

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 1984

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

GOVERNMENT AIR WING**Return to Order**

The following paper was laid on the table—

Return to an Order made by the House on 28 August, on the motion of Mr Stephan, in relation to the operation of the Government Air Wing during the year 1 July 1983 to 30 June 1984, showing—

- (1) Total number of aircraft assigned to the Air Wing;
- (2) Total flying time;
- (3) Total number of passengers carried;
- (4) Names of all Ministers who travelled on any of the aircraft.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**Death of Hon. T. G. Newbery**

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.2 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“(1) That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Honourable Thomas Guy Newbery, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland and Minister of the Crown.

(2) That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the widow and family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.”

Thomas Guy Newbery was an honoured member of this House and a valued friend to many, not only in his former electorate of Mirani, but throughout the country.

Besides being a political colleague, Tom Newbery was a personal friend, a man I respected greatly.

To me he was a dear and trusted friend and I was deeply saddened by his passing. Our friendship goes back a long way, beyond the political arena. We were associated in business together in the early days. Throughout that association and through his political career I always found Tom to be a man one could rely on and trust.

There is a saying, “Good men lift up all those who live in their time.” Tom Newbery was such a man. Much of his life was devoted to the service of the community, and he gave his time unselfishly and in great volumes for the progress of the Sarina/Mackay region and later, as a Minister of the Crown, of Queensland as a whole.

He had many achievements but perhaps the most satisfying for him—and the most unheralded in the public sense—was his work in the Police portfolio. He took over the job at a most difficult time. Morale in the force was at an all-time low. There was almost universal dissatisfaction among the force with the then commissioner, and that was being reflected in work output and a high number of resignations of experienced officers.

As Minister he toured the State doing what he did best—meeting local residents and police and talking to them first-hand about their working conditions and problems

with the administration. He sought and received Cabinet approval for funds for housing and office improvements. He presided over a series of administrative changes, including the professional structuring of the police Public Relations Branch, all of which was soon reflected in a substantial lift in police morale, which reached its highest level for many years.

Intakes at the Police Academy doubled, resignations of senior officers decreased and the force built up to its full approved strength after being below strength for six of the previous seven years.

He moved on from that post with the force operating efficiently, working harder and achieving a crime clear-up rate among the highest in the western world.

Tom Newbery was born in Mackay on 23 March 1914, and was educated at the West Plane Creek, Laburnum Grove, Langdons Creek and Sarina State Schools, and at All Souls School at Charters Towers. He was a man of many talents and in his time was a motor agent and insurance inspector, sugar-cane-farmer, grazier, earth-mover and mine-owner.

Tom Newbery held several directorships, including one on the Plane Creek sugar-mill, where he was deputy chairman for 12 years and a member for 30 years, as well as being a member of the board of the Australian National Power Alcohol Distillery for 14 years. He was a member of the Queensland Sugar Cane Technologists Association for 11 years, a member of the Australian Sugar Producers Association and the Queensland Canegrowers Association for 29 years.

Tom was also a foundation member of the Mackay District Development Bureau and a member of the Mackay Club, the Sarina RSL and various bowling clubs. He was a member of the Sarina Shire Council for 28 years, its deputy chairman for nine years and chairman for 10 years, chairman of the Mackay Regional Electricity Board for 15 years and chairman of the Zelma Grasstree Goldmining Syndicate and other mineral leases in 1980.

He took an interest in politics and joined the Country Party as a Young Country Party member in 1931. He was the first Young Country Party member to enter politics, being elected to represent the seat of Mirani in a by-election on 15 May 1965.

Tom was in Parliament less than 10 years when he was appointed Minister for Tourism, Education and Cultural Activities on 23 December 1974. Then followed appointments as Minister for Tourism and Marine Services, Minister for Police and, finally, Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation. He was Leader of the House for three years and served on several Government party committees—local government and marine activities, works and housing, irrigation, primary industries and others.

Tom Newbery represented his electorate of Mirani with the dedication that we expected of him, and, even with the onerous duties of ministerial office, he still served his constituents to the full. Honourable members only have to look down the list of positions that he held and organisations to which he belonged to realise that he was not afraid of work and, in fact, revelled in it.

I would best describe Tom as a happy, considerate, caring person and a gentleman in every sense. His press secretary then is now my press secretary. It would be true to say that all his former staff and the very many people with whom Tom came in contact throughout his business, local government and political life had nothing but the highest regard for the way in which he treated others and the standards of conduct that he set for himself.

Tom Newbery served a sound apprenticeship in preparation for his service to this House and to the people of Queensland.

When he was elevated to Cabinet rank, he continued with his community service, while carrying out his ministerial duties with the same dedication that he had shown over previous years.

