys on the Government side are protected.

Mr De LACY: It seems so; there are a lot around.

The pioneering attitude was that the only good crocodile is a dead one. Crocodiles are referred to specifically in the Bill. The Opposition is concerned about the current attitudes and the management policies for crocodile populations so it is important that the Opposition places on record what it believes to be a right and proper attitude towards their preservation.

Every ingredient is present for a conflict situation between man and crocodile or between the needs for public safety and the needs for wildlife conservation. Most people are afraid of crocodiles. Fishermen generally look on them as a nuisance. That type of attitude has prevailed for a long time and the case for the crocodile is not assisted by the hysteria and scare tactics indulged in by some people, most notably some Ministers in this Parliament.

Australia, as a responsible nation, has an obligation to protect its crocodile population and its wildlife generally because crocodiles—particularly salt-water crocodiles—are considered throughout the world to be a rare and fast-diminishing species. That fact has been borne out and justified in Appendix 1 to the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna, or CITES.

Their inclusion in Appendix 1 means that they are accepted as an endangered species and that international trade in both the species itself and products of the species is prohibited. Although it is not clear, I am led to believe also that the publication in the appendix means that breeding from parents that have been taken directly from the wild is prohibited. In other words, breeding from them needs to be from what is described in genetic terms as F2 generation. Crocodiles are part of the north Queensland environment, and because of that a reasonable attitude to their preservation should be adopted.

Some time ago north Queensland had a large number of crocodiles. However, in the first two decades after World War II, a lucrative industry developed in the sale of crocodile skins. It soon became apparent that inadequate controls existed over the harvesting of crocodiles. By the late 1960s it became obvious that the resource was becoming seriously depleted. In many instances, exploitation had gone beyond the level of natural recovery.

The species most under threat was the salt-water crocodile. That was because its hide made a superior leather and was in greater demand. Towards the end of the 1960s it became obvious that the salt-water crocodile in particular was a seriously endangered species and, at about that time, as salt-water crocodiles became rarer and harder to obtain, hunters moved on to the fresh-water crocodiles and began to trade in their skins.

By the early 1970s, Governments were beginning to realise how serious the situation was. It was in 1972 that the Northern Territory protected, firstly, the salt-water crocodile and, later, the fresh-water crocodile. By 1974 all States had effectively protected both species, but by that time the geographical distribution of both species had shrunk alarmingly.

One of the problems associated with trying to maintain the crocodile population is that, like *Homo sapiens*, crocodiles have to live a fair while before they are able to breed. I am led to believe that they cannot breed before they are from 14 to 16 years of age. That means that even the youngest crocodiles that were bred before protection was afforded in 1974 would still not be mature enough to breed now. In other words, it will take a lengthy period before the crocodile population is able to be built up. The current status of the population cannot be ascertained exactly.

A worrying feature is that no-one knows the distribution and population numbers of crocodiles; nor does anyone know whether the numbers are increasing or decreasing. No scientific data or statistical evidence is available; nor is an ongoing monitoring program maintained.

I have read reports to the effect that a population explosion is taking place and that soon crocodiles will be overrunning the country. Certainly the number of sightings of crocodiles has increased. There were celebrated reported sightings of a crocodile taking a dog in Innisfail and of a crocodile in a storm-water drain in Cairns. But no scientific evidence has been produced to substantiate the claim that over the 10 years since the protective legislation was introduced the crocodile population has increased substantially.

As I said at the outset, I am deeply concerned about the attitude of the Queensland Government and of many people of Queensland towards the need to preserve and maintain the crocodile population.

Before I outline those concerns, I point out that in general terms, and I refer only to the way in which it refers to crocodiles, this legislation is not altogether bad. In fact, it merely ratifies or makes legal something that has always existed in fact. Clause 8 states that a person may kill a crocodile if it—

“ . . . has caused, is causing or is likely to cause injury to a person is not guilty of an offence under this Act.”

That is what happens if a person kills a crocodile or a reptile under present circumstances. That has been fact for a long time. I doubt whether anybody has ever been prosecuted for killing a snake or a crocodile because he would have been able to say that it was causing him some danger and that he destroyed it in self-defence. I am bound to say that the legislation overstates the position. Providing “has caused” or “is causing” would be fair enough, but providing “is likely to cause injury to a person” may be a slight overkill. I know many people who believe that a crocodile or a snake is likely to cause injury at any time and, therefore, that they are justified in destroying that reptile. Judging by the comments made by Government members, many people would hold that view.

I therefore do not believe that the legislation is altogether bad. It only ratifies something that has existed all along. The Opposition also believes that there is a need to relocate rogue crocodiles or ones that are causing a great deal of trouble, particularly in areas that are inhabited by large numbers of people, such as boat ramps, swimming holes and even stormwater drains in Cairns. The Opposition has no objection to that.

I referred earlier to my concern that no adequate scientific investigation was taking place into Queensland's crocodile populations and so forth. Nothing is known about their distribution. Nobody knows whether the crocodile population is increasing or decreasing, what the problems are, whether crocodiles are recovering or what their breeding habits are. Although some base information is known, insufficient work has been done on this matter in recent years. In 1979 a survey was carried out into the crocodile population on Cape York Peninsula. No subsequent surveys have been carried out. Five years have elapsed. There is still a great deal of reference to it in the newspapers. Although new legislation has now been introduced, there is nothing to back it up in material terms.

I am also aware that the National Parks and Wildlife Service has recently appointed a crocodile zoologist in Cairns. I appreciate that. I hope that it is not simply a sop to that trendy public opinion that our wildlife should be preserved, and that the Minister is prepared to provide the back-up, the resources and the institutional network to ensure that that zoologist is able to go about the very important task that he must perform in the future.

Without scientific data, the National Parks and Wildlife Service has been issuing permits for the harvesting of crocodiles in the wild. I do not believe that the service is able to justify its action on ecological grounds or why it is allowing numbers of crocodiles to be captured.

I have seen copies of permits issued to Mr J. Lever, who has a crocodile farm in Rockhampton. I am led to believe that he has been issued permits to capture in excess of 200 crocodiles. Mr Harry Freeman, who comes from my part of the world, has been granted permits to capture about 100 crocodiles. He takes them to a crocodile park outside Cairns. That park is a substantial tourist attraction. He is doing a very good job. However, the National Parks and Wildlife Service is issuing permits without understanding or possessing the evidence needed to know what effect the capture of crocodiles will have on the wild population of that endangered species.

As long ago as September 1980, the National Parks and Wildlife Service was supposed to be formulating a plan for the management of and research into the crocodile population. That management plan still has not been completely formulated. It is certainly not yet available for public scrutiny. That indicates to me a lack of commitment to preparing the management and research plan for our crocodile population.

The fourth point relates to management strategy. From time to time management strategies are proposed. One suggestion that crops up every now and again is the need to have crocodile-free areas. Somewhere I read the suggestion that the area from Barron River on the north side of Cairns to Buchan's Point was a crocodile-free area. It probably should be. I have no doubt that the urban centre of Cairns ought to be a crocodile-free area also. However, there is a need to define what a crocodile-free area is and where those areas are. Every time a request about such areas is made, nobody seems to be able to supply the information.

Mr Cahill: You don't want crocodiles in Abbott Street.

Mr De LACY: That would not hurt. They would be better than some members on the other side of the House.

Hand in hand with the need for a crocodile-free area is the need to have a remote area where crocodiles can exist in an undisturbed habitat; where they can be secure and undisturbed. Humans going into such areas must be made aware of the dangers they would be facing.

My sixth point relates to the need for a public education campaign at two levels. I know that the National Parks and Wildlife Service has from time to time conducted minor programs. Crocodiles are of value. They are a natural part of our environment. They need to be protected, simply because they are a natural part of the environment. Probably some other reasons justify their existence. Over the years, I have heard many fishermen say that a stream with plenty of crocodiles is a good stream for barramundi fishing. I do not know whether there is hard scientific justification for such a statement, but it is a commonly held belief among fishermen.

It must be explained to people that crocodiles are not altogether bad. On the other hand, a healthier respect for crocodiles must be developed so that people take sensible precautions, understand the dangers in certain areas, particularly remote, uncontrolled areas, and are aware of the steps to be taken to look out for crocodiles. We are all aware of the problems associated with the box jellyfish, sharks and other dangerous sea life. In my opinion, it is important to establish an education program to generally upgrade the community's knowledge of crocodiles and their role in our ecology.

I am concerned also at continual reports of illegal shooting and killing of crocodiles, although they have not all been substantiated. It is important that wildlife rangers are able to follow up any complaint.

Finally, from time to time I hear that a great number of salt-water crocodiles are being caught in gill nets in the streams that run across Lakefield National Park on Cape York Peninsula and into Princess Charlotte Bay. Consideration must be given to the way in which that affects the crocodile population in the estuaries in that area.

In summary, the legislation addresses the preservation of crocodiles and other reptiles. It has not done very much to take away the protection that has existed in Queensland since 1974. There is probably a bit of an overstatement in the wording, but there needs to be not only legislation but also a commitment by the Government, through the National Parks and Wildlife Service, to developing a plan and long term strategy for the preservation of crocodiles.

Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (8.50 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister, who, since coming into his new portfolio, has worked very hard and has had the courage to introduce legislation in a field that has given trouble for a long time. In doing so, he has gained the respect of the Opposition and the support of the media. I remind the people of Queensland that the same Opposition initiated and fuelled the ridiculous scare tactics about this Bill. Little old ladies were convinced that they would lose their budgerigars. A little old lady in my electorate rang me about her two budgerigars called Joh and Flo. She was concerned that, because of the Bill, she would lose them.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr LINGARD: Members of the Opposition would not even know the difference between a male and a female budgerigar.

The Bill contains a list of almost 50 gazetted aviary birds for which no permit is necessary. That means that approximately 70 per cent of the birds in aviaries in Queensland may be kept, bred, exchanged, sold and moved within the State without restriction. The only permits that are necessary are in connection with bringing such birds into the State or exporting them from the State. Those aviary birds include exotic species and aviary-bred varieties of some native species that are well suited to being kept in captivity.

What a disgrace it was that the Labor Party worried little old ladies with one or two budgerigars. I am sure that every honourable member was contacted by people who had heard the malicious rumours. A similar thing happened to people with fish in aquariums. Malicious gossip from the Opposition made them afraid that fish in aquariums would be included in the restrictions.

I hope that the people of Queensland will see the common sense of the Bill, the wisdom of the Government and the hard work of the new Minister. Everyone should have it clearly in his mind that the Fauna Conservation Act seeks to protect native fauna in the wild and to control, by means of a system of permits, licences or other authorities, those activities that are aimed directly at affecting fauna in some way.

Mr Deputy Speaker, if I were you, I would watch the member for Wolston as he leaves the Chamber. He will probably give you a Heil Hitler salute, just as he did a few days ago. That is an absolute disgrace. The people of the Wolston electorate should be made aware of the actions of their member.

The Minister has shown a positive policy on legislation on national parks. The new legislation contains a commonsense balance between the safety of people and their livelihoods and the conservation of birds, mammals and reptiles. Honourable members had to listen to the ridiculous contributions of the member for Ipswich West, who envisaged a great entrepreneurial project that he would initiate. Imagine sending bats and crows to England! Imagine all the money that Queensland would receive from selling bats and crows in England! He said that that would be the start of a great industry. I can imagine that tomorrow "The Courier-Mail" will carry the caption, "Labor's policy for new Queensland industry—sell bats and crows."

The honourable member for Ipswich West also put forward the policy of helping all wildlife in the country by having people take wild animals to their homes. From experience, anybody knows that wild birds and animals cannot be kept in captivity; but that was the policy proposed by the member for Ipswich West.

The member for Cairns embarked on a ridiculous discussion on the Labor Party's policy of promoting a great crocodile industry. After living in Bamaga for two years, I can just imagine what the people of the Torres Strait islands think about breeding crocodiles

up there, especially when they spend a great deal of their time in the search for crayfish and pearl shells. I can just imagine the member for Lytton out there fishing; I would love to see a crocodile get hold of him.

Farmers are no longer required to seek permits to destroy the creatures attacking their commercial fruit and vegetable crops. The Act has approved that four species of fruit bat and three species of crow be no longer protected fauna under the Fauna Conservation Act. Let us hope that the Labor Party does not begin the entrepreneurial industry of sending those species overseas.

This is good, commonsense legislation because, during an unusually wet winter last year, common flying foxes caused damage to stone-fruit crops in southern Queensland, in particular, estimated at several million dollars. Crows, too, have always been a problem for farmers of fruit and vegetable crops. Unfortunately, farmers have come to live with those pest problems, so no-one bothers to report crop damage any more. Therefore, the Government has decided to lift any restriction on farmers seeking to protect their livelihood from the pests.

I refer members to the amendments to the Act that will allow people to kill crocodiles and snakes that threaten human life. The proposals already allow for these reptiles to be killed if they are a menace in developing areas; however, unprovoked and unnecessary killing of crocodiles and snakes is still to be illegal.

Other amendments will tighten up provisions of the Act that may, in the past, have allowed offenders to escape penalties through a loophole. Interstate movement was almost like an American wild west movie in which there was a race for the border to escape the sheriff. The Australian Constitution makes the States responsible for wildlife conservation, but State laws can operate only within the State. All honourable members appreciate that. Problems can arise in carrying out law enforcement activities adjacent to State borders. I congratulate the Minister for having had the initiative to try to overcome those problems.

I wish to state once again my disgust at the tactics of all those Opposition members who embarked on a campaign to scare the Queensland public. Not only did they unnecessarily worry many people with aquariums and aviaries, who have now received considerable relief from the Act; they also worried many old people, who became convinced that their pets would be taken from them. Surely the politics of the ALP in Queensland should not be allowed to degenerate to that extent.

Finally, I again compliment the Minister and his department.

Mr COMBEN (Windsor) (8.57 p.m.): I rise with some trepidation to follow the honourable member for Fassifern, who I would have thought would have had far more fact in his speech than he did—

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr COMBEN: I would not; but I do not have any children, so I am not sure about that.

The member for Fassifern said that there is no merit in the suggestions made in very general terms by my colleague the member for Ipswich West when he said there was a need to begin exporting various animals in order to ensure the survival of the species. A genetic pool is needed somewhere in the world so that we can be assured that all of our species will survive and not become in-bred, like the members of the National Party in this State.

Mr FitzGerald: Oh, that's getting nasty.

Mr Burns: It's true.

Mr COMBEN: As the member for Lytton quite correctly says, that is a true statement. If one looks at any species of wild animal and sees that there is a decline in intelligence and a decline in the voice-box and the articulation, it becomes obvious that there is an incestuous relationship in the small, clandestine group. One sees that in every type of animal that interbreeds, and there are some types of animal in this Chamber that show evidence of such inter-breeding.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The reference to any member of this Chamber as an animal is entirely unparliamentary, and I ask for a withdrawal.

Mr COMBEN: I withdraw.

The contribution of the member for Fassifern was totally facetious, so I turn to the contribution of the member for Ipswich West, who said that there is a need to export some of our wildlife. I remind the member for Fassifern that if we adopt National Party of Australia policies in this State we will have to export our wildlife, because there will be no natural native scrub and no habitat of any sort left for our wild animals. The member for Ipswich West is to be commended for his contribution and the Government should take it on board; but, in their usual myopic way, Government members will not even bother to listen.

The contributions of the members for Ipswich West and Cairns were extremely good, and I support them, especially in view—

Mr Menzel: You wouldn't be biased by any chance, would you?

Mr COMBEN: I would be biased towards policies of care and concern, but not towards this Government's policies. My colleagues have stated the Opposition's view of the provisions relating to the killing of snakes or estuarine crocodiles.

Mr FitzGerald: I thought you were supporting the Bill.

Mr COMBEN: I am supporting the Bill in the same way as my colleagues support it. I said that my colleagues have stated the Opposition's point of view. Because we hold a point of view, that does not mean that we will only oppose. We will not oppose everything not put up by us, although I know that members of the National Party are that way inclined. Unless something comes from the internal clique, National Party members believe it is no good. Fortunately, Opposition members have a wider vision and a bigger brain.

Opposition members believe that the provision concerning the allowable killing of crocodiles is far too wide. If a 25-ft crocodile were lying, as the member for Surfers Paradise lies, on the foreshore sunning itself, and someone stood between it and the water, where it would be safe, it could be said with reasonable accuracy that it would be likely to cause injury, as is outlined in the various provisions in the Bill. The injury could be caused by many things, such as the crocodile's tail or its teeth. A person in imminent danger at that moment, or one who thinks he is in imminent danger, could shoot the crocodile, with total impunity, and be confident that, in terms of the legislation, he would not be guilty of an offence. That is not acceptable to the Opposition.

The whole concept under this amending legislation of protection against personal injury by snakes and crocodiles, is a farce. The whole concept is obsolete. The Criminal Code, which was worked for the past 84 years, contains provisions to meet the situations that the amendment is proposed to address. Sir Samuel Griffith, a former leader in this Parliament and Australia's first Chief Justice, wrote section 25 into the Criminal Code in 1899, and it was enacted in 1901. The Minister would have been well advised to read that section prior to the introduction of this legislation. It reads—

“Extraordinary Emergencies. Subject to the express provisions of this Code relating to acts done upon compulsion or provocation or in self-defence, a person is not criminally responsible for an act or omission done or made under such circumstances of sudden or extraordinary emergency that an ordinary person possessing ordinary power of self-control could not reasonably be expected to act otherwise.”

I suggest to the Minister that any person faced with a striking snake or a crocodile with open jaws on its way to the water would be in such circumstances of sudden or extraordinary emergency that an ordinary person possessing ordinary power of self control could not reasonably be expected to act otherwise than to destroy that animal.

Mrs Chapman: You have done that? You have been faced with a snake or a crocodile?

Mr COMBEN: No. But if I had been before the introduction of this legislation I would have happily given it a kick first, as I would give many things a kick if they keep interrupting me. I am not talking about the honourable member, Mr Deputy Speaker.