He had the trust of all, and I am sure that it can be truly said that he was a friend to all, no matter which side of the political fence they were on.

To his widow, Jessie, his three children, and to the rest of the family, I offer my personal sympathy, and I am sure that all members of the House will join with me in extending sincere condolences.

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (11.9 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer to express sympathy to the family of the late Thomas Guy Newbery.

Tom Newbery was elected to Parliament in May 1965 in the by-election for the seat of Mirani left vacant by the death of the Honourable Ernest Evans.

As has been the case with so many members of this House, his move into politics came as a natural extension of his service to local government and to the community. As the Premier and Treasurer has said, he was a member of the Sarina Shire Council for 28 years. Of this period, he spent a total of 19 years as chairman or deputy chairman. He was a director of the Plane Creek sugar-mill, deputy chairman for 12 years and a member for more than 30 years.

He was also a director of the Australian National Power Alcohol Distillery for 14 years, a member of the Queensland Sugar Cane Technologists Association for 11 years and a member of both the Australian Sugar Producers Association and Queensland Canegrowers Association for more than three decades. Community service was inbuilt in Tom Newbery.

Tom was young when his father died trying to save a drowning swimmer in Louisa Creek.

A proud north Queenslander, his desire to see north Queensland achieve its full potential led him into party politics as a teenager. He joined the Country Party in 1931 and was the first Young Country Party member to enter State politics. Tom Newbery brought to Parliament a wealth of knowledge gained as a cane-grower, earth-mover and mine-owner, and, through his involvement with local government and community organisations, he was always concerned with ensuring that the needs of the north were recognised.

In his maiden speech, Tom extolled the contribution of the Mirani electorate in particular and north Queensland generally to the economy of this State. At the same time, he gave notice that he would ensure that the needs of the rural sector for water, electricity, better roads, secondary schools and Government services were recognised and met.

In the 15 years that he spent as a hard-working Minister and parliamentarian, he contributed significantly to the deliberate and planned development that is the hallmark of this State. He gained the trust of everyone with whom he had dealings in his five years in State Cabinet, initially as Minister for Tourism, Education and Cultural Activities and later as Minister for Tourism and Marine Services, as Minister for Police and as Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation.

Tom Newbery will be missed by the many friends that he made in Parliament and in the community. I join with the Premier and Treasurer in extending my condolences to his widow Jessie and other members of his family.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (11.12 a.m.): The Opposition supports the motion of condolence moved by the Premier and Treasurer.

When I first entered Parliament in 1977, I became the shadow Minister for the Ministry of Culture, National Parks and Recreation. At that time, Tom Newbery was the Minister responsible for that portfolio. To his credit, I found him to be a Minister who would willingly co-operate in matters relating to the functions of Parliament. I, like many others, found Tom Newbery to be a very affable person.

The Premier has outlined many of the activities with which Tom Newbery was associated during his lifetime. He was involved in community affairs to a significant extent through his participation in local government, as a member of Parliament and subsequently as a Minister, and through his involvement in business and the many organisations with which he was associated.

As parliamentarians come to learn, time spent away from the home puts pressure on family life, and responsibilities in the Parliament and the electorate are generally shared by family members. For that reason, we in this place can fully understand the impact on a family of a loss such as the death of Tom Newbery.

To Mrs Newbery and family members, the Opposition extends its very sincere sympathy.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (11.14 a.m.): Members of the Liberal Party wish to be associated with the sentiments expressed by previous speakers in this motion of condolence.

Thomas Newbery was very well known to me, both personally and officially. In the 1965 by-election, I had the pleasure and honour of campaigning with him, and I was delighted to be associated with him.

Tom Newbery had a very long and distinguished career in local government. He was always very involved with matters concerning the geographic location of his electorate.

I came to know Tom Newbery extremely well when the Goonyella-Hay Point railway line was built through his electorate. He took up the interests of the people in his electorate who were affected by that railway line, and I seemed to visit his electorate nearly every month to sort out some of the problems that arise when the community feels the impact of such a huge undertaking. Because of the many representations that he made on behalf of his constituents, it became apparent to me that he was not doing so as a formality but because he was involved with the concerns and rights of his constituents.

As a result of the numerous representations that he made on their behalf, many people who, in the normal course of officialdom, might have been overlooked received satisfaction. He made very genuine efforts on behalf of his constituents.

As a Minister, Tom Newbery was very cordial and always listened to other people's problems with as much energy and enthusiasm as he showed as a private member working on behalf of his constituents. He had a personality that other members of Cabinet enjoyed; it was a delight to be with him. He will be missed a great deal. On behalf of the Liberal Party, I extend sincere sympathy to his family.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (11.16 a.m.): I support the motion of condolence relative to Tom Newbery. To his wife and children, I express my deepest sympathy. I have known them very closely for many years. I knew Tom Newbery as a friend for almost as long as the Premier and Treasurer knew him—and that was a very long time. As well as being a personal friend, he was a political associate of mine. For many years I was a supporter of his in our area.