In a note to this section in the Draft Code, Sir Samuel Griffith stated—

“This section gives effect to the principle that no man is expected (for the purposes of the criminal law, at all events) to be wiser or better than all mankind. It is conceived that it is a rule of the common law, as it undoubtedly is a rule upon which any jury would desire to act. It may, perhaps, be said that it sums up nearly all the common law rules as to excuses for an act which is prima facie criminal.”

It would be trite to say that that law applies to this legislation. The penal provisions in the legislation contain a criminal sanction and thus the exculpatory provisions in section 25 of the Criminal Code apply with full force.

The measures that the Government is trying to introduce are totally obsolete. Any person genuinely, immediately threatened by a snake or crocodile could claim the protection of the Criminal Code. There is no need for the irresponsible, wide-ranging provisions in this Bill. The emphasis of the department should be on protection of native fauna, but the Bill contains a legal loophole that could further erode the protection given to the crocodile. As has been canvassed by my colleague the member for Cairns, there is still not sufficient empirical evidence of the range and number of the estuarine crocodiles in Queensland.

Population figures have not been taken since the massive slaughter days of the mid-1960s and prior to the December 1972 Commonwealth embargo on the export of crocodile skins and skin products. It was not until 1974 that uniform protection laws were passed across the nation.

The precise number of estuarine crocodiles is not known. Recently, a very disquieting article about the estuarine crocodile was published in “Wildlife”, which is produced by the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland. The article indicated that, contrary to popular belief, the crocodile was no longer common in isolated waters as had long been believed. The simple reason for the lack of specimens in isolated waters was that unlicensed and illegal shooters had been able to shoot in these isolated waters with impunity for many years because not enough wildlife officers were available to patrol the waters. As a result, far fewer crocodiles were found than expected.

To ensure the crocodile's survival in the last of its great habitat areas, better provisions are needed than those found in this Bill. The member for Cairns outlined the type of provisions that are needed. As I said, the protective provision of the Criminal Code, which provides that every Queensland citizen is within his legal rights if he destroys an attacking crocodile or snake, is to be commended. Those rights do not need to be contained in obsolete provisions in amending legislation.

Mr Borbidge: You are not being very practical.

Mr COMBEN: I am being very practical. I am telling the Minister that it is unnecessary to pass this legislation.

The Bill rectifies a number of technical defects and, as I have found in the few months that I have been a member, that is usual. However, the glaring point about this Bill and the principal Act is the failure to address the greatest conservation need in Queensland today.

Mr Milliner interjected.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, that would help conservation a long way. The Bill fails to address the problem of the conservation of native fauna or its habitat. While that gap remains, the Bill will be only of limited benefit. As I said in my maiden speech in November last year—

“The Queensland Fauna Protection Act, which the Government always holds up as wonderful legislation ensuring that Queensland's fauna is protected, has no teeth. It is totally useless, in that only individual specimens are protected and nothing is done for species overall. It is absurd that we protect the dugong and, at the same time, remove the sea-grass plains so that the dugong starve to death, while Government members say ‘We did not harm them.’”

Government members say that they protect them.

Mr Menzel: What would you do if a taipan bit you? Would you kill it or let it go?

Mr COMBEN: I would quite happily kill it.

Mr Burns: The member for Mulgrave would be mucking about trying to kill it. I would whip off to the doctor.

Mr COMBEN: The comments made by the member for Lytton are very pertinent. I know that the member for Mulgrave would take some time to make sure that he got the taipan—

Mr Burns: They would both die.

Mr COMBEN: That is right.

The situation in Queensland is absurd because if any member were to go to the Redland Bay area and shoot a koala, he would be fined about \$50 and if he kept on killing koalas, he might be gaoled. However, if a member took a bulldozer—and I remind the House that members on only one side of the House own bulldozers—

Mr Menzel interjected.

Mr COMBEN: The National Party members would bulldoze the 300 acres of gums in the Redland Bay area in which koalas live. I am pleased that the member for Mulgrave said that he would do that and I am sure that his electors would like to hear it as well.

Mr Borbidge: You are talking a load of rubbish.

Mr COMBEN: I am following the example of the member for Surfers Paradise. He spoke about chasing birds all over the countryside. That is something that I expect from him.

Mr Milliner: I know that he is fond of birds of paradise.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, and he pays quite a lot of money for them, especially lovebirds and special parrots, but I do not want to cast aspersions on him.

If National Party members were to go to Redland Bay with their bulldozers, as advocated by the member for Mulgrave, and were to destroy about 300 acres of gums in that area and leave 200 koalas sitting on the ground to starve in a matter of days, no action could be taken against them. That is the absurd position.

Another horrendous example, and one that is closer to home, is that occurring in the Etna limestone cave system near Rockhampton, which contains almost the total Australian population of the little bent-winged bat. I should not imagine that that little bat would be of much consequence to members of the National Party, who are used to Dracula going out at night-time with the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police.

Mr Menzel: We care about people. Don't you?

Mr COMBEN: Yes, we are concerned about people and their quality of life. We want to ensure that they have a reasonable life on this planet in the future and that they can see the same variety of fauna and flora that was our heritage when we were born and that we accept today. In the honourable member's short time remaining on this earth he may not see many differences. However, as I am about 30 years younger than he is, I can expect to see some changes over the next few years.

Mr Burns: You're about 50 years younger.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, about 50 years younger, and 70 years younger than the member for Mirani.

As I was saying, about 80 per cent of the population of the little bent-winged bat is contained in the Etna caves region.

Mr Menzel: Has anyone ever told you that you are as blind as a bat?

Mr COMBEN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not seem to be able to get on with my speech, because Government members keep on interjecting. I am not provoking them in any way.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr COMBEN: Opposition members are helping me.

As I was saying, 80 per cent of the population of the little bent-winged bat uses one area, known as the bat cleft, for maternity purposes. If any vandal from the Government side was to shoot one of those bats, he would be liable to a fine and perhaps even imprisonment. However, incredibly, any limestone-miner can go into that area, which is under an authority to prospect, with large earth-moving equipment and destroy the bat cleft with total impunity. The end result would be the killing of not just a few specimens but probably the entire population of the little bent-winged bat.

Such inconsistency is totally incomprehensible. It makes as much sense as a speech by the honourable member for Surfers Paradise. It is because of such inconsistencies that legislation such as this should contain a provision that will protect our native flora and habitat.

Queensland should be examining the legislation that is passed in other States. I again refer honourable members to my maiden speech, in which I canvassed the wide range of options that are available to the Government, including educational programs for land-holders and financial incentives such as rate relief and tax concessions to prevent indiscriminate clearing and destruction.

Mr Borbidge: Do you know that the Victorian bush fire problem came about because of attitudes exactly like yours? They could not cut the grass and they could not cut down the timber.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! Only one member should be speaking, and that is the honourable member for Windsor.

Mr COMBEN: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is very difficult to speak over the cacophony on the Government side.

An Opposition Member: They are like a lot of galahs.

Mr COMBEN: Obviously galahs, too, need protection.

If I could continue with my speech—as a last measure, it could even be necessary to legislate to prevent indiscriminate clearing. That has had to be done in South Australia—not, as the honourable member for Surfers Paradise said, in Victoria—and I confess that the South Australian Government has had considerable difficulty in implementing the legislation.

Mr Borbidge: And the Dandenong Ranges.

Mr COMBEN: I am not aware of the difficulties in the Dandenong Ranges. I drove through that area at Christmas-time and I certainly did not see any problems.

Mr Borbidge: The year before was when the problem started.

Mr COMBEN: That was the year that the member for Surfers Paradise was there cutting down the trees.

I concede that in South Australia there have been problems with the native habitat retention program. The short-term result of that program has been that unscrupulous land-holders out to make a quick buck have gone in very quickly with wide-bladed bulldozers and wiped out even greater areas of natural flora and native habitat than would previously have been the case. If ever we pass similar legislation, we must be careful to ensure that that sort of indiscriminate clearing does not continue.

A comprehensive program needs to be implemented by the Government and by the Labor Government that will follow it in 1986. Also, increased staffing is needed in the National Parks and Wildlife Service to adequately police the limited provisions of this Act.

The Bill does not go far enough. It is time that we became serious about conservation in this State, and I have spoken privately to the Minister about that. I hope that one day there will be a change of jobs and that the job will then be done more effectively. It is time that everyone in this State became serious about legislation to protect our heritage in the form of native flora and native habitat. We might then be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel. In the next couple of years we shall wait for

effective legislation, but I presume that we shall wait in vain. Maybe one day we will see the members of the Minister's committee, about whom we hear so much, getting serious about conservation. The Opposition hopes that that day is not very far away.

Mr KAUS (Mansfield) (9.17 p.m.): It is indeed a pleasure for me to enter into this debate on the Fauna Conservation Act and Another Act Amendment Bill, which relates to the conservation of fauna and its habitat. Of approximately 13 200 mammals and birds species that were in existence in the year 1600, over 130 of them have already become extinct. About 240 more species of mammals and birds are today in danger of extinction.

Mr Scott: All because of National Party people.

Mr KAUS: Boloney!

Large numbers of reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates are also endangered, together with a conservatively estimated 20 000 plant species. I do not know whether Opposition members know about that, but if they listen they will learn something. Man is largely responsible for eliminating and endangering species through habitat destruction and the introduction of pest species, which is very important to Australia, by hunting and by trade.

Pest species, such as rabbits, foxes and starlings, once introduced into a new continent, are almost impossible to eliminate. Undoubtedly farmers are aware of that problem. International discussion has taken place on habitat preservation, particularly in rain forests. Government members are lobbied regularly by certain people. A number of rain forests exist in Queensland. However, most international activity has centred on controlling trade in threatened species, either alive or as animal and plant products. The need for countries to import and export rare species is a matter that should be discussed at length.

I will give honourable members some idea of how long these things take. The seventh general assembly of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources was held in Warsaw in 1960. By 1963 it passed a resolution. Fancy taking three years to pass a resolution! It takes a bit of time for these international people to get together. Of course, a few trips are involved. That resolution called for "an international convention on regulations of export, transit and import of rare or threatened wildlife species or their skins and trophies" The first draft of that convention was drawn up in 1964. The Governments got together between 1967 and 1971. Finally, on 3 March 1973, 21 nations signed a final draft known as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. By March 1981, there were 68 member states. That is one convention with which I agree. I do not agree with many conventions that the Commonwealth has signed.

There are big markets for animal products such as furs, plumes and meat, but an increasing trade is now observed in live animals as pets, for collectors or for use in scientific experiments. There is, of course, considerable status in owning an animal, or a product from an animal, which is rare. CITES approaches the problem by banning the commercial trade of endangered species, which, as we all know, is a big problem. What is called a threatened category can be traded commercially, but under surveillance. Another section takes account of species specially nominated by individual member states. Control is exercised on a system of import and export permits.

However, there are certain problems. First is that of funding. The member for Surfers Paradise has mentioned CITES. These organisations form committees. Consequently, nothing is done. That is why it took 13 years for the convention that I have just mentioned to be signed. CITES was told by the governing body to run its own show. A trust fund was established. All parties were expected to contribute. A group called the Survival Service Commission was then formed, one of the most important functions of which was to prepare and update red data books which list endangered mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and plants. Most species listed are also described in the red data books.

There were some difficulties with CITES, and it is interesting to note them. I have already mentioned finance. However, countries which are non-signatories are acting as launderers for wildlife trade. Secondly, free ports have no customs controls. Thirdly, flexible animal products industries smoothly switch to other species if supplies of one dwindle. In

other words, rarity is not so much a commercial threat as is commonly supposed. Other problems revolve round the forgery of import and export papers, the wilful mislabelling of species, the very high profits to be made from the rare species trade, and the lack of recognition of species by customs officers.

Mr Casey: Is that what happened with those soya beans that the Premier brought in that time?

Mr KAUS: I would not know, but that has nothing to do with this.

Over the 10 years' existence of that organisation, some progress has been made in overcoming the difficulties. For example, import/export permits are now much more difficult to forge. The major laundering ports are being identified and the activities in them countered. Because of identification problems, people now require permits for the trade in all parrots, both common and rare. Some agreement on wildlife transportation has been reached with carriers. A most important point is that Third World countries are becoming increasingly conscious of the need to protect their wildlife.

From 1976, only 13 convictions have been recorded under the regulations, with fines imposed amounting to a paltry \$7,210. That is less than the cost of one bird.

Mr Vaughan: Is that in Queensland?

Mr KAUS: I would say that would be in the whole of Australia.

However, it is known that wildlife smuggling out of Australia is a multimillion dollar industry involving well organised gangs of criminals. Customs management, low maximum penalties, corruption among officials, jealousy between customs and wildlife authorities and the lack of a suitable number of enforcement officers have all contributed to the poor application of CITES by Australia, which has been to its own detriment.

This year, a new Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Bill has been passed in the House of Representatives and introduced in the Senate. Apart from consolidating previously diverse legislation, the Bill is a distinct improvement on the Customs (Endangered Species) Regulations in that management is now entrusted to the Director, National Parks and Wildlife; maximum penalties under the Bill are large, being \$100,000 or five years gaol for an individual; there is more flexibility to take account of the inevitable changes in CITES appendices; and possession of illegally imported wildlife is prohibited.

As far as Australia is concerned, the smuggling of live birds and reptiles out of the country is a considerable threat to rare and endangered species. Overseas, very high prices are obtained for rare Australian birds. In fact, prices are so high that an 80 per cent or so mortality rate in transit is acceptable to the criminals involved. The animals are easily trapped without detection, or even bought on the Australian market, then are thought to be flown out of Australia via light aircraft from the many remote airstrips in northern Australia. Singapore is the major laundering port for Australian wildlife, it seems, from which animals are sent to major markets in the US, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. There appears to be little effort on the part of Australian officials to stop the Singapore connection through negotiations with Government officials there. It should be noted that caged birds are a favourite hobby in China, Japan and South-east Asia.

The smuggling of Australia's unique wildlife is sure to remain a serious problem. One factor sometimes cited by officials is that the extent and number of bird and animal populations in Australia is still poorly known.

Apart from the regulation of imports and exports, Australia still has no endangered species legislation of a national character. In the United States of America for example, the Endangered Species Act provides, inter alia, for a national list of endangered flora and fauna, acquisition of needed habitat, specified procedures for Federal-State co-operation, and guide-lines for Federal agencies according to wildlife conservation principles.

That is one point that would have to be looked at, and I think the Minister could take it up with the Federal Minister when he is in Canberra.

At a Canberra symposium on endangered species held in November 1981, it was stated that up to 80 species of native animals and more than 2 200 native plant species were now considered extinct, endangered or threatened. Quite a few other species will almost certainly be lost because of the lack of available resources. I congratulate the Minister on bringing forward these amendments.

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (9.31 p.m.): I often wonder whether we spend too much time worrying about the harp seal in Canada and the other cuddly and better looking animals and neglect the uglier animals. The argument tonight over crocodiles probably has something to do with my making that point.

I ask honourable members: If you were a hairy-nosed wombat living in the Epping Forest National Park outside Clermont, and you looked like Claude Wharton, what chance would you have? If you were a porcupine and looked like Russ Hinze, what chance would you have of people being concerned about you? If you were a yellow-footed rock wallaby that looked like the Premier, or a brush-tailed rat kangaroo that looked like the Minister, what would be your chances of survival in this world? They are the animals about which we should be concerned, because the hairy-nosed wombat, the bridled nailtail wallaby and other animals are endangered in this State. They are a bit like some of the animals on the other side of the House. The fact is that they are endangered because they are not popular. It is easy for people to shoot them or exterminate them because they are not the ones that grasp the public imagination. It is very easy for us to say that we should kill them off or allow the extermination of certain animals because people do not like them or appreciate them.

Tonight, the member for Fassifern attacked the Opposition spokesman for suggesting that Queensland's wild birds should be bred and exported. I remember that, years ago, Sir Edward Hallstrom of Taronga Park Zoo made such a recommendation. I found the article and I want to refer to it tonight. It states—

“The breeding of native birds of the rarer species for export overseas would prevent, or at least drastically reduce, any attempt to smuggle our native fauna. Persons of world renown such as the late Mr Al Chisholm, president of the Field Naturalist Club, Victoria; Dr Allen Lendon, surgeon, aviculturist and author, who re-wrote Neville W. Cayleys, *Australian Parrots in Field and Aviary*, and Sir Edward Hallstrom—all of these people advocated the breeding and exporting of the rarer species, even such parrots as the Paradise Parrot.”

I remember a story in “The Queensland Graingrower” of 2 December 1981 that referred to the search for the Paradise parrot. It said that that parrot just does not exist any more. There have been no sightings for a number of years.

Mr Comben: Since 1924.

Mr BURNS: Since 1924, my colleague from Windsor tells me. Would it have been better for us if we had allowed that bird to be trapped and then bred in captivity? In some cases, allowing the sale and export of those birds bred in captivity might have assisted in stamping out the cruel and inhuman practice of transporting animals. Members should not say that it cannot be done. I have a great personal friend who is an aviculturist. He lives in the heart of my electorate and I have known him for many years. I have great faith in his concern for birds and animals in the wild. He told me that the gang gang cockatoo is bred successfully at the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary by Des Spittal and Christine Gannon, two very responsible and dedicated persons who lecture widely at numerous bird societies and groups. But the breeding of gang gang cockatoos has had to be curtailed because the sanctuary is not allowed to sell them. What is the use of breeding them if they cannot be sold? They just end up with more and more of them.

Mr Kaus: Have you ever been walking in the bush and had them follow you?

Mr BURNS: I have not, to be truthful. Just recently I read in the newspaper that 37 gang gang cockatoos were found, drugged, in suitcases at Sydney airport, waiting to be smuggled out. Would it not have been better to have kept a few of those birds alive so that some of them could have been sold to the people overseas who wanted them and were prepared to pay so much money for them to the illegal operators who slaughtered thousands of birds a year in their attempts to get them overseas?

I cannot believe that an answer cannot be found to the slaughtering of galahs and other parrots because they eat crops. They are destroyed in their thousands, yet many kind-hearted people would be prepared to keep them.

I do not keep caged birds. I do not believe in locking up wild creatures. However, my friends who do keep them care for them and are seriously concerned about their safety and welfare. They spend a great deal of money and time in looking after them. They are good people.