I knew Tom as a very hard worker. Not many people know that Tom was one of the gun cane-cutters in our area. He pioneered his area and built up his farm. Very early in life he lost his father, and by sheer hard work and the strength of his own two hands he built up his farm. Anyone who visits it today will see a show-place.

Earlier speakers have mentioned what Tom achieved during his life. He was a director of the Plane Creek sugar-mill and chairman of the Sarina Shire Council. However, perhaps he was known more for the work that he did as a member of the Mackay Regional Electricity Board. During his term of office, electricity was extended into country areas in the Mackay region. I lived well out in the country, and I recall his coming to the local hall one night and chairing a meeting that was called to discuss electricity.

Thanks to his efforts, electricity was extended into my area. Tom certainly left his mark in the area.

As to Tom Newbery the man—the night before last, when his family telephoned me to tell me of his passing, I told many honourable members and Ministers of his death. I can say that, without exception, honourable members held Tom Newbery in high regard. He was a gentleman to everyone. He had a great feeling for his fellowman and a good deal of compassion. He did his utmost to serve all people, no matter what their political affiliations were. I know that in my area he was held in high esteem and his loss will be a cause for great sadness.

I saw Tom Newbery on many occasions during his recent illness, but the one occasion that struck me was when, approximately three weeks ago, I called upon him and found him sitting at the doorway of his home, looking over his farm. Anyone who has visited the farm will know that beyond the front of his farm lie rolling hills. Just before I visited him some rain had fallen, and the whole area presented a lovely picture. Tom could not get up off the chair, but his wife and two grandsons were with him. I think that at that time Tom knew what was in store for him. He said to me, “Jimmy, I am a very lucky man.” A few minutes earlier, the Premier and Treasurer had telephoned him, and that gave Tom a tremendous boost. Tom went on to say, “Everyone knows me as ‘Tinny’ Tom. See those hills out there. Last week I put \$10,000 worth of fertiliser on that land, and that very night we got 3 inches of rain.” He added, “When you go back down to Parliament House, will you tell the many friends that I have down there that I am thinking of them and looking forward to the time when I will be back down there with them?” As was typical of Tom, he thought of everyone else.

I could pay no greater tribute to Tom Newbery than to say that both this place and the Sarina area are better for having known Tom Newbery and for having had him work and live there. I extend my sympathy to his family.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr ROW (Hinchinbrook) (11.19 a.m.): I add my condolences and those of my family to those that have been expressed by earlier speakers to the widow and family of the late Tom Newbery. Like many other honourable members, I was closely associated with Tom Newbery both inside and outside Parliament. He and I shared many common interests, but our particular interest lay in the sugar industry. I always found him to be an extraordinarily pleasant person, good company and a sincere friend. In common with others in this Chamber, I will miss him very much.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Proposed Legislation Controlling Videotape Industry

Hon. P. R. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon—Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts) (11.20 a.m.), by leave: Mr Speaker, I wish to correct a newspaper item in today’s “Daily Sun” which claims that police will have “New powers to search private homes for unapproved video tapes under proposed Queensland Government laws to control the video industry”. This gives the impression that police will be able to enter private homes to look for any sort of videotape banned under the proposed legislation.

In fact, police already have such powers and the Bill limits—I stress the word “limits”—rather than widens the power of entry. Police action in a private home will be limited to what have been termed “video nasties”, which even the Labor Federal Government and Labor States, which are soft on pornography, cannot stomach. They depict pornography involving children, bestiality, incitement to acts of terrorism or incitement to the misuse of drugs. Even in those cases a warrant will have to be issued by a magistrate. The import of those videotapes will be banned, and those already circulating in Australia will be refused classification and therefore also will be banned

throughout Australia. I am certain that not even members opposite are willing to stand up and say that they approve of anyone having such videotapes in their possession and that police should not take action in regard to such material.

Members will recall the case of Clarence Osborne, a former employee of this Assembly who, after committing suicide, was found to have a houseful of pornographic photographs and material involving young boys. Osborne also was a member of a world-wide organisation circulating pornographic material, and members will recall that only last month the University of Queensland had to take action against a conference involving persons advocating sex with children.

I also reiterate that the Queensland Government will not agree to attempts by the Federal Labor Government and the Labor States to make pornography legal and acceptable by introducing an ER classification. The Queensland Government will ban the sale, hire or public exhibition of X-rated videotapes and will retain the right to review R-rated videotapes to make sure that the pornographers operating in New South Wales and Victoria do not slip pornography through in disguise.

The legislation will prohibit the distribution, exhibition or retail sale of material refused classification, of X-rated videos or videotapes prohibited by the Film and Video Board of Review.

The legislation does not attempt to control mail-order video——

Mr Underwood interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Ipswich West.

Mr McKECHNIE: For the benefit of other members who want to listen, I repeat——

Mr Underwood interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I give the member for Ipswich West a second warning.

Mr McKECHNIE: The legislation does not attempt to control mail-order videotapes, because that is a Federal matter; nor does it make any attempt to prohibit viewing of videotapes obtained in such a manner in the privacy of one's own home, provided that no attempt is made to charge any form of admission fee.

Mr Speaker, to make it crystal clear, I point out that police, provided that they have a warrant from a magistrate, will be able to enter a home to search for material that has been refused classification by the Commonwealth censor; that is, only video nasties. They will not have power to enter a home where any other sort of video material is being shown, provided that such showing is entirely private and that no admission fee of any kind is being charged. The legislation aims to protect our young people against exploitation until they are old enough to make their own judgments and to give the video industry guide-lines as to what can or cannot be stocked.

I repeat my challenge to Labor members to stand up and join me in demanding that the Federal Labor Government prohibit the import of all pornography. It may like giving the mafia a new and lucrative market in Australia and seeing the pornographers join the drug-peddlars and the criminals in exploiting our young people, but I and the Queensland Government never will.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I accept the Minister's challenge and I move——

“That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as to allow the Minister to table the Bill here and now.”

Government Members: Out, out!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Ipswich West under Standing Order No. 123A. That is his final warning.

Mr Underwood: I have moved a motion.

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen: Out!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the honourable member for Ipswich West under Standing Order No. 123A. He will leave the Chamber. That is his second warning under Standing Order No. 123A. He will not rise in defiance of my order. Every time that that happens, I will be as hard as I can on members on that side of the House—on either side of the House, for that matter.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I assure the member for Ipswich West that, if he does not leave the House, he will be in strife.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I rise to a point of order. I was not warned.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will name the member for Ipswich West if he does not leave the House immediately.

Mr Goss: All he did was move a motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Underwood: I am going, but I wasn't warned.

Whereupon the honourable member for Ipswich West withdrew from the Chamber.

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, before you asked the member for Ipswich West to leave the Chamber, he moved a motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The House has my decision.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (11.28 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday in the House the Minister for Education blatantly misquoted me and attacked me personally over my statements about the ban on children meeting the Prime Minister when he visited Bundaberg.

The Minister told a blatant untruth. He quoted me as saying—

“The Government uses children in a political manner by bringing them into Parliament.”

I did not make that statement. It is only a figment of the Minister's imagination. I challenge the Minister to table that statement which he attributed to me, or to withdraw that allegation.

The Minister clearly distorted the facts by suggesting that I said that children must be taken out of school to see the Prime Minister. What I said was as follows—

“The freedom of choice was given to the schoolchildren and their parents by the school principal to see their Prime Minister. That freedom was denied to them by the Minister.”

Nowhere did I say that the children must see the Prime Minister.

The Minister said that schoolchildren have not been used in political meetings by the National Party. I refer to the editorial in the “News-Mail” of 29 October 1984—

“He (the Minister) will find examples in which the State Government paid for a bus in an election campaign to transport Aboriginal and Islander people under its administration, including school-children, to a hall to hear political speeches—but only those of National Party figures.”

The Minister for Education has blatantly misrepresented what I said about the matter. The allegations that he made are shown to be total fabrications of his own petty mind and are blatantly untrue.

The Minister's statements should be treated by the public with utter contempt and mistrust. As Peter Trundle wrote in "The Courier-Mail" of 25 July 1984, the Minister, as the Peter Pan of politics, is not trusted by some of his Cabinet colleagues. The Minister for Education has clearly been caught with his pants down on the issue.

PETITION

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petition—

Safety of Pedestrian Crossing, Stafford Road and Clifford Street, Stafford

From Mr Gygar (210 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take the necessary action to ensure that the pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Stafford Road and Clifford Street, Stafford, be made safe.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice were answered as follows—

1. Braking Standards, Trucks and Trailers

Ms WARNER asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Does the report of the national road freight industry recommend that trucks and trailers which comply with the latest braking standards as defined in the Australian Design Rules be limited to a speed of 100 km/h outside built-up areas?

(2) Does it also recommend that those trucks that do not comply with the new brake standards be limited to a maximum speed of 80 km/h and be required to display a readily identifiable plate to signify the lower speed limit, that these speed limits be vigorously enforced and that the current practice of unwritten tolerance in relation to speeding come to an end?