The Fauna Squad needs additional members so that the inspectors can move round. People who are seriously interested in looking after birds should be assisted to do so. Some people in the National Parks and Wildlife Service share my belief about taking birds from the wild. They think that no-one should do it. They talk about policy rather than legislation and the law as it is laid down. They say to people, "You should not keep birds." They do everything possible to create a bureaucratic nightmare so that people will not try to get a permit to move birds from one place to another. They make things difficult because of the views they hold. It may be that a fellow of my persuasion would try to do as I would do if he thought that they were hurting birds, but I do not believe that that situation should be allowed to develop.

Our job is to see that animals and birds in zoos, or animals and birds in any other place, including domestic animals, are properly kept, clean, well-fed and well looked after. If that is not done, inspectors should ensure that the person responsible cannot buy a bird, move a bird or ever again be involved with an animal or bird. It should be made quite clear that, if people are prepared to look after birds and care for them properly, they will be allowed to keep them and sell them.

My friend went on to say that the red-tailed black cockatoo is successfully bred on the Darling Downs and elsewhere but the Government curtails its sale. The birds cannot be sold. The hooded parrot, when bred, cannot be sold interstate. When a person tries to sell one locally, he cannot get a permit. The officers say that it is not against the law to sell the birds, but a permit will not be given, because that is the policy. What is the policy? Who determines it? Is it someone in the department? Is it the Minister, or is it the Government? People on the counter say, "It is not against the law, but that is the policy."

My friend tells me that orange-bellied parrots and blue-winged parrots are bred in New South Wales but people are not allowed to buy them in Queensland. He said that an unofficial policy applies an import ban on Major Mitchell cockatoos. He knows of a person who brought a Major Mitchell parrot in New South Wales. He had a New South Wales permit to transport it to Queensland, but Queensland would not issue a permit to move it in this State. Can anyone explain why that should be so? The man at the departmental counter said, "Why don't you leave the birds in the bush where they belong?" I may have sympathy for the man who said that but, as I say, many people care for their birds and animals decently. It does not seem right that I should try to impose my personal views on those people. It is wrong to me that people who breed native birds are not allowed to sell them. I make no bones about it. It is well known that when bans are placed on certain things, they become more valuable and people try harder to get round the ban illegally. When people smuggle birds they damage or kill more than they manage to sell illegally.

As a child I trapped birds. I trapped so many bullfinches in a cage that, because they were flying about inside the cage took off. At the time I did not think that that was very cruel, but when I got a hiding when I got home I found it was cruel so far as I was concerned.

Governments still choose to ignore the Senate standing committee of inquiry into trafficking and smuggling in Australia which, I understand, advocated the export of native fauna. A report at the State Government level that is ignored is the inquiry into animal and vegetable pests.

The more species of native birds that are bred in aviaries, the less is the chance of those species becoming extinct in the wild. That can be said of the golden shouldered parrot. It is fairly widely known that they are being bred in the southern States, but large numbers are not found in the wild.

Mr Kaus: What happens to them when they let them out?

Mr BURNS: A person is not allowed to let them out. I am sure that the Minister will agree with me on that. As I understand it, a person is not allowed to release into the wild a bird that has been bred in captivity. In some cases the situation becomes crazy. A person is allowed to keep a bird or animal that is hurt and feed it. If a bird or animal is badly hurt, it is some time before it can be released and by that time it has become dependent on its keeper.

Mr Simpson: There is the time factor in letting them go in the wild.

Mr BURNS: That is right. If an animal or bird is kept quite a while, it becomes dependent on the people looking after it and feeding it. It is cruel to let that bird or animal return to the wild. It would be better to kill it than put it in a position in which it cannot fend for itself. It is at that stage when the Government has permitted a person to care for a bird or animal and restore it to good health that it would be better off in an aviary or zoo.

Mr Stephan: Some of those birds love natural areas where they can, in fact, go. If they go out of those areas, predators kill them.

Mr BURNS: That is true, but I am talking about injured birds. Many people, when driving to the coast or to Toowoomba, will pick up a bird or animal that is hurt on the road, bring it to Brisbane and feed it. Most of those people do not think about taking the bird or animal back to the coast or Toowoomba.

The department issues permits to keep such birds or animals, but most people would not know that such permits exist. A lady in my electorate told me that she had been to the local pet shop to buy a bird and that the man in the shop had told her that she could buy a cockatoo but that she needed a permit to move it. When she wanted to take it to a friend's place because she was going on holiday, she had to obtain another permit to move it there. She also needed a permit to move it from the friend's place to her own place when she returned from holiday. That is crazy. People will ignore the permit system if a bureaucratic nightmare is created. It is even worse if, when making application for a permit, a person is told to come back on another day or that the person who issues the permit has just gone to lunch. That system only breeds a lack of respect for the law and makes people say, "What's the use?"

Mr Underwood interjected.

Mr BURNS: That is right, when a person knows that that is happening.

I can understand the feelings of a farmer whose wheat or panicum seed crop is being wiped out by birds. He wants to get rid of those birds and he will use the quickest and easiest way to do it. But I am not sure that that is the best way. I am not a trapper and I do not like trapping but I wonder whether it would be far more humane than poisoning or shooting the birds.

I would also like to speak about endangered species. When I was environment spokesman for the Labor Party, I spent some time with the members of the Conondale Range Committee who spoke about the platypus frog. They made some recommendations about special legislation for endangered species. I looked at that proposed legislation and read the material, and I felt that they had made some worthwhile points. One point was that Queensland was still in the early stages of the development of wilderness areas and national parks and that, despite the early recognition of the need to preserve the uniqueness of the Australian landscape, national park declarations have always been subordinate to mining, agricultural and forestry operations. That point is a very valid one. Clearing for development, the use of pesticides, trail bike riding and new roadworks have all destroyed habitat areas. A lot of fauna, as the member for Gympie said, cannot exist in other areas. Fauna cannot just move up the street or into the next suburb as a person would. Much of it is wiped out or starves or perishes from the effect of the pesticides and other man-made problems. Man creates many situations in which certain species are endangered.

The proposal put forward by the Conondale Range Committee in June 1983 is worth considering, and I would like the Minister's officers to advise on whether it has been considered and whether any proposal has been put forward in this State to introduce endangered species legislation.

I am not a proponent of zoos. I do not believe in locking wild animals up. I suppose that my great weakness is that I am a fisherman, not a hunter. When I kill fish I do not see that as being as bad as someone who kills birds or animals. I suppose all of us have such quirks in our nature.

I am interested, however, in the Q-zoo concept for 1988. Queensland should have a decent State zoo operated by the Queensland Government.

Mr De Lacy: They have it on the other side.

Mr BURNS: Many people claim that Parliament is something of a zoo, and I suppose it can be said that they are right.

The concept of a Q-zoo is one that all of us should support so that it can be assured of receiving the maximum amount of money.

I have visited zoos in other parts of the world. I do not support the export of koalas to Japan or to the United States of America.

Sir William Knox: What about bulls to China?

Mr BURNS: I was there, and I described it as I described the honourable member for Nundah. However, I do not want to hurt the honourable member or his family by stating the description that I gave him.

One day in the middle of winter I visited a zoo in Sweden and saw a kangaroo sitting on a piece of cement under a plastic tree that was supposed to resemble a gum-tree. As all the people were parading past, I thought to myself that that treatment of the kangaroo was worse than that meted out to the people who were transported from England to Australia in chains.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr BURNS: Maybe the kangaroo was better off than those that were left here in Australia. However, before Australia allows animals to be sent to countries such as Sweden, it should ensure that those countries not only plant the appropriate trees but also provide adequate facilities. In America, large numbers of gum-trees grow in the areas to which the koalas are exported. In spite of that, koalas in America do not last very long. Continually we read of their dying off. I realise that people are beating a path to the door to send koalas overseas, but they will not get my vote. I do not support the export of koalas or other animals out of their own environment. Let the tourists come to Australia to see our animals instead of allowing our animals to be exported for exploitation in other countries.

Mr Casey: There is nothing better than the big open concept of the zoo that the New South Wales Government established near Dubbo.

Mr BURNS: Obviously we have to get away from the concept of zoos containing little wire cages in which animals are kept on cement floors that are hosed down every morning. Animals should not be kept in such surroundings.

In every annual report of the National Parks and Wildlife Service we read of studies that are undertaken by it. However, the results of those studies are not published or, if they are, they are not available to members. We read of studies concerning the purple-necked rock wallaby, the turtle courtship at Mon Repos and the effect of sand temperature on sex determination of hatching turtles and the management implications thereof. I would like to know where these reports—

Mr Simpson: R-rated.

Mr BURNS: Yes, I would like to know where these R-rated reports are published. It seems to me that they are available only to officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Finally, how are the royalties on birds and animals assessed? Why is the royalty \$65 on a cassowary, \$5 on an emu, \$17 on a penguin, and \$12 on an albatross? I know that many Ministers are albatrosses round the Premier's neck; but at \$12? Perhaps some of them are worth it.

Why is it that the royalty is \$145 on a jabiru, \$17 on a red-backed or red-humped parrot, \$7 on a rosella, \$145 on a rifle bird, \$40 on a little lorikeet, \$335 on a platypus, and \$335 on a koala? I would charge higher royalties than that. Why is the royalty \$65 on the common wombat and \$675 on the hairy-nosed wombat?

Why is the royalty \$28 on a musk rat-kangaroo, \$135 on a Queensland rat-kangaroo, \$135 on a Herbert River ringtail (the Deputy Speaker is a Herbert River ringtail), \$135 on a striped possum, \$28 on a estuarine crocodile, \$28 on a freshwater crocodile, and \$65 on a green tree python?

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr BURNS: Lytton love-birds are very valuable.

How are those values assessed? Who sets them? Why are they set at those levels? Some parrots are worth \$140 and others are worth \$7. They are the questions that I ask about the legislation.

I support the legislation. I welcome the visit to the Chamber by the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing. A couple of years ago he promised me that he would introduce legislation on animal protection. In January 1983, he said that he would introduce it in the next session of Parliament. It has not yet been introduced. I know that he is a little slow, but if he could arrange for its introduction in the next couple of years, it would be appreciated, because many animals are suffering as a result of mistreatment. Some animals are being badly mistreated. The Police Fauna Squad has an insufficient number of officers to police this matter properly. An insufficient number of officers are available in the community to police the protection of domestic wildlife. Brisbane has a great deal of wildlife that is badly treated because it is in a residential and metropolitan area. The surveys that have been undertaken show that a large number of birds and animals reside in the city area. Concern should be shown for them.

Support should be given to those persons in cat societies who want cats desexed or castrated to stop them from breeding, being set loose and allowed to turn into feral animals that eat birds and other small animals. If a small amount of money was spent at that level, some of the problems that are experienced with wild cats and other wild animals would not exist. A little extra money spent on desexing programs would be of great help to the wildlife as well as of benefit to domestic animals.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (9.52 p.m.): I wish to cover a couple of topics that include some of the principles that have already been canvassed. I wish to raise some questions about the kangaroo cull. Perhaps the Minister can tell me how the Commonwealth might have conned Queensland in relation to the kangaroo population of this State. I do not know whether it had anything to do with the New South Wales election. Also, I wish to ask some questions about 26 animals that were taken off the protected list on 31 March. Currently, we are talking about protection. However, on 31 March, under the Minister's hand, some species of wildlife, most of which was non-indigenous, was taken off the protected list, with whatever consequences follow.

The first matter relates to the kangaroo. As I recall it—and I ask for the Minister's assistance because I do not claim that my memory in these matters is perfect—Queensland has the greatest number of red kangaroo habitats of any State in Australia. Queensland has probably two or three times the area of red kangaroo habitat that is available in New South Wales. As I recall, in the mid-1970s our kangaroo culling quota was twice that of New South Wales.

Mr Barry Cohen, the Federal Minister for Home Affairs and Environment, announced new quotas for export licences. That had a direct effect on the quotas that were set in Queensland in February of this year. Although I do not have access to the Minister's press reports, I understand that about 12 per cent of the estimated herd is set for culling each year. I think that the figures for Queensland and New South Wales are the same. New South Wales received a quota of 330 000, whereas the quota for Queensland was only 200 000. I suspect that after the rains, many western graziers would be staggered to learn that the estimated kangaroo population in Queensland is only 2 million; that Queensland's population is about one-third less than that in New South Wales, which received a quota of 330 000.

I ask: What happened between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s to reverse the relative position between Queensland and New South Wales? Queensland used to receive twice the quota, and the quota is of some interest to the man on the land—the grazier—because it is related to the protection of his feed. The Labor grape-vine might have been better. The reason might have been the advent of the New South Wales State election. Something has certainly changed. Has Queensland been conned? If it has been conned, why didn't somebody say so? The graziers of western Queensland might be interested to hear some comments. If I am in error in my recollection, I hope that I am set right. I would unreservedly withdraw any of the comments I have made if they have been made on the basis of a faulty memory. I ask the Minister to tell us. I know that there have been some unhappy times between Queensland and the Commonwealth, particularly on such matters. If there has been a dramatic reversal, I would be happy to hear about it.

One notes that the thrust of the Bill is towards conservation. All of us, since we live in a more enlightened world, are in favour of the conservation of Australian indigenous animals and birds. There is much in what many members of the House have said. We ought to take the greatest steps we can to preserve any of our endangered fauna. I do not share the view of the member for Lytton. Having taken my children through the Taronga Park Zoo and having watched other people at that zoo in January—a major tourist time—I can inform members that the greatest excitement and interest shown by both adults and youngsters was in exhibits of Australian wildlife, particularly nocturnal wildlife, such as wombats. I do not agree with the member for Lytton. Many Australians find the wombat enormously appealing. It is an extraordinary looking animal. There is tremendous interest in many Australian animals that are nocturnal and, unfortunately, require special display in facilities such as the nocturnal house at the Taronga Park Zoo.

Like the member for Lytton, I would not keep caged birds and do not wish to keep caged animals, but I understand the people who do. I do not dismiss their instincts as being irrelevant or abhorrent. There is a real need for institutions such as properly run zoos to present these seldom-seen animals, so that children and adults can see the value in them, their uniqueness and the reason for acting to preserve them. If people are interested, they will preserve. If they do not know anything about something—if they are unaware of its habitat—they might unconsciously destroy, or add their assistance to the destruction of, something that they do not see as important.

The member for Lytton mentioned Q-zoo, but perhaps in a way different from that in which I will mention it. The concept of Q-zoo was formulated in the department some little time ago. It is an admirable concept. The concept was not that of the creation of a zoo of the Taronga Park type. In essence, it was to place a viewing station on the edge of a site such as the Townsville Common or on the edge of a water and marsh area with a tremendous amount of naturally occurring water bird and wading bird wildlife, where large congregations of broilgas could be viewed. It would be a place for natural viewing, with the benefit of watching something in the wild. If necessary, the wild is augmented or reinforced with vegetation and the viewing position is secluded and the traffic area is hidden so that people have a bird's-eye view of the birds of nature.

In some cases the concept would involve special displays, such as a nocturnal house, to complement the natural displays. The Q-zoo concept is a great one and Queensland has some ideal locations for that type of development. Frankly, that should be done by the Government, which has the wherewithal to do it and the sort of professional staff necessary to ensure that standards are adequate. I do not refer to the Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary, but some facilities to the north of Brisbane are an abomination. The surroundings in which animals are presented are foul and disgusting and are not a compliment to any civilised society. Because of the profit factor, too many are run on the cheap and too many are run appallingly. A facility near The Windmill at the Buderim turn-off appallingly presented Australian wildlife. I vowed that I would never take my children back to see animals in the deplorable conditions that existed at that facility. Queensland wants no more of that, but it is legitimate for people to see wildlife, particularly native Queensland and Australian wildlife, presented both naturally and, if necessary, in a reinforced way in a Government-controlled facility.

I have been to the Western Plains Zoo near Dubbo. It contains dominantly exotic species. The great thing about it is the way the animals are presented. Tens of thousands of tourists drive enormous distances to see the exhibits presented in such an unusual way. People stand on grass mounds looking across moats at animals such as tigers and giraffes grazing a few yards away. No fences are set behind the paddocks and the viewing positions look straight into natural grass and timber country where the animals look their best.

The Bill deals directly with many matters, including aviculture. Like the member for Lytton (Mr Burns), I am no aviculturist, but I have friends—we all have constituents—who keep birds, and keep them well. One of the refreshing things nowadays is that fewer tiny cages and more aviaries are used. Many of them are well displayed with vegetation growing in them, are well looked after and contain a host of birds, both of Australian and exotic origin. Like the member for Lytton, I agree that people go through phases in life. My children would like to have an aviary, but I have opposed it. However, they have tanks of tropical fish, which is a legitimate interest which, if it is encouraged, develops in them a knowledge and respect for living things, for animal life, which will encourage in their later

life the development of an interest in preserving native wildlife in the wild. The development of aviculturist interests is valid. They provide a service; they certainly supply a knowledge resource in the community.

I cannot find any grounds for opposing the continuation of the legitimate hobby interest of aviculturists. They are so serious in their interest—and I have spoken to the president of one of the biggest societies in Queensland who lives in my electorate—that they say, “Look, if exotic finches get out, we will assist the Government to shoot them out. If there is any danger of colonisation, we will take part in an eradication program.” But they proclaim the right to keep finches, and they make the very forceful argument that if a person has spent several hundred dollars, or a thousand dollars, on a pair of birds, he will devote that sort of care to birds that cost so much which makes sure that he confines them. I think that people should be allowed to continue to keep finches and other exotic species in aviaries.

The problem comes, I suppose, with Australian native birds. We do not want to do anything to encourage people to take from the wild any of the rarer species. Again, like the member for Lytton, I am somewhat attracted by the proposal put forward by many authoritative people that if birds were bred in a controlled situation—and, again, for the rarest birds, it would have to be Government controlled—there would seem to be at least an alternative argument. If a demand can be filled—a demand that is satisfied by the payment of thousands of dollars on the black market—from a lawful market, that demand is satisfied and the impetus for the unlawful trade is removed.