(3) What is the speed limit set for trucks in Queensland?

Answer—

(1 to 3) The honourable member mentions the national road freight industry. I assume she means the National Road Freight Industry Inquiry set up by the Federal Labor Government, whose report was issued in September.

The report recommends a speed limit of 100 km/h outside built-up areas for vehicles that comply with the latest Australian Design Rule braking standards, and a limit of 80 km/h for those which do not. It also recommends that vehicles which do not meet the ADR braking standards should display a plate signifying the lower speed limit. These recommendations will now be discussed by the various State Government authorities.

The report recommends that these recommendations be enforced if they are adopted.

The speed for trucks in Queensland is now 90 km/h for articulated trucks and 100 km/h for other trucks outside built-up areas, unless traffic signs indicate that a lower speed limit applies.

I advise the honourable member that the National Road Freight Industry Inquiry report contains 98 separate recommendations. It is unlikely that the Government will agree to all of those recommendations. The recommendations in the report are now being examined by the Commissioner for Transport to assess their relevance to Queensland. The recommendations will also be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the

Australian Transport Advisory Council. The Government's views will, in due course, be forwarded to the Federal Government.

The honourable member can be assured that the recommendations that are in the best interests of the Queensland public will be acted upon.

2. Speeding by Trucks

Ms WARNER asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police—

With reference to my question on 31 October (No. 3) to the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing and his answer thereto—

Does Queensland allow unwritten tolerance in relation to speeding by trucks?

Answer—

No. The traffic regulations set out the speed restrictions and permissible speed-indication variations relating to speedometer equipment.

3. St George—Hebel Road

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

With reference to the widespread damage sustained to the road system in south-west Queensland due to the prolonged wet weather and the resultant hold-up of new works—

What are his department's intentions with regard to the ongoing commitment for the St George-Dirranbandi-Hebel-New South Wales border road-sealing program?

Answer—

It is expected that the recent widespread rain in many areas of the south west will cause some disruption to construction works. However, it is not expected that the effect on the overall works program will be significant. The department's intention is to proceed with construction and sealing according to the program outlined previously.

I am aware of the concerns recently expressed by the honourable member and the Balonne Shire Council, and I have arranged for the Assistant Commissioner (South West), to discuss these with the council.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Stamp Duty on Superannuation Payments

Mr WARBURTON: In asking a question of the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to the tax problems that confront Queenslanders who wish to use their superannuation entitlements or other retirement funds to buy an annuity.

Mr ALISON: What problems?

Mr WARBURTON: If the honourable member will listen, I will tell him.

The Premier would be aware that stamp duties of 2.5 per cent and 3.5 per cent are payable in Queensland, depending on the lump sum amount, just as he is probably aware that New South Wales and Victoria have no such stamp duty.

Mr GUNN interjected.

Mr WARBURTON: Does the Deputy Premier wish to answer?

As one financial writer recently said—

“For my money, I would be heading for the border if I wanted an annuity.”

As this stamp duty tax imposed by the Government is yet another example of an iniquitous tax, especially on those who are in the process of retiring, I now ask the Premier: Will any legislative action be taken this year to have that stamp duty removed?

Mr Gunn interjected.

Mr WARBURTON: Mr Speaker, are you going to throw him out, too?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Leader of the Opposition has highlighted the fact that the Federal Government has imposed a 30 per cent tax on lump sum superannuation benefits. Contrary to the action taken by the honourable member's colleagues in Canberra, this week the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer will introduce legislation to fix that problem.

Mr Warburton: This week?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes, this week. I wish the honourable member could persuade the Commonwealth Government to drop that 30 per cent tax on superannuation.

Pay-roll Tax Avoidance

Mr WARBURTON: My second question is also directed to the Premier and Treasurer. I refer the Premier to the recent Brisbane hearings of the Commonwealth Grants Commission at which the commission raised the matter of the apparent substantial avoidance of pay-roll tax in Queensland. As estimates of the level of pay-roll tax avoidance reveal it could be as high as \$60m a year, and as, at the time, Treasury officials could not explain the shortfall, I ask: Has the State Government yet responded to the Commonwealth Grants Commission's request to supply information as to why that tax avoidance exists? What action has the Government taken to investigate and to counter pay-roll tax avoidance in Queensland?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: No doubt there is some avoidance on occasions, as there is with all taxes in all States. There is no argument about that.

I certainly am not aware of the request to which the honourable member referred. It has not been drawn to my attention. However, I cannot, and will not, accept that there is avoidance of the magnitude suggested. That is supposition. The Under Secretary of the Treasury is a pretty keen operator in looking after the State's tax resources. He has not drawn pay-roll tax avoidance to my attention as being a problem. I do not believe that the picture is as bad as the honourable member is trying to paint it.

I thank the honourable member for giving me the opportunity to say something about the subject of pay-roll tax, particularly about the way in which the southern States rip off businesses through the imposition of that tax. The honourable member knows that Queensland has the highest exemption level in Australia, and it will be lifted very considerably again this year.

Mr Warburton: You promised to delete pay-roll tax altogether.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Year by year, Queensland is moving very rapidly towards that end. The honourable member's colleagues in other States are moving the other way and increasing pay-roll tax. The position in Queensland in relation to pay-roll tax attracts many industries to this State.

Superannuation Trust Funds

Mr NEAL: I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: Can he inform the House of the present position relative to the Superannuation Trust Funds (Protection of Employee Entitlements) Act? Have the Minister's discussions with the trade unions

and employer groups led to an agreement to establish a superannuation scheme for the building industry in Queensland in accordance with the Queensland Act? Does that mean that employees in the Queensland building industry will now receive greater protection than building industry employees in any other State? Does the Minister agree that that agreement justifies the decision of the Queensland Government to act in the interests of Queensland employees by introducing the Superannuation Trust Funds (Protection of Employee Entitlements) Act last week?

Mr HARPER: The present position relative to the Superannuation Trust Funds (Protection of Employee Entitlements) Act is that I envisage that the Governor in Council will proclaim the Act at midday, when Executive Council meets. I also expect that a minute will be issued appointing the Registrar of Commercial Acts as the Registrar of Superannuation Trust Deeds and the putting in place of regulations in regard to the scheme.

Yes, I have had discussions with the trade unions and employer groups. In fact, only an hour ago I was in discussion with representatives of those groups, including legal advisers to and representatives of Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Ltd. I expect that a building union superannuation scheme will be presented to the Registrar of Superannuation Trust Deeds later today. He already has a draft proposal. I have given instructions that every facility is to be made available towards assisting the building unions to put in place by tomorrow evening the superannuation scheme that they desire. I have made my officers available, even to the extent of authorising them to stay away from the precincts of this House during the debate on the Estimates of the Justice Department today so that that move may be facilitated.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: I will take it easy.

Mr HARPER: I am sure that the honourable member will not take advantage of the situation because he has at heart the interests of the trade unions in respect of which he saw me last week.

It is rather interesting to note that the press, which a week ago was declaring that there would be industrial chaos and that all hell would break loose, has now seen fit virtually to disregard the achievement of this Government and the fact that the building unions have reacted responsibly and taken a responsible attitude in this area. It is noticeable that the media last night and this morning virtually disregarded both of those facts. Perhaps those sections of the media do not like eating their own words.

The honourable member for Balonne asked whether employees in the Queensland building industry would now receive greater protection than building workers in any other State. I say without equivocation, "Yes". I draw to the attention of the House some of the provisions in the trust deed relating to the Building Unions Superannuation Scheme that have not been aired publicly and about which I am sure the workers who are intended to be covered by that scheme would have as much concern as the Government. I read from part of a clause in the trust deed headed "Investment"—

"So much of the moneys of the Fund as is not directly required for any other purpose shall as soon as practicable be invested as a common fund in or upon such investments or property of whatsoever nature and wheresoever and whether involving liability or not and whether producing income or not or upon such personal credit with or without security as the Trustee shall in its absolute discretion thinks fit . . ."

That type of thing is not acceptable to the Government, and it will be dealt with.

I am happy to report to the House that building workers in Queensland have responded in a responsible manner. Hopefully, a building unions superannuation scheme will be in place in this State by tomorrow evening, fully complying with the Act and in

terms of the resolution that was carried yesterday by an estimated 1 000 to 2 000 members of building unions at a meeting in Albert Park. I read from that resolution—

“The meeting instructs its officers to immediately take steps to register a superannuation scheme . . . Such a Scheme to comply with the Act introduced into the State Parliament of Queensland on Wednesday, 24th October, 1984.”

I agree with the suggestion of the honourable member, and, in answer to his question, I say that the agreement that has been reached and the protection that is now to be afforded to workers in the building unions in Queensland more than justifies the action taken by the Government last week.

Mr Warburton interjected.

Mr HARPER: The Leader of the Opposition may be interested to have drawn to his attention that, under the requirements of the Queensland Act, there is provision for an annuity or pension benefit and a lump-sum benefit, or both.

Fire Services

Mr NEAL: I ask the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services: Is the claim by the United Firefighters Union and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Officers Association that yesterday's fire at the Tower Mill Motel in Brisbane has exposed dangerous manpower and equipment shortages in the Metropolitan Fire Brigade correct? Is the statement by the Federal Administrative Services Minister (Mr Brown) that Queensland is out of step with the rest of Australia over its demands that the Commonwealth pay its way for fire services costs in the State also correct?