Breeding of wild birds can preserve the species, and the World Wildlife Fund and the New South Wales Government, and, I think, the Australian Government, combined to establish a breeding program, which included artificial insemination, of the Lord Howe Island waterhen. That deliberate breeding program has resulted in an increase from something like 10 to 20 or 30; the waterhen is on the way back. So captive breeding can help to save a species bordering on extinction. Places such as Taronga Park, or an establishment in Queensland that was devoted to the displaying of parrots, for instance, should be allowed to breed and should be given a licence for the sale of birds produced in that way.

I would not like to see any endangered species bred by private interests, though. The dangers for augmenting the aviary, the dangers of people hawking, if I could use that word loosely, species around to the private entrepreneur would be too great. But, again, surely there can be nothing wrong if the alternative is shooting, poisoning or trapping cockatoos and galahs at times when they reach plague proportions—we know it goes on—if that helps fulfil a demand. If that takes away from the development of an unlawful trade, perhaps we should look at it. There is some force in the argument for allowing Government-controlled sale of native species, although certainly in no way that encourages any further endangering of the species.

I said that I would ask some questions of the Minister. On 31 March 1984, a number of birds and mammals were taken off the protected list. In the case of birds, feral pigeons, the Indian spotted dove, sparrows, starlings and Indian minahs, all of which are common in and around Brisbane and up on to the Darling Downs, were removed. I can understand the reason. I have some sympathy for the removal of feral introduced species that are taking over the habitat and dislodging native species. I ask what that means in terms of the problems in urban areas. The Australian raven, the little crow and the Torresian crow have also been taken off the protected list. I do not like crows.

Mr FitzGerald: They are not bad when they are young.

Mr INNES: I have no doubt that the honourable member has eaten crow; no doubt he will eat more while he is alive.

What does the Minister see as the consequence of taking these birds off the protected list? Many of them are in urban areas. Does that mean that they will be fair game for anyone who wishes to knock them off? Some of them are so much a part of our daily life that they are not seen by the general public to be greatly different from the native species. The starlings, sparrows and Indian dove are part and parcel of the local scene. Unfortunate as the initial situation may have been, they are part of our spectrum of life. The mammals include, hares, rabbits, house mice, Norway rats, ship rats, dingoes, foxes, feral cats, feral pigs, feral goats, feral dromedaries—there are not too many of them in Sherwood—feral donkeys—there are probably more of those—and brumbies. A number of bats are listed. They are all native species. They are the grey-headed fruit bat, the

little red fruit bat, the black fruit bat and the spectacled fruit bat. They are what people commonly call flying foxes. Is the species of flying fox that has a vast rookery at Indooroopilly one of those species? If it is, what is its justification?

In my back yard, I have a Moreton Bay fig tree. I have just gone through two weeks of hell. That happens every year. The screaming in the fig tree, the droppings on all the outdoor furniture and elsewhere mean that the paved area has to be hosed down daily. That means two weeks every year of raking the lawn, but I put up with that because it is part of Australia.

The flight of the flying foxes away from Indooroopilly at night is one of the remarkable wildlife sights in Brisbane. They stream in every direction every night and sleep in their foul-smelling rookery at Canoe Island in the Indooroopilly Reach.

An Opposition Member: Where is it?

Mr INNES: It is near the golf course. It is one of the sights in our area to see millions of flying foxes streaming out every night.

Mr Scott: Stop patronising them.

Mr INNES: I hear again the carp from Cook. He carps at everything. He is the one who drove the native fish from the rivers.

Mr Casey: You should have told this story before the people paid \$100,000 for a block of land the other day.

Mr INNES: That is not so. I am sure that those people think as I do. I am speaking of one of the sights of Brisbane. We should not want to remove it. What reason can there be for getting rid of it? I suppose fruit-farming would be one reason. Does it mean that people who grow a few papaws around Brisbane can head for the rookeries at Indooroopilly to kill the flying foxes with impunity? I hope it does not. If protection is needed, it should take place at the farm. I would either provide the protection or put up with flying foxes.

Mr Randell: How do you give protection?

Mr INNES: There are many devices. Protection can be afforded by way of plastic bags and in many other ways. Nothing gives us the right to exterminate an indigenous species, if it is reasonable to take action to provide protection.

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr INNES: The member for Mirani can take steps to destroy the birds eating his crops; but I want to know whether that means that people with, say, a small interest that can be protected in a particular way can go to the rookery and wipe out the entire population. Many flying foxes eat nectar off blossoms for much of the year; not all of them go to papaw plantations. I hope that the entire species will not be destroyed in the rookeries. I do not mind people taking action on their own farms to protect their produce, but I do not want to see, for example, the rookery at Indooroopilly obliterated.

Hon. P. R. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon—Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts) (10.16 p.m.), in reply: It is traditional that I reply to the Opposition spokesman first; but I will reply first to the honourable member for Lytton, because, quite frankly, he was the only Opposition member who spoke any common sense, and I say that in praise of him. Had he done his homework—and I have just been joking with him about that—and read what I said as a back-bencher when the Act was amended last time, he would have found some agreement between us. The member for Lytton and another member made the same comment; but the member for Lytton put his point very well and it has some validity. His point was that perhaps if it was legalised—

Mr Casey interjected.

Mr McKECHNIE: The member for Mackay should be patient; I am making my speech now.

The member for Lytton claimed that there may be validity in the argument that legally opening up trading activities would result in less smuggling. Philosophically, I have some sympathy with that argument, and the member for Lytton might like to check my comments from the past.

Recently, I had a two-hour meeting with the bird dealers. I have agreed to institute a trial period in which they can sell about 20 native birds. As honourable members know, at the moment no native birds can be sold. If the trial period works, the list of birds may be extended. If the trial does not work, I will be twice as tough as I am now. I have asked the dealers to put their money where their mouths are. If they are right, I will help them; but if they are proved wrong, they will cop it twice as hard.

The member for Lytton spoke also about a Q-zoo. I support that notion, and so does the Government. When it is possible for the Government to fund such a proposal, it is keen to do something about it. At the moment, within my own portfolio, a lot of money is being spent on the cultural complex and that has been a drain on consolidated revenue. It is wise for the Government to pay for that before I advocate the launching of a Q-zoo and other projects that will be expensive to get off the ground. However, the Government does agree in principle.

Mr Burns: You should be looking round for land or a suitable site.

Mr McKECHNIE: My department is undertaking some studies, but at the moment it is not appropriate to fund it.

The member for Lytton mentioned also the possibility of the protection of various animals and their habitats. Not long ago, the Queensland Government reached agreement with the Commonwealth on the purchase of Red Hill station, to adjoin Taunton, to protect the bridled nail-tailed wallaby. The Government is aware of the problems. When money is available, it takes responsible action to try to do something.

As well, the honourable member said something about the prohibition on the liberation of fauna. That refers only to non-indigenous species, not to native species. I am not aware of any proposals to introduce endangered species legislation. What we have to do is look at certain areas when things happen and treat the matter in a responsible manner, as we have done with the bridled nail-tailed wallaby. That is the better way to handle it. Of course, we always listen to constructive suggestions.

I should mention also some of the problems that my officers see in the trapping and trading of birds. I am told that trapping is not as effective as shooting in protecting farmers' crops. As a farmer—I have not been a grain-farmer for about 14 or 15 years—I agree with that assumption by my officers. Anyone who wants to trap birds that damage crops has to pre-feed the birds, which probably only encourages more on to the property. The problem is not an easy one to solve, but I take note of the honourable member's comments.

I am told by my officers that South Australia has experienced problems concerning trapping and selling. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is aware of those problems. As to the export of birds—that is controlled by the Commonwealth, which will not allow their export to the degree suggested by some honourable members.

Some of my officers are concerned that legal trading in common species might mean an increase in the number of people keeping them and an increase in demand for the rarer species. So this is not an easy matter to solve. However, I assure the honourable member for Lytton that I am taking the matter seriously. I have some sympathy with the problem, and the bird-dealers have agreed to the action I have taken.

In dealing with the speech by the honourable member for Ipswich West, I welcome him back in to the Chamber. Just as it is hoped that a convict's behaviour will improve when he is released from gaol, I hope that now that the honourable member for Ipswich West has served his short sentence his behaviour will be more circumspect.

He said that the Opposition agrees with the amendments, but he had a dig at me when he said that when there is a change in Minister there is change in policy. I do not apologise for saying that that is true. Some of the comments that I made in reply to the honourable member for Lytton show that I am prepared to make changes. However, I assure the House that any changes I make will be made in a responsible manner. I am not afraid of change. I am prepared to look at each case on its merits.

The honourable member for Ipswich West went on at length about the Cooloola Way. I inform him that, in company with the Widgee Shire Council chairman and the honourable member for Gympie, I inspected the Cooloola Way. The council is a responsible council. I

do not believe that it will construct a 100 km/h highway. I am told that in America some scenic drives are constructed of bitumen and are designed in such a way that it is not practicable to drive at a speed of 100 km/h.

The particular section of the Cooloola Way that I looked at has many bends in it, and I have suggested to the Widgee Shire Council that it should follow that course in order to try to keep speed down. However, it is not fair to expect the Widgee Shire Council to have to live with the high maintenance costs that are involved with the present dirt surface if it is possible to bituminise the road in such a way that will not seriously affect the Cooloola National Park.

Generally, the Widgee Shire Council does co-operate well with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, so I am a little disappointed that the honourable member for Ipswich West saw fit to attack it. At election-time Opposition members like to be the friends of local government, but in this House they never seem to be very worried about tipping a bucket on local authorities.

The honourable member for Ipswich West asked whether the Government has an obligation to protect its asset. The bituminisation of that road will be to the benefit of the people of Queensland. It will encourage more people to see the park. That can cause some problems. However, in the balance, it is better that the road is bituminised. If the Widgee Shire Council wants to do it, it has my support. The member for Ipswich West mentioned the need for an environmental impact study and how it should be funded. I have told the Widgee Shire Council that that will be its problem. It wants to bituminise the road. The Government will not force it to do that. That is something with which the council must contend. The honourable member mentioned that the former Minister said that the road should not be upgraded. I did not gain that impression from my discussions with the former Minister. He said that it should remain a low-speed road. There is no division between us on that matter.

The honourable member asked whether oil-drilling had taken place in national parks. To the best of my knowledge, no drilling has taken place. If the honourable member has any evidence about it, I would like to know about it. Seismic survey has been conducted on Moolayemba, which is a national park proposal near Carnarvon. Maybe he is confused about it. He mentioned the possibility of the service capturing and selling birds from rural areas. I have already dealt with that proposition in answer to a more constructive speech made by the honourable member for Lytton.

The honourable member for Ipswich West also asked, "What is an agricultural pest?" Having listened to the other Opposition members refer to the controls that they would put on clearing and such matters, I think that the biggest agricultural pest to graziers will be the ALP, if ever it gains office. Graziers and farmers should be made aware of what would be in store for them if an ALP Government gained power.

The Hawke Labor Government has withdrawn taxation incentives to enable farmers to develop their properties and improve their livelihood. Even if that is done in a sensitive way, a taxation deduction cannot be claimed. Development will be slowed down. Job opportunities in rural Queensland will be destroyed. If that decision is followed by a State Government with the views of some honourable members opposite, all I can say is, "God help the farmers of Queensland."

The honourable member also questioned whether a permit was required for 70 per cent of aviary birds. He wanted to know on what basis the calculations were made. The Government does not ask them to obtain a permit, and obviously it cannot count every bird. It is not necessarily 70 per cent of the species but 70 per cent of the number of birds held in aviaries that I am talking about. The calculation is made on the observation of wildlife rangers. Now that I have agreed to introduce this trial, I do not think that it is relevant. The members of the deputation from the bird dealers organisation told me that they were happy with what I plan to do in that regard. I do not want to encourage more red tape by having somebody counting every bird in every aviary in Queensland.

The honourable for Surfers Paradise proved that the Opposition is long in talk and short in action when he mentioned that the previous Federal Government—

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr McKECHNIE: Opposition members are very good at interjecting. They should be patient and take what is coming to them. As the honourable member for Surfers Paradise said, the previous Federal Government introduced an Act on 23 December 1982 to tighten up certain measures. The present Federal Government needs only to proclaim the Act. Members were told by the honourable member for Surfers Paradise that that has not happened. I do not think that the ALP can point its finger at this Government when its colleagues in Canberra cannot even proclaim an Act.

Opposition members were critical of fines imposed by Queensland courts. In January, a \$5,304 fine was imposed on two Italians. I am advised by my officers that, even though there was an apparent breach of the Federal law, the Federal officers did not want to prosecute because they felt that the penalty under the Queensland Act had been sufficient. The Opposition cannot point the finger at Queensland, claiming that we are going easy, when it was at my direction that the prosecution was instituted. The court imposed a fine. However, the Commonwealth chose not to exercise its options. I regarded it as a blatant breach. The offenders ought to have had the book thrown at them. That happened when they were charged under our Act. However, the ALP Federal Government did not even choose to act.

The honourable member for Cairns made some comments which I think I can dismiss fairly quickly by saying that it was quite apparent to me that he was more concerned about the welfare of crocodiles than he was about the welfare of people. I hope that that is well known in the north. That is the only fair comment anybody could make after listening to him.

The honourable member for Fassifern pointed out the futility of trapping wild animals to be kept as pets. He made an excellent point. His other comments were of a similar high quality.

In regard to snakes and crocodiles, the honourable member for Windsor complained that the term "likely to be attacked" is too wide. In my opinion, it is not too wide at all. He made a great deal of noise about nobody having been prosecuted. However, as he pointed out, the simple reality of life is that if a person appeared to commit an offence by killing a snake, a defence available to him was that he thought he might be bitten by the snake. It is wrong to have people believe they have committed an offence when such a defence is available. The Bill makes it quite clear that an offence would not be committed in the first place. That is reasonable. I see nothing wrong with it.

The honourable member for Mansfield made an excellent speech, in which he pointed out the problems of endangered species. I commend him for his interest in the conservation movement.

The honourable member for Sherwood mentioned something about the number of non-protected species that have now been gazetted. I have, in broad layman's language, taken flying foxes and crows off the protected list. The others he mentioned represented a restatement of the policy that previously existed. We in Queensland take the kangaroo management program seriously. As a result of droughts, kangaroo numbers have been depleted and the quota for which tags have been allocated this year may not be filled. If it is, I will be making urgent representations to the Commonwealth to have the quota increased. The National Parks and Wildlife Service has been responsible in the number of tags it recommended to the Commonwealth, and the Commonwealth agreed with the recommendation.

I would like to refer to many other matters, but the hour is late. If any other points are troubling honourable members, they will have an opportunity to raise them during the Committee stage.

Motion (Mr McKechnie) agreed to.

Committee

Mr Booth (Warwick) in the chair; Hon. P. R. McKechnie (Carnarvon—Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short title—

Mr UNDERWOOD (10.35 p.m.): I wish to refer to comments made by the Minister and the member for Surfers Paradise on the Wildlife Protection Bill, which deals with both flora and fauna. While the debate continued, I contacted the Australian Minister for Home Affairs and Environment to obtain the latest information on that legislation. I advise the Committee that the final discussion on the Wildlife Protection Bill will take place in the Federal Executive Council tomorrow morning and that the Bill will be proclaimed on 1 May 1984. Queensland should have known the reasons for the delay, as that matter was discussed both formally and informally at conferences attended by all State Ministers.

Mr Borbidge: It has taken only two years.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I am coming to the honourable member for Surfers Paradise.

The present Federal Labor Government was carrying out discussions with appropriate organisations, both State and Federal, as to how to successfully implement the Bill. In reply to that interjection from the member for Surfers Paradise, I point out to him that there was a Federal election in March of last year and the change of Government would have created some delay.

Mr Borbidge: The Act was already there.

Mr UNDERWOOD: People of the same political persuasion as the honourable member were in charge of it. The previous Federal Government passed the legislation but did not have it proclaimed.

Mr Borbidge: The Labor Party became the Government; why didn't it proclaim the legislation?

Mr UNDERWOOD: I ask the honourable member for Surfers Paradise: Why did not the previous Government proclaim it? In fact, in a moment I will tell him why. The member for Mansfield partly answered that question.

Since that time there has been a Queensland State election, which involved a change of Ministry here. Part of the delay was caused by the slow response from the Queensland Government. I have just mentioned some of the reasons.

Mr Borbidge: That is pathetic.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I ask the honourable member to hold on for a moment. Just because his party is being exposed does not mean that he should become impatient.

The Minister indicated that he was not quite sure of what was going on. That explains another reason for the delay. The Queensland Government has not been terribly concerned about replying to the Federal Government. The member for Mansfield, whom the Minister congratulated for making an excellent speech, quite clearly outlined the problems with the various discussions between the agencies and the different Government departments. He also outlined the jealousies and problems between agencies and discussed various problems in relation to the provisions contained in the Wildlife Protection Bill. So it has been a long process. Any processes between State and Federal Governments that involve their departments, as the member for Mansfield said, will cause delay.

The National Party should now explain why its Minister, who was originally in charge of the Bill, failed to proclaim it before the last election. Perhaps I could get an answer to that. Quite clearly, the Federal legislation is in the process of being proclaimed.

Mr McKECHNIE: I have nothing to reply, except to say: excuses, excuses, excuses.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 16, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr McKechnie, by leave, read a third time.

FARM WATER SUPPLIES ASSISTANCE ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT
BILL

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 27 March (see p. 2107) on Mr Goleby's motion—

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

Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (10.40 p.m.): I agree with the intent of the Bill because, representing a rural electorate as I do, I can fully appreciate the need for assistance with farm water supplies. The Minister would be well aware of that and, although I intend to be critical of the Government, I realise that the Minister has not been in his job for as long as this Act has been in force. As the Minister said in his second-reading speech, in the 25 years since its introduction only \$21m has been distributed to 26 000 applicants for farm water supplies assistance.

In the couple of years that I have been Opposition spokesman on water resources, the amounts provided in the Budgets for water resources have necessitated the introduction of this Bill. That shows the Government's neglect of the primary industries and rural areas of Queensland. I want to emphasise once again that the Government is starving the Water Resources Commission of funds. The amount provided for capital expenditure has dropped in successive Budgets. The Minister has now had to bring in a Bill to try to alleviate some of the problems faced by rural areas.

I cannot speak highly enough of the officers of the Water Resources Commission. I know that they are fully occupied, particularly in north Queensland. They have made a great contribution towards the provision of farm water supply systems. They have gone out into the field and given all the advice and help they possibly can to people such as dairy-farmers and agriculturists in the north and cane-farmers on the coast. One hears only good reports about them. The only criticism that one hears is that, although they know what has to be done and what they would like to do, there is a severe shortage of funds. That is the point that I want to emphasise. The very existence of this Bill proves that point.

In the Minister's second-reading speech he said that the normal procedure was that the commissioner would have borrowed the money in his name but that this Bill will result in a transfer of responsibility. Although I can agree with the need to streamline legislation and to make it easier for the commissioner to borrow money, I wonder whether the new authority will become another quango, even though it will be a statutory authority.

Over the years this Government has gone overboard in professing its support for private enterprise and free enterprise. Members heard more about it today. The Government does have a responsibility to the State. Services and responsibilities cannot always be measured in terms of dollars. Those dollars, and many more of them, are needed. The Water Resources Commission is a striking example of the shortage of dollars causing problems throughout the State not only in the area of farm water supplies but also in drainage, water conservation and water reticulation.

To see how serious the situation is, one has only to look at the figures cited by the Minister in his second-reading speech. He said that only \$21m had been allocated in 25 years. That is a very small amount considering the size of Queensland and the need for the services provided by the commission. The Minister said that even after the passage of this Bill only \$1.8m will be allocated this year.

Considering the size of Queensland and the need for farm water supplies on all farms and some grazing areas, trying to spread the money equally throughout the State will cause many headaches for the officers in the Water Resources Commission. I offer them my sympathy because once the \$1.8m is spent no additional money will be forthcoming.

An expenditure of \$32m was provided for in the last Bill presented by the Minister, but the Government did not know where the money was to come from. In addition, deficit funding would be required to complete the job. This Bill will grant \$1.8m to the farm water supply assistance scheme. The Act went through Parliament in less than an hour and committed the State to an expenditure of \$32m in an isolated section of the State.

The Opposition is concerned that what the Government has in mind is too big for the small man and too small for the big man. Because of the needs in Queensland and the size of the State, the \$1.8m will not go very far. Restrictions will have to be imposed so that the majority of applicants can have their needs met. As I said, extreme pressure will be placed on departmental officers in determining priorities.

About two years ago two men, both outside my electorate, approached the Agricultural Bank for money to purchase irrigation equipment. By northern standards a drought was being experienced, because this occurred in the wet belt of the State. In the dry times of the year the improved pastures needed irrigation. The first man had his application for about \$5,400 to purchase irrigation plant approved by the Agricultural Bank. The other man applied for about \$7,000 or \$8,000.

Mr Kruger: If he opposed the Premier he would not get anything at all.

Mr EATON: That is right.

The Agricultural Bank approved both loans, but the drought broke before the money became available. Parts of Queensland have been dry for five years and, rightly, the bank has had to be lenient with some of its customers. The drought broke before the money came through and those men contacted me as well as other members of Parliament because they realised that the money should be got through as quickly as possible. The bank told them that they would have to wait until after some of the mortgagees had made their payments on 30 June. I have not seen those two men since to see whether they purchased the irrigation equipment, but the facts can be checked by the Government. They are not the only two people with such problems. The Government has a responsibility to provide services for people who are in need. One of my concerns, as I said, is that the scheme could be too big for the small fellow and too small for the big fellow. A happy medium must be struck to service needs throughout the State. People in the rural community feel very strongly about this problem.

The people are generally happy with the information services and the help that is available through the engineers and officers of the Water Resources Commission. Around north Queensland, when speaking to people about the services provided by that body, I have heard very good comments.

However, because it is short of funds, the commission will need to do more talking and provide less action. It has been allocated \$1.8m, which is to be spread equitably throughout the whole State. I would not like to be in the shoes of the people trying to set up the list of priorities, because I know from experience that people make applications for farm water supplies assistance because they are desperate. If that money is to be borrowed, what is to be the interest rate? Can the projects service the debt? Many farmers, although their intentions are good and the money may be easy to get initially, are unable to meet the repayments of interest and redemption. Anyone coming from the land knows that weather conditions for the next year cannot be predicted with any certainty, and, of course, weather conditions affect the harvest and the quality of livestock. I hope that the Minister will comment on that in his reply.

Does the Minister know what the interest rate will be? Will it be at today's rate? Will the Government subsidise interest to those farmers in need of farm water supplies assistance? I am sure that all Government members, in common with my colleague the member for Bundaberg, are aware of the need for money for water resources, particularly in irrigation areas.

Something should be done to assist the Agricultural Bank. This Bill is necessary because of the great need for farm water supplies assistance in Queensland. Because of the Government's free enterprise attitude, it has let the Agricultural Bank run down to the extent that it has ceased to service the needs of rural producers in Queensland. The Government should have been expanding that bank. The State has passed through the years of plenty in which there was great development; but, because of the Government's private enterprise syndrome, deals have been made with the private banks. The private banks said to the Government that they would pour money into various schemes such as the brigalow scheme. They told the Government to keep plodding along with the little farmers and to keep the Agricultural Bank down. The private banks had a Government that played right into their hands.

A history of the Agricultural Bank will reveal that, in the early days, many farmers survived only because of the help they received from the Agricultural Bank. That bank was created for the purpose of lending money to small farmers and farmers just starting out.

Mr Casey: It was set up by a Labor Government.

Mr EATON: Yes, by a Labor Government. It was created for a specific purpose, and this Government has played down that role. History shows that farmers who made successful applications were paid by the Government through the Agricultural Bank. The Government has found it convenient to use the Agricultural Bank on some occasions, but it does not want it, as a Government instrumentality, to get too big. If that happens, the Government will fall out with the private banks. The system has been manipulated and money has been invested at higher interest rates—

Mr McPhie: Who has been telling you that?

Mr EATON: I was in the Agricultural Bank many years ago, and I speak well of it. The Government is well aware of that bank's system. I notice that the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police is in the Chamber, and he would be interested in the take-over of that bank and its system by the Country/Liberal Party Government in 1957. At that time, the Agricultural Bank was helping young people on the land with low interest rates over a set period. A parent could be a guarantor if he held land for his son.

The Agricultural Bank allowed dairy farmers to buy a herd, lease a farm for five years and then purchase the farm. It bent over backwards to help rural people. I would suggest that 90 per cent of the National Party members throughout Queensland have received some help from the Agricultural Bank. They know only too well the role that it played in developing primary industries in Queensland, not only under the Labor Government but in the early years of the coalition Government as well.

Soon after the coalition Government became established in the 1960s, it started to go off to the Right and to accede to the requests of the big banking corporations, which said, "We will move in. We can fund any projects when you want to open up land. There is no need for you as a Government to make money available. You can use it somewhere else or in some other department."

As a result, these days, in the hour of need of our primary industries, interest rates are very high. In very few primary industries can the people engaged in those industries borrow large amounts of money and have their debt serviced by the industry.

I am sure that the mathematicians on the Government side will try to shoot me down in flames. I would like them to try to do that. I come from an area in which only two primary industries do not operate commercially, namely, the wheat industry and the wool industry. Besides that, my area contains the only tea plantation and factory in Australia. I am well versed in primary industry. So I should like to see some Government member try to shoot me down on the figures.

It was a sad day when this Government allowed the Agricultural Bank to fall down as it did. Perhaps I have strayed from the track slightly, but I wanted to emphasise that all Government departments are faced with a shortage of money. This Minister has a hard row to hoe. Perhaps now that the Premier is also the Treasurer the Minister will have to try to get more money by strangling only one fellow instead of two.

I know how hard it is for a Government department to obtain money. An examination of the Government's Budgets over the years will show that the allocation to water resources has been reduced each year. Over a period of seven years it has dropped from 11 per cent to about 4.25 or 4.5 per cent of the total Budget. The figures speak for themselves.

The need for this Bill shows how short money is for Queensland's water resources. As I said before, if there was plenty of money around, there would be no need for this amendment to the Act.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (10.58 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join in this debate. In response to the Opposition spokesman, I state quite emphatically that Government members are very proud of the fact that we are a free enterprise Government comprising members of a free enterprise party. The Opposition spokesman more or less pointed that out in an

accusing manner by saying that we are interested only in free enterprise. I suggest to Opposition members that this Bill is about getting some free enterprise back into the provision of water supplies to rural properties.

The Act was introduced by the coalition Government in 1958, after many years of Labor Government in Queensland. The Bill epitomises the philosophies of a free enterprise Government. In other words, it will assist anyone who is willing to help himself.

Mr Kruger: Get big and get bigger is what you are trying to say.

Mr FITZGERALD: The honourable member said that it is a matter of getting big and getting bigger. The Opposition spokesman claimed that because the borrowings were through the Agricultural Bank it would help only the small person. The honourable member for Murrumba is now stating that the Agricultural Bank is there only to help the big people. I wish Opposition members would get their heads together and settle on which argument they intend to follow.

Mr Kruger: I wasn't talking about what he said.

Mr FITZGERALD: I know the honourable member was not; I know that Opposition members do not agree among themselves very often. I do not know which faction the honourable member for Murrumba is in and which faction the Opposition spokesman is in.

One point made by the Opposition spokesman is that this Bill is being introduced because funds are very short this year. He claimed that it is quite evident that the Minister does not have the money available to service the fund this year or, in other words, that the Minister's budgetary provisions were insufficient. I know that last year, because of the drought, the Government did experience some difficulties. The honourable member for Mourilyan referred to a case in his area. He said that, because last year was a drought year, a terrific demand was imposed on available funds. I should like to know whether the funds are extremely short this year and whether the Minister has underbudgeted or not. I understand that, although last year the Minister overstretched his budgetary allocation, this year the funds are not in the critical condition they were in last year.

During recent years I have seen a great deal of private investment in water conservation in Queensland. Ever since I could walk, I have been involved with irrigation. A great deal of free enterprise money has been spent on irrigation in the electorate of Lockyer. I used to look with great envy upon the other areas supplied with water by the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply as it was called. Farmers received water at what seemed to be an extremely cheap rate. However, the present scheme assists farmers to help themselves. Although I still envy those farmers in those areas, I believe that they have developed many inland areas of Queensland that would not have been developed without tax-payers' money being used to provide water. I can understand how the economy of those towns and those farmers is totally dependent on the price that is paid for water.

In the future, most areas that are developing water resources will have to pay more for their water. Most farmers but not many tax-payers would realise that charges imposed on farmers for water generally cover only the cost of distribution and administration and generally contribute very little of the interest and redemption on the total cost of supplying that water. Many benefits accrue to the State from the provision of water. The State benefits overall from the development.

The development of water resources by private enterprise in the last couple of years has been astronomical. The aquifer on the Darling Downs has declined. The limited water supplies available to the irrigators in the Condamine Valley, particularly in the Cecil Plains and Brookstead areas of the Darling Downs, have led many farmers, who became dependent on the underground water and the river systems and were unable to obtain additional supplies from the river or from underground supplies, to invest in ring tanks and on-farm storages. When farmers have done their sums, they have found that some of those projects are relatively expensive exercises. The farms have become more viable because the farmers can plan what crops they will grow. They are very good farmers. They have discovered that water is essential to the high yields that they now obtain in that area.

I suggest that the Lockyer Valley has a number of schemes that have taken off in a much smaller way. Farmers will become more dependent on surface water in the valley. The underground water is fully committed in most years. More farmers will be looking

forward to providing themselves with on-farm surface water. Earlier the Opposition spokesman said that some farmers came to him during a drought and said that they needed water urgently. The astute farmer realises that droughts and floods will continue to occur in this country. It is always very risky for a farmer, during a drought, to make panic plans on how to provide water efficiently to an irrigation farm. He must carry out long-term planning so that he can install it at the right time, make a proper consideration of his commitments and determine whether it will be a viable proposition. All farmers should take that action.

A couple of weeks ago I had the pleasure of accompanying the Minister on a trip to the St George and Goondiwindi areas. In the St George irrigation area many farmers are building ring tanks so that they can reticulate their drainage water and, at the same time, retain some of the surface water off the farms so that they can utilise their water allocation to the fullest extent. They are supplementing their supplies to a great extent. The future irrigators in the Goondiwindi area will be considering water-harvesting to supplement the supplies provided by the Water Resources Commission.

The Government cannot provide water for future large developments without a return of the capital cost. The policy will have to entail a contribution from the irrigators towards interest and redemption. It is false economy to commence farmers in a new irrigation scheme at cheap rates and gradually raise the cost of the water. Those farmers could eventually lose their profitability. People should enter a scheme knowing exactly what their costs will be.

Farmers who have provided water for themselves—and I refer particularly to those in the Lockyer Valley and on the Darling Downs—are unfairly and unjustly treated if other areas are developed to their detriment. If other areas are developed, they should be developed for the production of crops that are not being produced in an area such as the Lockyer, where farmers have provided their own water. Certainly, they are very fortunate to have the benefit of a natural resource. However, it has either been developed by themselves or their parents or been paid for in the capital cost of the purchase of the farm. It is unfair and unjust that those assets be put at risk by development in other areas.

The Farm Water Supplies Assistance Scheme should be encouraged, promoted and developed. There ought to be more research into irrigation practices. Farmers should be encouraged to examine exactly how much water to apply to a property and when it should be applied. There is a real need for a great deal more research. Most farmers would be unable to undertake that type of research. The CSIRO field station at the Queensland Agricultural College has conducted experiments on the water needs of some drylands crops. I suggest to the Minister that similar research could be conducted into irrigated crops. Under the Federal Labor Government there has been a major cut-back in CSIRO expenditure for experimentation into water for crop-farming.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr FITZGERALD: I know that honourable members opposite are touchy about this matter. Perhaps I will quote the figures. There is very little hope of the CSIRO receiving any further funds from the Federal Government for water research. The Federal Government is giving absolutely nothing at present. The Opposition is probably aware of the cut-backs in the CSIRO budget and of the conditions under which that organisation is labouring. It knows what rural industries will receive. What a great organisation the CSIRO has been for rural research in Australia. Now everybody will suffer because of the cut-backs of the Hawke Labor Government.

Mr De Lacy: Have they reduced the CSIRO budget?

Mr FITZGERALD: CSIRO funding for rural research has been slashed.

Mr De Lacy: The total budget?

Mr FITZGERALD: It has been slashed. I invite the member for Cairns to look at the figures. He should ask how many people have been put off at the CSIRO station at Gatton.

Mr De Lacy: The total budget?

Mr FITZGERALD: There has been a major cut-back. There is a complete reorganisation. I know that I am straying from the subject, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr Littleproud: CSIRO has slashed all funds for primary industry.

Mr FITZGERALD: That is so.

Mr Neal interjected.

Mr FITZGERALD: There has been no protest from members on the other side of the Chamber. I have not heard a squeak out of them.

Mr Neal: They cut off the National Water Resources Program.

Mr FITZGERALD: That is so. There has been a severe cut-back by the Hawke Government in all areas connected with rural industries.

Before I conclude, I should say that more funds should be made available for experimentation and research into the quantity of water that is required for irrigation. In the long run that would save money. Farmers should be armed with the necessary knowledge of the water requirements for their various crops. The cut-back in the Federal Government funding for this type of work is most regrettable. The Minister's budget is very, very limited but I suggest that perhaps his department could work through the Department of Primary Industries in an endeavour to get some funds for this scheme, which would benefit both existing and future irrigation areas. There is nothing surer than the fact that the future of agriculture in Queensland and in Australia will depend largely on the amount of water that can be made available. I have no doubt that the price of water will keep increasing. In the years to come farmers will find it absolutely necessary to use less and less water to grow more and more crops. The only way to go is not to supply more and more water but to ensure that farmers do use that water to the best advantage.

The legislation is really only a house-keeping Bill. It does not raise extra funds; it will create the Farm Water Supply Assistance Authority, tidy up the workings of the commission and allow the authority to borrow funds. That will be of great assistance to farmers and I wholeheartedly support the Bill.

Mr HARTWIG (Callide) (11.12 p.m.): I have long been an advocate of on-farm water storage by farmers and land-owners in the State of Queensland. Indeed, over the number of years that I have represented Callide, I have been a very strong advocate of water being conserved by major weir constructions and farmers helping themselves tremendously by constructing small reservoirs on suitable sites on farms and grazing properties.

One of the things that amaze me is that the Callide Valley, which is one of the richest areas for the production of farm crops in Queensland, has not one major storage for irrigation. That is not for the want of advocating or requesting such a storage. On several occasions the Minister has been invited to the area. I know he is only new in his portfolio, but that invitation stands. I would like to see him visit the area and realise the tremendous potential of the valley.

The geography of the State of Queensland shows that east of the Great Dividing Range are the tremendous watersheds of the Burdekin, Fitroy, Burnett, Mary, Brisbane and the Condamine Rivers. Recently, when I was flying home to Rockhampton, I saw the North Pine Dam, the Somerset Dam, the Wivenhoe Dam, which is nearing completion, the Tarong Dam on the Boyne River, the Cania Weir at Monto and the Callide Dam. They are all the dams in that part of Queensland.

I am often amazed that, when engineers consider the costing of dams and water supplies, they work on the cost per acre foot—it is now megalitres. On that basis only, engineers decide whether a dam is too costly to build or whether a site does not warrant water conservation. One does not hear the counter-argument that if such water was conserved it would result in increased production and bring benefits to the State generally.

After I inspected the Snowy Mountains scheme I constructed 21 dams on my property and made it drought-proof. I have never lost stock in a big drought because they have never had far to walk to water. There was ample water to keep them alive. So I have had experience in this field, and I know the benefits of on-farm storage.

I am sorry to see that the Minister's hands are tied and that this year there will be an allocation of only \$1.8m. I spent over \$200,000 to conserve water on my property, and we are talking about a State that occupies 22½ per cent of the total area of Australia being allocated \$1.8m for vital on-farm storage. A tremendous number of sites can be used for on-farm storage, as the Minister would know. If one picks the right spot, where a gully or a creek narrows, with a few bulldozers and a few days' work one can build a levee bank that will conserve millions of gallons of water.