Mr TENNI: Mr Arthur Rogers of the United Firefighters Union and of course Mr Gary Hammond of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Officers Association have, once again, demonstrated their completely irresponsible attitude to the question of fire safety in Brisbane.

Although I have nothing but praise for the actions of the officers and firemen at the fire at the Tower Mill Motel yesterday, I am heartily sick of the gross distortion of the facts by both leaders of these unions, who are determined to drag the reputation of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade through the mud.

As a result of my own observations of yesterday's fire and from a report received this morning from the acting chief officer (Mr Cliff Berghofer), I am able to present some information that will be of interest to the House and to the people of this State. Six fire appliances—two pump units, a turntable ladder, a breathing apparatus tender and two salvage tenders—were directly involved in the fire-fighting operation. Two telescopic pump units and a hydraulic platform were on stand-by at the fire scene and a further three pump units were used to transport men to the scene. The units involved in the actual fire-fighting operation were from the Kemp Place and Roma Street fire stations, and back-up equipment came from the Annerley and Windsor fire stations.

Six senior officers, ten officers and 28 firemen were involved in the operation until the fire was brought under control. A further three officers and 14 firemen were called in after the fire was brought under control to relieve some fire-fighters and to assist in damping down operations.

Mr Rogers and Mr Hammond are indulging in their favourite pastime of scaremongering, claiming that the Metropolitan Fire Brigade could not have handled another major city fire. The total operational strength of the brigade is approximately 700 men in Brisbane and, at any one time, approximately 150 officers and firemen are on duty at the brigade's 21 stations. According to the latest figures available from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board, the brigade has 44 different fire-fighting units, ranging from pump units to hydraulic platforms and turntable ladders. It is nonsense to suggest that equipment and men could not have been brought in from outlying stations and

that, if necessary, additional off-duty men could not have been called in had another fire occurred.

Every property-owner in Brisbane should question when Mr Rogers and Mr Hammond will start to tell the truth about the high standard of fire protection provided in Brisbane.

The Federal Minister for Administrative Services (Mr John Brown) has said that, because the Queensland Government will charge for all fires that occur on Commonwealth property in Queensland, the Commonwealth Government will not subscribe to fire services to protect its houses and properties. In a few weeks' time I will be able to tell the House how many thousands of pieces of land and buildings the Commonwealth owns in this State. Mr Brown has said that, because many fires do not occur on Commonwealth property, it does not matter that the Commonwealth does not subscribe. What it means is that the Federal Government will be parasites on the people of this State. It will only pay when called upon to put a fire out on a Commonwealth property. In other words, the Federal Government is saying that the little home-owners of this State can pay to keep fire services available in case a fire occurs on Commonwealth property. That is an absolute disgrace. I hope that, on 1 December, the people of Queensland are aware of the attitude of the Federal Government. Mr Brown is playing politics at the expense of the little home-owners and the pensioners of this State.

Enrolment of Year 11 and Year 12 Students at Capalaba State High School

Mr FITZGERALD: In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer to the fact that this morning, at a high school in my electorate, I became aware of a rumour to the effect that the Capalaba State High School had been instructed not to enrol students for Years 11 and 12 in 1985. I now ask: Did his office issue such an instruction, or is it only a rumour?

Mr POWELL: Until the honourable member for Lockyer drew my attention to the matter this morning, I was not aware that such a rumour was abroad. On investigating the matter, I found that a scurrilous twirp is busily trying to denigrate the Education Department as much as possible.

Mr Comben: Could that be the local member?

Mr POWELL: It is obvious that the honourable member for Windsor wishes to identify with a person cast in that mould.

There is absolutely no truth in the rumour that instructions had been given to the principal of the Capalaba State High School to the effect that he is not to enrol students in Years 11 and 12 next year. As far as I know, the Capalaba High School will be enrolling students in Years 8 to 12, as it has done in the past.

I see no reason why such a practice should stop.

Commonwealth Inspection of Tertiary Institutions

Mr FITZGERALD: I ask the Minister for Education—

(1) Is he aware that the Commonwealth Government has approved a proposal by its Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission to institute a system of inspection of tertiary education institutions in the States, under the guise of so-called major discipline reviews?

(2) Does the Commonwealth Government have the necessary constitutional power to conduct such inspections?

(3) What is the attitude of the Queensland Government to this dramatic departure from tradition?