The last drought cost this State \$80m or \$40 a head for each of the State's 2 million people. There are no brakes on finance for a cultural centre, an exposition in 1988, the Commonwealth Games stadium or Parliament House. The Government should be realistic. It talks about the wealth of primary industries—they are still the greatest industries—yet the Bill provides only \$1.8m for on-farm water conservation.

Look at the amount spent on education. This year it is in excess of \$800m. It is not much good educating children on how to run a farm if the first thing they run into when they take up land is a drought that wipes them out. Many people have to walk off their properties after a drought. Only one thing causes drought and that is lack of moisture. In flood times and good seasons the rivers and creeks break their banks and spread for miles. All the water runs out to sea. Nothing is done to conserve it. It is quite a simple matter to pump water out of running creeks behind levee banks.

I am all for this scheme, and I congratulate the Minister on it but, for goodness sake, he has to make the Treasurer realise that \$1.8m is inadequate. He should not need any convincing, because he is a man of the land. His hands and those of his departmental head are tied, and if somebody applies for assistance, the application will be refused. If the last drought cost \$80.2m or \$80.5m, surely the Government can allocate more money for the conservation of water. If adequate water is available, the effects of drought can be minimised. What happened in the Callide Valley at the end of last year when the drought broke? Hundreds of acres of lucerne was dying because the streams had dried up. The pumps were sucking air. When it rained the creeks were half a mile wide, and they ran like that for a week. Where did that water go? It went out to sea!

Under this Government, I have yet to see a full-scale drought mitigation scheme put into effect by practical men. I heard someone say that the library has a good scheme. It is not much good having it there. It has to be ready for implementation.

A little rain has fallen in various parts of the State, but we are verging on another drought. To date, most of central Queensland and other parts of the State have missed the monsoonal rain. Queensland is looking right down the barrel of another dry year. Hand-feeding of stock is taking place in many areas.

In good seasons, I should like to see the fodder sheds around Biloela full of hay. When lucerne cannot be sold in a good season, the farmers have to turn to other cash crops. When lucerne is ploughed out, it cannot be replaced overnight. A farmer will not hold machinery if he has no use for it. When a drought hits, where does the fodder come from? From nowhere but the irrigation areas! If the irrigation areas cannot stand up to a long drought, the State is in big trouble. Last year, the lucerne growers of Callide were stumped by lack of moisture. The bores gave out and the lucerne paddocks turned brown. I do not know what has to be done to convince a National Party Government, with representatives from all over the State, that \$1.8m is chicken-feed for water conservation.

Last Sunday I saw the Bedford Weir on the Mackenzie River. It is only a weir, but it was holding a lot of water. It does not cost a great deal of money to build such a weir. The Government should be looking at providing more weirs in the productive areas. Virtually no farming takes place in that area but, in Callide, with its high activity, the Government can get back any money that it invests in water conservation. The State has other similar areas. With the rich soil in areas east of the Great Dividing Range, all that is needed is water. A property-owner has only to dam a gully and get a few inches of rain to collect a great deal of water.

It is time that practical men were put in charge of water conservation. The engineers are good at designing weirs, but the Government should not be confused by arguments that water conservation projects will cost so many dollars. When the State may lose \$80m in one year through drought, water conservation cannot be argued against. Today, a breeding cow would be worth between \$500 and \$1 000. Not many cows would need be lost to make up \$1m, but tonight we are talking about \$1.8m for water conservation.

It is time that members said to the Treasurer, "The \$1.8m is not enough. Let us make it \$8.1m, and we will talk turkey." The Minister is a man of the land. He knows that, with adequate finance, he can do the job.

I am not criticising the gentlemen who operate the Water Resources Commission. They do very well with the amount of money available to them. The Government that allocates the funds for water resources is the same Government that allocates \$800m for education. I am not denying that education is important, and I am sure that no honourable member would. However, if the Government can find \$800m for education but only \$1.8m for water, something is wrong with its thinking.

Mr Neal: Point taken; wind up.

Mr HARTWIG: The member for Balonne has told me to wind up; but we are discussing water, which makes a very important contribution to the State's productivity. I have been told twice tonight to wind my speech up. I just want to impress upon the Parliament—

Mr Neal: I said that you made your point.

Mr HARTWIG: That is all right. The member for Balonne can make his speech; I will make mine.

I commend the thought behind this Bill. However, if the Government is to come to grips with this very large problem, as sure as night follows day, more funds must be allocated.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (11.26 p.m.): This free enterprise Government believes in small Government, so it is pleasing that, although it has created a new quango—a new authority—it is only a single person authority. That is marvellous for small Government.

This Bill is designed to amend the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act; but there should be absolutely no need for the new authority to be established, especially if the Government had not abrogated its responsibility for the water resources of this State. For the first time in over a decade, the Government has spent less than half of one per cent on water resources development in Queensland. This is why—

Mr Cooper: What about the Burdekin?

Mr CAMPBELL: That is all Commonwealth money.

Less than one half of one per cent of the State Budget was allocated for water resources development. The member for Callide said that the Government was going to allocate \$1.8m for farm water assistance, but that is boloney. This Bill gives the Government power to borrow money that has to be paid back.

I will tell the House how much the Government contributes to the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Fund. Mr Beattie, the Commissioner for Water Resources, said in his annual report that his department was not working well because of the constraints of both funding and staff that have made its duties more difficult to carry out. Over the last year, and during the last decade, the Government has abrogated its responsibility for water resources.

I would like now to look at the figures. At page 35, the annual report states that at the end of last year 613 applications were still to be considered. An amount of \$2.7m was advanced to applicants from the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Fund. Unexpended approvals carried forward to the new financial year total \$2.2m. In other words, farmers needed that much assistance, but the Government did not have the \$2m to give them because it was not allocated in the Budget.

How much does the Government give to the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Fund? Last year a total of \$4.1m was received by the fund. From that fund, borrowers' repayments were \$1.7m, debenture loans \$1.1m, Treasury interest \$10,000, Special Projects Trust Fund \$1m and Loan Fund \$200,000. How much did the Government give to the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Fund? \$75,000! In other words, that is what this Government gave to help farmers last year. It was not \$1.8m, but \$75,000. Because the Government has not given the money, it now wants to set up another quango.

Mr FitzGerald: This is the greatest lot of bunkum we have ever heard from you. It is a free-enterprise system.

Mr CAMPBELL: The free-enterprise system in which this Government believes allows the farmers of this State to over-exploit and deplete the underground aquifers. That has happened on the Darling Downs, in the Lockyer Valley and in Bundaberg. All the underground aquifers have been over-exploited, with the result that now they are drying up and a special allocation of money has to be made available for surface water.

If there was the proper development and the proper and ordered licensing of those resources, they would be here for years. After the farmers have over-exploited the underground aquifers, a call is made on the Government for licensing. It is being called upon to stop the farmers over-exploiting the aquifers. In Bundaberg it was the farmers who went on their knees and asked the Government to protect the aquifers. The farmers in the Lockyer, too, will be doing that after they have exploited the natural underground water in that area. Proper licensing is necessary to ensure that these resources remain for another 20 or 30 years.

Under the Act, assistance is made available through the Agricultural Bank. The special assistance fund was called the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Fund. Initially, that fund was financed from State loan funds together with repayments from borrowers.

The real reason for the introduction of this legislation is that the State Treasury, through the Consolidated Revenue Fund, has not kept up its commitment to the fund. In other words, the problem has arisen because this Government ran out of money that would usually come from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and it now has to borrow from two other areas—under the semi-Government aspects of borrowing and the smaller bodies program. That would not have been required if the money had been made available in the first place.

If Government members believe that \$75,000 is a reasonable amount for the Government to make available to farmers by way of farm water supplies assistance, they should say so in the House tonight. That sum is totally inadequate. The honourable member for Lockyer is shaking his head. Let him tell me how much the Government does provide to the farmers. It provides only \$75,000.

The Agricultural Bank makes funds available under many Acts, including the Co-ordination of Rural Advances and Agricultural Bank Act, the War Service Land Settlement Act, the Drought Relief to Primary Producers Act, the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act and, of course, the Soil Conservation Act.

During the financial year advances totalling \$3.6m were approved. However, the sum that was actually provided to farmers was only \$2.7m. In other words, the difference between the sum approved and the sum that was actually paid out totalled approximately \$897,000, or 33 per cent.

Because the money has not been approved from other sources, a special Act is needed to form a quango to provide that money. If the money had been provided in the State Budget, there would be no reason for introducing a special Act. Because of the irresponsibility that the Government has shown towards farmers, they will suffer as individuals. Previously, because of the very slow rate of funding for water resources, many farmers suffered collectively. That happened with the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme. In 1970, the State allocated \$8m to that scheme. It was not 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, but 1976—more than six years—before the money that was allocated by the Government was spent on that scheme.

Unless the Government meets its commitment to those schemes, Queensland will go backwards with all its water resources development. That has happened with the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme and the Eton Irrigation Scheme, and it will happen with other irrigation schemes. It is now happening with the ordinary farmer. Last year, 600 farmers were waiting for money. They did not receive it because the Government provided only \$75,000. If that is the best commitment that the Government can make, it is not being fair dinkum to the farmers in those areas. Water is the most scarce resource in Queensland. If Queensland's water resources are not protected and developed as an act of responsibility, the Government will have failed, and it will have failed the farmers of Queensland.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (11.37 p.m.): I support the Minister in his efforts to increase the assistance provided for farm water supplies. It was interesting to hear the comments made by Opposition members recently. Whether it be land or water, they

seem to have the idea that complete Government control and Government funding are needed. That is not the Government's thinking at all. The development of water supplies in coastal and inland areas is undertaken, by and large, by individual farmers who have been prepared and able to use their initiative to provide water. When assistance is provided by the department to develop water supplies even further, that is a step in the right direction.

I ask the Opposition to tell me by what amount the Hawke Government, since it gained office, has reduced funding for water supplies in Queensland. Firstly, the Hawke Government reduced the amount that had already been allocated for water supplies and spent it in other areas. It was determined not to give it to the rural community. It was determined to provide the least possible assistance to rural areas. Because of the interest that the Hawke Government has shown in the rural community for a number of years, it is understandable that it would reduce funding in rural areas.

It is also interesting to note that the money provided by the Water Resources Commission for farm assistance has not always been utilised by the producers. I could dissect the information and ask why that is so. One of the reasons is that the farmers like to be independent.

Mr Kruger: Do you think there is some break-down? Do you think that there has been no PR done for the producers?

Mr STEPHAN: By and large, the producers have known that the assistance is there, but they are using their own expertise. In many instances they can do as good a job in this area as they do when they receive assistance from other sources. I can use my own experience as an example. A number of dams that have been built on my own property have been financed through private enterprise and not by the Water Resources Commission. That has occurred on farms right along the coast. That is one of the reasons why not all of the money has been spent. However, the additional assistance is commendable.

The value of smaller farm dams and water-harvesting methods ought not to be underestimated. Large dams serve their purpose. I do not knock them. I encourage the construction of dams and weirs. In the last few months I have twice accompanied the Minister on the inspection of weirs.

Mr Kruger: In which areas?

Mr STEPHAN: One at Lockyer and one at Gympie. Both are serving particular purposes. Other dams and weirs are being constructed but I have not visited them. Money is being spent by the Government on water conservation and distribution.

There is no more efficient means of storage than conservation of water on individual properties. When an individual farmer has water available on his own land, the cost of distribution is much lower. Evaporation on small dams has been mentioned. Certainly there is evaporation, but evaporation occurs whether the dam is large or small. Whether evaporation is greater on smaller dams is very debatable.

A great deal of effort has been directed to encouraging primary producers to do a little more. Some used to try to beat the system. For example, pipes were put through walls to let as much water run out as was running in. Some of those methods were not for publication. However, they did not do a great deal for the producer; nor did they do much for conservation.

The topography of our land lends itself to the construction of dams, and it is to be hoped that more will be built. Never is sufficient money allocated for that purpose. One of our greatest complaints has always been about the small allocation of funds for water conservation. To progress at a faster rate and more efficiently, greater effort has to be directed towards water-harvesting. However, the Government must concentrate not only on the amount of money to be spent but also on the return on funds invested. There is not much point in investing capital to produce a crop that is already over-produced, and that happens from time to time. Australian producers have been very efficient and have been able to produce more than is consumed in this country. Some of us in this Chamber are over-fed and could do without a meal from time to time without losing anything.

Each producer operates as a business. In any debate on the matter of the harvesting of water and the construction of dams, we must bear in mind that markets have to be found for the article produced. When produce is being cultivated by a reliable and satisfactory method, it can compete on world markets. At present there is no end to what Australia can produce very efficiently. That has been shown very effectively and very often.

Mr Prest: You get dry ice from dry water, you know.

Mr STEPHAN: One gets a lot of water, too, from many different places.

Some Opposition members mentioned the need for licensing. I wonder whether the member for Bundaberg actually knows about licensing throughout the area. He will find that the coastal streams from Brisbane north are licensed and that farmers are told the size of the pumps that can be used and when they can be used. The same applies on the Darling Downs. I suggest to members of the Opposition that they get out past the last streetlight and find out what is going on in the rural community. If they did that, they would realise that many of their complaints are wide of the mark. When I realise that the thoughts put forward by members of the Opposition would be implemented if Queensland ever had the misfortune to have a Labor Government, I shudder at what would be ahead of the rural community.

I compliment the Minister on his initiative. The Bill is certainly a step in the right direction. With a little more support and encouragement from the Federal Government, things would certainly be much better. For instance, the Federal Government should be allocating more funding to water conservation rather than reducing it. Perhaps members of the Opposition should use their energies to encourage their friends in Canberra to help in this very important area of farm production.

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (11.47 p.m.): I wish to support the comments made by the Opposition spokesman on this matter. Nobody has disagreed with the need for increased funding for water resources in Queensland. This Government must give a better commitment to funding or at least return to the previous level of funding.

Earlier today, in another debate, I spoke about the very important relationship between land and water resources. However, I have no wish to further canvass points that have already been made. I want to put to the Minister a proposition that very much relates to the Bill. I have carried this proposal deep within me for some considerable period. Every time the State suffers from very dry weather and has drought conditions, the call comes from hell, west and crooked—particularly from the areas west of the Great Dividing Range—for drought relief for the grazing industry. During the periods of the Liberal-National Party Government in Canberra, money was distributed in Queensland to shoot cattle, to spay female cattle and to pay graziers to muster cattle—all of the normal, everyday things that they do on their properties. That has been one of the greatest wastes of the financial resources of this nation that I have ever seen.

I am of the firm belief that what has happened on those occasions should never be repeated for the simple reason that once the drought broke there was no change in the graziers' activities. They continued even when grass and water were in abundance. However, the State is no further down the road towards battling the next drought that will confront this nation. I propose that those drought relief moneys be not paid out to individuals willy-nilly. Some of them, tragically, made false claims and used the moneys received from drought relief schemes for holidays in the area of the Minister for Mines and Energy, other areas of the Gold Coast and even on overseas trips. They were paid to do things that they would usually do on their properties.

The Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act should be extended to cover the grazing areas to which I have referred. Although it would mean that the normal pipeline-type projects could not go ahead, as has occurred in most farming areas, it would mean that money could be provided for additional windmills, the tapping of bores, the provision of new water outlets, the cleaning and repairing of drains to take the water where it is needed, the building of on-farm dams in western Queensland and the building of earth tanks and other types of tanks.

It would have a twofold purpose. Not only would it provide funding to ensure more permanent water resources on properties; it would also provide employment in western areas. The Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police and other honourable members know well that one of the big tragedies of droughts in western areas is that on many properties

the ordinary workers are the first to be put off. The dam-sinkers, the tank-builders and the windmill-repairers, all experts, find themselves out of work. Sometimes, tragically, they leave the west, never to return, and their skills are lost. Those skills can be retained in those areas. If this scheme was adopted the workers would be spending their wages in those areas and maintaining the towns.

My proposal should be looked at by this Government. It would certainly be looked at by a Labor Government. It is one through which a great contribution could be made in times of drought. The Act should be extended into that area, using the money that becomes available to ensure that when a drought does come we are just that bit further down the line. If we are able to help only one property-owner to improve his water resources and harness a little more water to keep his stock going for another week, and if it helps them retain their condition a little longer, it might mean the difference between life and death for those stock.

I would like to see the Act used for that purpose. It is something that the Minister could look at now that he is to become an authority of one in relation to funding arrangements. He could do something to help this nation. It would mean that money would not just be thrown down the drain in times of drought.

Hon. J. P. GOLEBY (Redlands—Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services) (11.53 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions. First of all, the Opposition spokesman (Mr Eaton) outlined clearly his thoughts on the Bill. I know that he has a very keen appreciation of the problems of the man on the land and of the need for water conservation. Every honourable member, in particular those who spoke tonight, would agree with him.

However, this Bill is nothing more than a machinery measure to allow special borrowings of \$1.8m. Because of the special borrowings for the Burdekin irrigation area, the commissioner is not able to exercise his powers in the area of small borrowings, and that is why it is necessary to transfer control to me to facilitate the borrowing of the additional \$1.8m.

I agree with the honourable member's assertion—I think every honourable member does—that more money is needed for water. But I must remind him that when the Federal Labor Government came to power, it immediately removed \$35m under the bicentennial program from Queensland's water allocation. That has had disastrous effects on the provision of necessary water supplies. I remind him that that meant the loss of \$10m on the Gladstone scheme, \$7.2m on the Dawson River and a similar amount on the Macintyre Brook.

The honourable member referred also to the Nerang training walls and where the money was coming from for them. That is to be a self-funding scheme, carried by the Gold Coast Waterways Authority.

The scheme attached to the \$1.8m provided under the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act sets a \$50,000 maximum for an applicant. Last year, with the wages pause, an additional \$1m was put into that area. Although funding for expenditure on water resources throughout the State is not as good as one might wish, I remind honourable members that the commission will spend some \$140m on water conservation in 1983-84. The funds for farm water supplies come from borrowings and repayments by borrowers.

The sum of \$2.3m is to be provided for advances to land-holders in 1983-84. That is expected to meet the demand in this year. Interest charges to land-holders are set at the rate applicable to the Agricultural Bank. One of the main attractions of the Agricultural Bank is that it allows a much longer repayment period. When borrowing funds from the trading banks today, it is very difficult to get terms over five years, and an applicant is lucky to get five years. In the main, the trading banks prefer roll-over bills. Because the money is borrowed through the Agricultural Bank, and because it is administered by the Agricultural Bank, it can be lent on much more favourable terms.

I thank the honourable member for Lockyer, who is a member of my water committee, for his understanding of the Farm Water Supplies scheme. Since entering the House he has shown keen interest in the need for farm water schemes. He knows his electorate well, and that has been indicated clearly in his various speeches. I assure the honourable member that the available funds are expected to meet the demand in this financial year in areas covered by the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act.

As honourable members should appreciate, the demand in 1982-83 was very high because of the unusually bad drought. Many districts experienced the worst drought in living memory. Because of that, honourable members will understand why heavy demands were placed on the fund.

The need for further research into crop water requirements is acknowledged. However, substantial gains have been made in trickle irrigation. The farm water advisory service is active in promoting various water-saving devices and new methods in various farming areas. I have spent a lot of time on this matter and will continue to spend more time on investigating the way in which it is put into effect in other parts of the world.

I inform the honourable member for Callide that I have been to his electorate on numerous occasions since I became a Minister. I am well acquainted with the Callide Dam. I have also visited groups of farmers in the area. The fund about which we are speaking is used not only for the building of dams but also to provide pumps and other essential infrastructure. Many of the large water storage tanks cost more than the \$50,000 maximum. Everything is being done to encourage farmers to put in large storage tanks and to practise water harvesting. That is happening in many places throughout Queensland, and in a significant way on the Darling Downs. The expenditure is a tax deduction. I hope that the Federal Government will not interfere with that, because every encouragement must be given for the conservation of water. If a farmer has a good season, as most farmers have had in the past 12 months, they should be encouraged in every way to plough as much money as possible into water storage tanks.

The Callide Dam was built for power generation, with a capacity of 46 600 ML. The temporary shutters were installed to increase the capacity to 57 000 ML. The gates to be installed by 1986 will increase the capacity of the Callide Dam to 127 000 ML. The additional water stored would be available to replenish underground water.

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I hope that the member for Callide realises that in his electorate there is a diversion scheme that takes water from the Callide dam into one of the creeks to replenish the underground water. The Bedford Weir that he referred to, which is on the Mackenzie River, was largely financed by the mining companies and will be largely used by them in their operations.

The honourable member for Bundaberg displayed his very little understanding of the Bill. He reminded me of a centrifugal pump going flat out with all taps turned off. He might have been sucking air. Whichever it was, he has very little appreciation of the needs of the Bundaberg area. I can only say that I am pleased that he does not represent the farmers there. He referred to the figure of \$2.214m shown in the report as outstanding at 30 June last year. That figure is the value of schemes approved but not proceeded with by that date. It does not refer to claims made and advances not paid.

The Farm Water Supplies Assistance Fund met the record demand of the 1982-83 year. The allocation of \$75,000 from revenue in 1982-83 was an additional grant, and, as I reminded honourable members previously, the wage pause contributed extra money into the fund. The total allocation in 1982-83 was over \$4m. Of the 613 applications outstanding as at 30 June 1983, 110 applications were for technical and financial assistance and 503 were for technical assistance only. Of the 675 applicants this year, only 43 have requested financial assistance.

The honourable member for Gympie referred mainly to his electorate, which he knows very well. A small dam will be built on East Deep Creek. It will be known as the Cedar Pocket Dam and will provide water for 14 contiguous dairy farms on that creek.

The member for Mackay spoke about the need for water in the western areas. I remind him that it was the Federal Minister (Senator Walsh) who took away the funds that would have allowed for investigations into a diversion scheme on the Bradfield and Clarence Rivers. The Clarence River diversion scheme is very important because it would send water right down the Balonne River and into the system.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr GOLEBY: Of course it is, and that is what the member for Mackay said had not been done. It was a Federal Labor Government that took the funds away.

It is recognised that bores, tanks and windmills are important on properties, and last year the Government permitted farmers to irrigate a small area of land from artesian bores to save that water from running away. Previously, only stock-watering was permitted; but farmers are being encouraged to use the excess water to grow fodder that will be of great assistance during times of drought. That matter was brought to my attention and raised in this House by the member for Flinders, who is now the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs. Graziers are invited to make application to use artesian water, which is running to waste through the bore drains, for irrigation and some other profitable use. That will be of considerable help to graziers who are trying to keep sheep alive in drought times.

I thank honourable members for their contributions.

Motion (Mr Goleby) agreed to.

Committee

Mr Booth (Warwick) in the chair; Hon. J. P. Goleby (Redlands—Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—Repeal of and new s. 17A; Vesting of certain borrowings—

Mr CAMPBELL (12.6 a.m.): I ask the Minister one question: If the Government had provided \$2m from consolidated revenue for the fund, would it have needed to borrow the \$1.8m?

Mr GOLEBY: The answer to that question is quite simple. In fact, the honourable member answered the question earlier when he claimed that we cannot get too much money for this type of assistance to farmers. I agree that that is so. If the funds are available for borrowing, I will borrow them.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Goleby, by leave, read a third time.

CRIMINAL CODE AND BAIL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Criminal Code in certain particulars and to amend the Bail Act 1980-1984 in a certain particular.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.8 a.m.): I move—

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

When the Criminal Code was drafted in the late 1890s and passed by this House in 1899, it was intended that the criminal law of Queensland would be located in the one statute. Embodied in the code were all of the common law offences as well as the statutory offences which were in force at that time.

The Criminal Code Act of 1899 provided that the Criminal Code as set forth in the first schedule of the Act was to be the law of Queensland for all the matters to which it referred.

For a statute which has now been in force for almost 83 years there have been remarkably few amendments. This speaks highly of the preparation which went into the legislation, the drafting of Sir Samuel Griffith, who later took his place as the first Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, and the foresight of those responsible for the passage of the legislation through this House.

On occasions, however, it has been necessary for the Code to be updated to ensure that conduct which is abhorrent to society is recognised as constituting a criminal offence. The Criminal Code contains many offences which are committed very rarely as well as those which are committed throughout this State on almost a daily basis. While it is necessary to ensure that the laws which are frequently used are effective, it is equally necessary to look to the future to ensure that our heritage is protected.

The democratic system of Government which we have inherited is a valuable gift which we must protect so that the future rights of all Queenslanders may be maintained and strengthened. Unfortunately, there are those who do not value and respect those rights. Through threats of violence and mayhem they seek to exert their will over democratically elected Governments.

Throughout the world, particularly in the last 20 years, terrorist groups have been active. We in Australia have been very fortunate. As with the ravages of war, we have been free from such activities. The indiscriminate bombings which occurred in other countries, with countless lives being taken, are virtually unknown here. Overseas, hijackings and kidnappings take place on an almost regular basis.

As a result of those trends, legislatures throughout the world have reacted to protect their citizens. Counter-terrorist legislation has passed through the House of Commons and become law in Great Britain. In Australia, the Commonwealth Government enacted the Crimes (Hijacking of Aircraft) Act 1972-1973. That legislation resulted from international concern over the increasing number of hijackings that were taking place.

While these trends towards violence and threats against Governments have been readily apparent overseas, it is only recently that examples within Australia and in this region of the world have been observed. The Hilton Hotel bombing in Sydney during the regional Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sydney in 1978, which resulted in the unprecedented call-out of the defence forces, is perhaps the most graphic example.

Others have been the threat to release nerve gas in Wellington, New Zealand, and the threat to place explosives on railway bridges in the Brisbane area of our own State. The recent threat to release foot-and-mouth virus in Queensland is yet another example.

While these events have been the catalyst in causing this review of Queensland legislation, it must be stressed that these events are in the past, and it is to the future that this Bill looks. The Queensland Government is determined to take a firm stance on issues of this nature. It is determined to protect the rights of Queenslanders to be governed by their lawfully elected representatives. It is determined to protect and maintain the safety and independence of the executive arm of Government in all its facets and in all its functions. Likewise, it is determined to protect the integrity of servants of the Crown and Government corporations.

The Criminal Code and Bail Act Amendment Bill is innovative legislation which will achieve these purposes. Chapter 8 of the Criminal Code provides for a number of offences against the executive and legislative power.

The Bill provides for a new section to be inserted into the Criminal Code to provide for a new offence of "demands with menaces upon agencies of government" This new section will be section 54A. Any person who demands that anything be done or omitted to be done or be procured by the Government of Queensland or Crown servants, the Governor, a Minister of the Crown, a Government corporation or its servants with threats of injury or detriment of any kind will commit an offence.

The Act or omission which is to be done or procured by those named must be done in an official capacity as opposed to something which must be done in a private capacity. Where such a threat is made, it is immaterial, for the purposes of this offence, against whom the injury or detriment is to be caused.

This part of the clause has been drafted widely to ensure that every possible eventuality has been covered. When threats of the type envisaged are made, it is not at all unusual that the target is not identified and a general threat is made against the public at large. Such a situation is provided for by this clause.

Another feature of this type of offence is that the threat may not be made to a particular person directly but is delivered to some other person or communicated to the media. The vital aspect is that the threat is made and action is taken by the offender to ensure that the threat is received by the person, persons or body to whom it is directed.

If the threat does not specify the injury or detriment that is to be caused or the person or persons to whom or the property to which it is to be caused, provided that it is a threat of injury or detriment, no further particulars will be necessary. An offence of this nature will have as a maximum sentence a period of imprisonment for 14 years.

If the threat is of a serious nature, the carrying out of which would be likely to cause loss of life or serious personal injury to any person or substantial economic loss to the Crown or its instrumentalities or to any industrial or commercial activity, a circumstance of aggravation may be alleged against the accused. Should this circumstance be proved to the satisfaction of the jury, the offender will be liable to a maximum sentence of imprisonment with hard labour for life.

For the most serious cases, a further circumstance of aggravation may be alleged if the accused or another person on his behalf has carried out the serious threat and caused a consequence of the type mentioned previously, or alternatively if he has, by some overt act, begun to prepare for the carrying out of the threat. In this case, if he is convicted of the offence with both circumstances of aggravation, he will be imprisoned with hard labour for life. This sentence may not be varied or mitigated. However, the provisions of the Parole Act 1980-1983 will apply and an accused will be eligible for parole under that Act.

Although harsh measures are applied by this Bill, it must be remembered that it is dealing with terrorists who seek to tear down the very fabric of our society, namely, the democratic rights of the people of Queensland.

A definition of the term "injury or detriment" is also contained in the Bill which will ensure that flora, fauna and Aboriginal relics, as well as places of cultural, educational, environmental, historical, recreational, religious or scientific significance, are protected by the legislation.

The criminal processes in this State have a number of safeguards which are applied at various stages. These include committal proceedings, the power of the Attorney-General to enter a nolle prosequi during a criminal trial. As an additional safeguard, before a prosecution may commence where either one or both circumstances of aggravation are alleged, the consent of the Attorney-General must first be obtained. This procedure will allow a case to be fully examined by Crown law officers and advice given before a charge of a serious nature can be laid.

The Bill will also provide for the amendment of section 415 to provide that a circumstance of aggravation may be alleged where offences similar to those in the proposed section 54A are committed against private individuals. An example of the type of case which is intended to be caught by these provisions would be the case which became popularly known as the Woolworths bombing case in New South Wales.

Extortion bids of this nature may place the public at grave risk, even though the threat is not directed at Government. For this reason, if the threat is of a serious nature, the carrying out of which would be likely to cause loss of life or serious personal injury or substantial economic loss in any industrial or commercial activity whether conducted by a public authority or as a private enterprise, the offender will be liable to imprisonment with hard labour for life. As in the proposed section 54A, this circumstance may be alleged only with the consent of the Attorney-General.

The final amendment contained in the Bill relates to the Bail Act. For the reasons which I gave in this House during debate on the Bail Act Amendment Act 1984, persons who are charged with offences which have as the penalty mandatory life imprisonment may only obtain bail from a judge of the Supreme Court.

In order that there will be a consistent approach to bail in this State, it is necessary that the Act be amended to include in that category of offences an offence under the proposed section 54A where both circumstances of aggravation are alleged.

This legislation can best be described as preventive. It reinforces those values which must be maintained in our community. Anyone who attempts to subvert the democratic

process of Government or hold the community to ransom by terror and fear should be aware, before he or she starts on that course, that it is one regarded very seriously in Queensland, comparable to such acts as treason and murder.

In the past Queensland has been relatively free from offences of this type. It is through legislation such as this Bill proposes that the State will remain so. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Goss, adjourned.

EVIDENCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Evidence Act 1977–1981 in a certain particular.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.23 a.m.): I move—

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

The Evidence Act makes provision for certain reproductions of documents to be admissible in evidence in proceedings under certain circumstances. In general, such reproductions will be admissible if relevant affidavits are made by the person or persons responsible for, and as to the steps involved in, the making of the reproductions.

Section 105 of the Act provides for a much simpler means of admitting in evidence reproductions of official documents which, at the time of making the reproductions, are in the custody or control of an “approved person” That is defined in section 105 as meaning certain departmental officials or officials representing the Crown declared by the Minister to be an approved person for the purposes of the section as well as court officials.

This Bill amends that definition to allow a wider class of persons or officials to be declared as an “approved person”. For instance, the amendment will enable nominated local authority officers to be declared as an “approved person” under the Act for the purpose of the making of certified reproductions of official documents to be admissible as evidence without further proof.

Documents maintained by a local authority are quite similar in nature to those maintained by many of those bodies whereof an officer may be declared an “approved person” under the section as presently enacted. There seems to be, therefore, no real reason for not extending the obvious advantage afforded by the section to local authorities.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Goss, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

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

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Rooklyn Organisation

Mr GOSS (Salisbury) (12.25 a.m.): One week ago Mr Des Welk was prepared to risk reprisal by testifying to the illegal way the Rooklyn organisation operates in Queensland. The reaction of the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General (Mr Harper) has not been to inquire into Rooklyn’s organisation and Barry McNamara, who made the threat, but to charge Welk with having a bullet-proof vest to protect himself from them.

Let it be clearly understood that this is how that Rooklyn organisation has gained and currently maintains its dominant share of the industry—by violence, illegal means and unfair tactics towards small competitors. Small business people of Queensland who are involved in this industry are afraid to speak out.

Well, one more Rooklyn competitor has now had the courage to come forward and speak out. I will table a statutory declaration and attached diary notes by one Brian Natal Vidulich of 39 Gloucester Road, Buderim, who has also been threatened by Rooklyn's Queensland manager, Barry McNamara.

Mr Vidulich has been a respected and successful operator in the amusement machine industry for eight years on the north coast. The time came in 1979 when he was approached by a certain club to put his machines into that club. This was blocked by threats from McNamara who went to see Vidulich and his wife at Buderim. McNamara threatened them against causing the Rooklyn organisation any trouble by competing and said—

“Jack Rooklyn and Co. had fixed it with the local police to allow their in-line machines to operate in the area.”

He went on to say “that a lot of money had been slung”, and that if Vidulich gave the Rooklyn organisation any trouble “he would end up in the prawning nets off the north coast”.

Mr Vidulich, through his companies, Action Distributors, Kavid Amusements and Avid Sales has built up a successful, reputable and respected business on the north coast. Yet, despite the success of that business and his standing in the local community, he was afraid to ever compete with the Rooklyn organisation. Despite requests from various north coast clubs to install his machines in those clubs, he never did so for fear of violent reprisals. Will Mr Vidulich now be raided by the police the same way Mr Welk was? Will the Minister also send the cops round to carry out reprisals against him? Mr Vidulich is a careful and thorough businessman and he recorded this precise conversation in his diary on 29 May 1970. I will table a photocopy of that diary. Why has Mr Vidulich now been prepared to speak out, after all these years? Because of a recent personal bereavement he no longer fears for his personal safety.

How many more Queensland business people involved in the amusement machine industry have to put themselves at personal risk before we have a full inquiry into this situation?

The other area into which the Rooklyn organisation has now moved is the fund raising of the Queensland Spastic Welfare League. In 1982, the Surf Life Savers Appeal Committee lodged an application for the fund raising scheme known as “Instant Cash”, but the application was rejected by the Justice Department because it said it would compete with the Golden Casket's Instant Lotto venture scheduled for June 1984. Then last year, because of Rooklyn contacts in the Justice Department, and because Rooklyn had a financial interest in Spastic Welfare League fund raising, Rooklyn was able to get the same “Instant Cash” scheme approved by the Justice Department.

Mr HARPER: I rise to a point of order. I find the remarks made by the member offensive, totally inaccurate and reflecting on both officers of my department and me. I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth): Order! The Minister asks that the remarks be withdrawn. He believes that they reflect on him.

Mr GOSS: With respect, he can only take a point of order on a personal basis. I cannot withdraw it on that basis. Are you ruling—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member can withdraw the remarks that are directed to the Minister, and he will.

Mr GOSS: I withdraw any remarks that I made in respect of the Minister—none in respect of the department.

That is another example of how Rooklyn's competitors get squeezed out and the Rooklyn group get preferential decisions from the Justice Department. The Golden Casket, the Treasury and the Surf Life Savers Appeal Committee were shocked, but Rooklyn's interests succeed, as always.

The Queensland Spastic Welfare League first got caught up in the Rooklyn web through a firm called Golden State Ticket Machines. I will table a Corporate Affairs Office search indicating that the owner of Golden State Ticket Machines is Garderob Pty Ltd. I will table a letter from Rooklyn's business, Queensland Automatics, signed by his manager, Barry McNamara, showing that Garderob Pty Ltd is part of the Queensland Automatics group.

I will table a letter from Golden State Ticket Machines in which the company claims to earn \$10m a year for charities. I call on the Minister to table the figures to see how much of that \$10m goes to charity and how much goes to Queensland Automatics, the dominant distributor of in-line machines in Queensland. I table "Instant Cash" tickets endorsed with Queensland Automatics name.

Mr Welk, Mr Vidulich, Associated Leisure Industries and the Surf Life Savers Appeal Committee have all suffered. How many more people have suffered at the hands of the Rooklyn organisation and its powerful friends in the Justice Department?

I want to stress that the Queensland Spastic Welfare League and other charities have been caught up innocently in this situation but, with the clubs, they are now financially dependent on the Rooklyn organisation, and are afraid to speak out. When will the Minister act? When will he answer the substance of the allegations rather than engage in the smear tactics that he used this morning, by playing the man instead of the ball? He refuses to acknowledge the widespread illegal gambling in Queensland clubs, and every statement he makes defends Jack Rooklyn. When will he stop defending Jack Rooklyn?

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

(Time expired.)

Skin Cancer

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (12.31 a.m.): I intend to speak about a matter that should concern all members of Parliament and the public of Queensland. It concerns the growing incidence of skin cancer in Queensland. Indeed, Queensland has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world.

Anyone who has seen the devastating effect of advanced skin cancer and consequent surgery cannot but be shocked and alarmed at the increase. Any member who viewed the recent "Today Tonight" segment on this subject would have seen a gentleman who had one side of his face completely ravaged, or eaten away. I remember his saying, when being interviewed, that if he could walk along the beaches to show young people the effect that the sun could have on them if they did not adopt sensible precautions he would be doing them a good turn.

Possibly honourable members have friends or relatives who have been affected by this disease. When a relative of mine was affected, I was disturbed. Any member in a similar situation must also be disturbed at the growing incidence of this disease. No-one can help being very concerned when he sees someone with his lips, nose or face badly disfigured.

In April 1983, the Medical Journal of Australia reported that Queensland had the world's highest reported incidence of melanoma with a crude rate of 39.6 per 100 000 population and that the incidence had more than doubled in the past 15 years from the rate of 16.4 per 100 000 population.

All honourable members must be very concerned about this growing incidence, and each must do all he can to lessen the problem. In a State that has the best of everything, including good government and a marvellous climate, we are blessed with far more sunshine than most other nations with a predominantly white-skinned population. Because of the current health cult ideals that a good tan is far more socially acceptable than otherwise, more and more people, particularly the young, are sunbaking to acquire a sun tan. Honourable members will see that happening on any beach. As fashions continue to dictate briefer costumes, sunbathers do not have much protection.

Mr FitzGerald: Some people go without costumes.

Mr RANDELL: They do that, too.

The wish for a healthy tan leads many Australians into the sunlight with unhealthy frequency that can result in various forms of skin cancer and a proliferation of prematurely aged skin. It should be borne in mind that damage caused at an early age sometimes becomes visible only much later in life. I have seen that happen to a number of people.

Some medical people believe that intermittent exposure to ultraviolet sun rays is more harmful, particularly to indoor workers, than steady exposure by somebody who works constantly out of doors.

Several interesting studies have been undertaken. One was reported in the Medical Journal of Australia. It was conducted by Adele Green and Victor Siskind on the "Geographical distribution of cutaneous melanoma in Queensland". In part, the article reads—

"The geographical distribution of melanoma patients in Queensland was examined by reviewing the residential addresses of all incident cases in a 12-month period from July 1, 1979, and no association with latitude was found. Rather, there was a significantly increased incidence of melanoma in coastal, compared to inland, regions."

Later, the report continues—

"One possible explanation of the observed geographical distribution lies in the ready accessibility to beaches which encourages sunbathing in the coastal population. There are few comparable facilities available to the people of the inland region, and these (swimming pools and rivers) are far less conducive to 'sun worship' in leisure hours."

I could go on and on. The report details that earth and grassed surfaces reflect only about 2 per cent of ultraviolet rays, but water and dry sand reflect 4 per cent and 12 per cent respectively.

As I mentioned previously, it must be recognised that the damage caused to the young people in the community will show up in later life, and education must be the highest priority. Children should be educated at an early age about the dangers of the sun and I can think of no better way to do that than through the schools. The children must be taught about the protection provided by shady hats and adequate clothing. They must learn that the midday hours of the sun are the most destructive. The "slip, slap, slop!" campaign is a very good advertisement and the children should be encouraged to take notice of it. I have written to the Ministers for Education and Health suggesting that they take steps in schools to highlight the dangers. More should be done in this regard.

The women's section of the Mirani branch of the National Party is conducting a poster competition in all schools in the electorate. I recently attended a prize-giving ceremony at the Sarina primary school and the Mirani primary school. I was most impressed by the posters that the children had drawn. I have with me a poster drawn by a little girl named Madele Barfield. It is typical of the kind of posters drawn by the children. I am not saying that it is the best one, but it is very good. The children have shown much interest and they should be encouraged. I congratulate the teachers and the principals at the schools on their help and co-operation in this competition.

Last week-end, at a meeting of the women's section of the State Executive of the National Party, I understand that it was decided to approach every women's National Party branch in Queensland.

(Time expired.)

Milk Board and Milk Entitlements Committee

Mr KRUGER (Murrumba) (12.37 a.m.): On 31 January 1984 the Minister for Primary Industries wrote to the secretary of the Queensland Dairy Product Manufacturers Co-operative Association as follows—

"I wish to advise that the term of office of members of both the Queensland Milk Board and the Milk Entitlements Committee expires on 31 May, 1984.

In accordance with the provisions of Section 8 of the Milk Supply Act 1977-1983, I hereby invite your organisation to submit a panel of names of not less than three persons for each of the four zones prescribed in the schedule to Regulation 6, for the purpose of selecting three persons representative of processors for appointment to the Queensland Milk Board, for a period of three years commencing 1 June, 1984.

With respect to the Milk Entitlements Committee and in pursuance of provisions of Section 67 of the Act, I hereby invite your organisation to submit a panel of names of not less than three persons being nominees for the position as representative of processors within Zones 1, 2 and 3, as prescribed in the schedule to Regulation 12, for the purpose of selecting a person representative of processors, for appointment to the Milk Entitlements Committee, for a period of three years commencing 1 June, 1984.

Your attention is drawn to Section 11 (4) concerning eligibility for reappointment to the Board and to Section 68 (2) (b) which specifies eligibility for reappointment to the Committee."

That letter applied to the representatives of the processors and representatives of the producers. The producers were quite happy to go along with what happened. Section 11 (4) of the Milk Supply Act provides that—

"A member of the Board shall, if he is otherwise qualified, be eligible for re-appointment as a member"

Section 68 (2) (b) provides that a member of the committee "shall, if otherwise qualified, be eligible for reappointment". That provision prevents the Labor Party from moving a motion of disallowance.

A letter to the Queensland Dairy Produce Manufacturers Co-operative Association from its secretary says—

"A copy of a letter from the Minister for Primary Industries concerning the abovementioned is enclosed for your information. The Minister advises that the term of office for both these Committees expires on 31st May, 1984.

The next Executive meeting of our Association has been scheduled for Monday 26th March 1984. Therefore at this meeting nominations will be considered by your Executive for these important functions. Appointments in both these areas is for a term of three years.

To save considerable time and deliberations on these matters, you are requested to give prior due consideration to your proposed nominations. They can then be received, selected and forwarded to the Minister as nominated representatives of this Association by the required date of April 30, 1984."

A Government Member: Boring!

Mr KRUGER: It may be boring, but it is really very relevant, especially for the people who do not understand what has happened.

The crunch came on 23 March 1984 when Mr Miller, the director of the Dairying and Fisheries Division within the Department of Primary Industries told the Queensland Dairy Product Manufacturers Co-operative Association—

"I wish to advise that the members of both the Queensland Milk Board and the Milk Entitlements Committee have had their time of appointment extended by a further 10 months to 31st March 1985. You will be formally advised of this in due course by the Minister. I am taking the liberty to pass this information on to you in view of your meeting with members of your organisation on Monday 26th of March to discuss nominations for the Board and the Milk Entitlements Committee."

Last week, an article in "Queensland Country Life" went to great lengths to point out that the situation was most unusual. That publication stated—

"The unusual move, announced this week by Primary Industries Minister Mr Turner after approval by State Cabinet, has taken the dairy industry by surprise."

Recently, in this House I asked questions concerning this matter and it was canvassed fully. I highlighted the need to control the dairy industry in a reasonable manner.

The editorial in the same issue of "Queensland Country Life" underlined the fact that this situation is most unusual.

The reason for this situation is that Mr Pag Beatty, who is chairman of both the Milk Board and the Milk Entitlements Committee, will retire in about 12 months' time. The Minister has stated that, because of the Industry Assistance Commission report, both the board and the committee should continue in operation.

The situation is that the Minister for Primary Industries wants to ensure that those people who have been in cahoots with the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing, with Mr Charlie Holm and with other people continue to be members of the two organisations to make sure that further shonky deals can be carried on through the Primary Industries Department for the benefit of those people who prop up the National Party in this State. As I have said before, people in high places in the National Party are dominating the dairy industry for their own purposes.

(Time expired.)

Brisbane City Council Ordinances Relative to Caravan Parks

Mr HENDERSON (Mt Gravatt) (12.42 a.m.): One of the most important possessions that one can have is one's own home, but it is a truism that for many families the possibility of owning a new home is becoming more and more remote.

Although Governments are doing their best to provide funds for people to buy homes, many people make a deliberate and definite choice not to live in a traditional suburban home on a traditional suburban block of land. Those people do not necessarily want to live in an apartment.

Anyone who looks at the housing patterns overseas will find that a common and growing method of housing is mobile housing. Parks are set up in various areas, small allotments are made available and people are allowed to bring on to those areas mobile homes, whether they be caravans or mobile homes of the type that are now constructed in Queensland.

All honourable members have had an opportunity of inspecting the standard of housing provided by a caravan with a suitable annexe or by a mobile home. As I holiday in an on-site caravan, I know from personal experience that that standard of housing is quite excellent.

A growing and increasingly important number of people feel that they cannot afford to live in traditional housing. Another group of people simply do not want to live in traditional housing. They find the maintenance of a yard, garden and so on far too expensive. Those people have made what I consider to be a reasonable, legitimate and decent choice to live in a caravan park.

In many instances those people are pensioners who have decided that they cannot afford to maintain an existing home on a suburban block. They therefore opt for a caravan in a caravan park. Their caravans are well set up, they are particularly well maintained and they are extremely comfortable.

Another group of people who are moving into caravan parks comprise single-parent families who, again because of economic circumstances, find themselves unable to afford a traditional home.

At a cost of \$10,000 one can buy an extremely comfortable, a very livable and a very decent standard of accommodation in the form of a caravan with an annexe, properly furnished, on a small block of land.

A good deal of that accommodation is being opted for in increasingly large numbers by people living in the city of Brisbane. Throughout the whole civilised world, that is an increasing pattern of living. What do we find in the city of Brisbane? We find the Labor local government, the great champions of the underdog, the great champions of the deprived, the great champions of those who cannot afford the traditional things in life, insisting on a rule that can be most mildly described as uncharitable but in the truest sense as plain stupid. That rule is that residents in caravan parks will not be—

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr HENDERSON: As usual, the member for Port Curtis is interrupting. As usual, he has said nothing. In every sense, he could be called the member for "poor courtesy", because that is precisely what he is.

The Labor Government in the Brisbane City Council is insisting on throwing people out of caravan parks. The nine-week limit on which the Brisbane City Council is insisting is plain stupid. What is even more interesting is that the Labor City Council has shown a callous disregard for a very important section of the Brisbane community.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth): Order! If the member for Port Curtis wishes to interject, he should return to his usual place.

Mr HENDERSON: I repeat that the rule is stupid. It discriminates against a group of people who have enough hardships in life without having to carry the Brisbane City Council on their back.

I hope that the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing will have enough sense to veto any of those proposals in the interests of what is a decent standard of housing enjoyed by an underprivileged group who deserve a better deal from the council.

(Time expired.)

Building Contracts, Cairns District

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (12.47 a.m.): I wish to expose tonight a practice that is becoming all too frequent, whereby large, theoretically reputable companies attempt to recoup from innocent house-holders a loss that they sustained at the hands of bankrupt builders.

During recent months, three builders in the Cairns district have gone bankrupt, leaving high and dry a large number of aspiring house-holders as well as quite a few subcontractors, hardware and electrical suppliers. I do not have time during this debate to dwell on the subject of builders or private companies going broke. Suffice it to say that there is much bitterness in Cairns at present on both sides, namely, from the person engaging the builder and from those persons providing goods and services to the builder. However, the situation could be tolerated, or at least understood, if it was certain that when a company went broke, the principal of that company went broke also. Insofar as the laws of our State do not provide that, they are surely deficient.

Mr FitzGerald: Casey would be gone a long time ago, wouldn't he?

Mr De LACY: I think that a few members on the Government side would be gone.

The offending company in this instance is Solahart, which advertises, "Don't you think you oughta, buy your hot water, free from Solahart and the sun?"

Last October, Maurice and Yasmin Downing and their two very young children moved into their dream home in Cairns. They were luckier than most, as their home was virtually finished before the builder went broke. I know other families in Cairns who are paying rent, paying off their housing loan, and all they have to show for it is a concrete slab and a broken heart.

At the outset, I wish to make it clear that the Downings paid the builder, Andlea Homes, the whole of the contract price, except for \$1,000, which is held by the Commonwealth Bank and which they will not part with because the house is incomplete.

Early last week, Mrs Downing arrived home to find some technicians from Solahart doing something with the system. She asked what they were doing. They said they were removing the element. She thought that perhaps her husband had telephoned them. She rang him, only to be told that he had done nothing. She then contacted Solahart. It seems that Solahart has had a management reshuffle. The manager said that the element had been removed but that it would not be replaced because the unit had not been paid for and the company intended taking it back.

At that stage the Downings contacted me. I then got in touch with the new manager, Mr Les Miller. I said, "I believe that you have done something illegal; that that unit is part of the construction of the home. If you believe that somebody owes you money, it is the builder. You should take legal action against him. You can claim against the estate." At that stage Mrs Downing had called the media in. I said to him, "If you are prepared to put it back, I am sure I can have the media called off." That is what happened.

Mr Bailey interjected.

Mr De LACY: This type of thing happens to young people these days. If Government members think it is a joke, that is a matter for them.

The unit was replaced. At first, the manager told me the story that he was recalling some sort of a faulty element. On the Friday, however, workmen arrived with their truck and extension ladders and took the element again. It seems that they had had legal advice to the effect that they had justification for taking the element. On the Saturday,

a big article appeared in "The Cairns Post" headed "Cairns dream home plans shattered". On Monday, I contacted the police and asked them to investigate the matter. They are doing that.

Today, I have been advised that the Solahart people believe they are quite within their rights to take the whole system. They are now saying that the Downings had actually purchased the system, and that they have witnesses to prove it. All I can say is that it is a peculiar way to do business. The hot-water system had been installed in the Downings' residence for six months. They have certainly signed no agreement, contract or order form. They have never received an account or an account rendered. After six months of futility in trying to chase the builder, Solahart has decided that the home-owners are an easier target.

(Time expired.)

Control over Rifle Ranges; Speech by Member for Wynnum

Mr KAUS (Mansfield) (12.52 a.m.): I express concern about remarks made last week in the debate on the Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act Amendment Bill, which were reported in "The Courier-Mail". The member for Wynnum referred to the dangers that exist on some rifle ranges in the State and the lack of control or lack of regulation over them. He said also that the clubs were left to impose self-regulation. He mentioned that there was an accident waiting to happen.

I remind him that the rifle-shooting movement has been active in Queensland for 107 years. Not one fatal accident has been recorded, either within its own ranks or outside them. The member for Wynnum mentioned trail bike riders using the Belmont Rifle Range complex. If that were so, it would have been done without authorisation of the association, and the riders would have been regarded by the association as trespassers.

The Queensland Rifle Association has had correspondence with a group calling itself the Queensland Field and Game Association, which resulted in that group receiving approval of the Inspector of Rifle Ranges to construct a field and game range within the Belmont Shooting Complex. That is in exactly the same place as the bike-riders operate. It is 2 000 yards behind the butts. The approval for the Field and Game Association relates to an area on the other side of the range. I know that the trail bike riders go there. It is 2 km out of the safety area.

The entire 1.7 square miles of the Queensland Rifle Association is fenced and sign-posted to indicate that it is a rifle range. The fence is inspected regularly by the range superintendent and the Inspector of Rifle Ranges, who serves the Australian Government, to ensure safety, which is paramount at all times.

The Sporting Shooters Association operates under the strictest supervision and is the best training ground in Queensland for any shooter to learn the codes of shooting as they are applied by that well organised and disciplined group of people.

The body is a responsible one and handles most of the business for all the shooting fraternity throughout the QRA jurisdiction. Some of the events that will be occurring in the very near future are the American national matches to be held at Camp Perry, Ohio; Queensland Day 1984; and the Queensland Field and Game Association. To show that security is evident, the association indicated to the Inspector of Rifle Ranges that it would be in the interests of shooting generally if the Queensland Military Rifle Club was permitted to be reinstated and used the 400-metre range. However, the Inspector of Rifle Ranges refused to grant permission to that club.

If anything is to be done on the sporting shooters' range, the OK has to be received from the Inspector of Rifle Ranges, who has to check all safety on every range throughout Queensland. He makes inspections of all ranges at least three times a year.

The member for Windsor (Mr Comben) said that the range was to be sold to the Housing Commission. That is not correct. The association has been negotiating with the Commonwealth Government for five years and I hope that, in the very near future, the State Government will take over that land and the QRA will be running that complex, with all its disciplines of shooting, just as efficiently as it has done in the past.

As he is the local member for the area, and vice-president of the organisation, the member for Wynnum (Mr Shaw) and any other interested honourable member would find a great deal of good would be served by looking at the Belmont complex as a whole before making uninformed statements to the press. Members of the Government and the Opposition also hold positions in the organisation. I find it hard to believe that such responsible people would associate themselves with any irresponsible body or organisation.

I simply wanted to make the point that the Queensland Rifle Association is controlled by the Inspector of Rifle Ranges.

(Time expired.)

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.58 a.m. (Wednesday).