Mr POWELL: This question touches on a matter of extreme importance. In answer to the specific questions asked by the honourable member—

(1) Volume 2 of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission Report for the 1985-87 triennium, which was published in September this year, records that the Commonwealth Government has endorsed the commission's proposal to review major discipline areas as a means of avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort and increasing the efficiency of tertiary education. I understand that a three-man review team of the operation of faculties of law in universities is being assembled and that it will be required to make explicit recommendations on such matters as the nature and quality of courses, community requirements for graduates, standards of teaching and research, effectiveness of resource utilisation and the extent of unnecessary duplication. In view of these wide-ranging terms of reference, the term "inspection" seems to describe accurately the process being envisaged.

(2) The Commonwealth Government has absolutely no constitutional authority in education. Since 1974, it has assumed responsibility for funding university and advanced education in accordance with section 96 of the Constitution. In the Commonwealth States Grants (Tertiary Education Assistance) Acts, certain obligations are imposed upon the States as a condition of the section 96 grants to the States for university and advanced education purposes. Subjecting State institutions to inspection by externally appointed review teams is not a condition of such legislation.

(3) Let me stress at the outset that there has been absolutely no consultation by the Commonwealth with the States on this matter. Although sympathetic to the wishes of the Commonwealth authorities for greater public accountability on the part of tertiary education institutions, I am opposed to the manner in which the Commonwealth is attempting to achieve this objective. Rather than attempt to impose a system of inspection on universities and colleges by externally appointed teams, I have been endeavouring to encourage the Queensland tertiary education institutions themselves to accept responsibility for greater public accountability. An example will make my approach clear.

Convinced that too little is known of the good work which is done in Queensland tertiary education institutions in the area of technological innovation, in August this year I convened a meeting of representatives at Parliament House.

At this meeting I suggested that tertiary education in Queensland might usefully co-operate in documenting some examples of technological innovation in tertiary education in Queensland. Such a publication could bring to the attention of industry, in a concrete way, examples of technological innovations already featured in tertiary education in this State. It could assist materially in indicating to industry something of the capability of tertiary education in this regard and facilitating closer working relationships between industry and tertiary education.

A working party of tertiary education representatives is at present working on such a publication and I am hopeful of its early publication. Such a publication will materially contribute to improved accountability to the tax-paying public by Queensland tertiary education. It will have been achieved by the voluntary acceptance by the institutions of the responsibility for improving their accountability. It will have been achieved without the heavy-handed imposition of an externally appointed inspection team to achieve the outcome. It is my sincere wish that Queensland tertiary education can continue to improve its public accountability in such a voluntary and co-operative fashion without the need for intervention from Canberra.

Mr HAMILL having asked a question without notice—

Mr McKECHNIE: First of all, I point out that I am quite serious when I say that I had great difficulty in listening to the honourable member. He was not intelligible.

Mr HAMILL: Mr Speaker, I would be pleased to put the question on notice so that the Minister might be able to study it more closely.

Mr McKECHNIE: I think that might be better, because I could not understand what the honourable member said.

Mr HAMILL: I do so accordingly.

Mr Justice Murphy

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I ask the Minister for Transport: Has he seen reports in the press of the report of the Senate inquiry that indicates that there is some real basis for concern about the conduct of Mr Justice Murphy? Does he see that as a vindication of his actions in raising this matter publicly in this Parliament and so ensuring the conduct of such an inquiry?

Mr LANE: I have seen reports in the press on the report that was delivered by the Senate committee of inquiry into the conduct of Mr Justice Murphy of the High Court. He was a Labor senator. I must say how pleased I am that there are still people in this nation with enough intestinal fortitude and enough personal integrity to stand up and be counted on these matters. That does not exclude Senator Tate, the ALP senator for Tasmania, who was courageous enough to come out from within the Labor movement and state his position on that matter and to attach his name to that of Senator Austin Lewis of Victoria and Senator Janine Haines, the Democrat senator from South Australia, all of whom showed great courage and fortitude in their recommendations and findings in the report.

I would not wish this occasion to pass without acknowledging the great personal courage of stipendiary magistrate Brieze of New South Wales, who stood up against all sorts of ridicule, pressure and intimidation to remain silent on this matter and came out against that very influential High Court judge and very influential member of the Labor movement in Australia.

I can only say that my actions in raising Mr Justice Murphy's name in this place and in raising the issue to clear the good name of the High Court of Australia has been vindicated on this occasion by the Senate inquiry.

At 12 noon,

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY

Resumption of Committee—Estimates—Ninth and Tenth Allotted Days

Estimates-in-Chief, 1984-85

Justice and Attorney-General

Chief Office—Department of Justice

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.1 p.m.): I move—

“That \$5,646,000 be granted for ‘Department of Justice—Chief Office’.”

The law is the corner-stone of democracy, and the administration of justice touches the lives of every person in the community. It is of fundamental importance that the rights of each individual in the State are maintained, both by laws which appropriately and adequately protect those rights, and by ensuring that justice is administered with a balance which includes compassion and understanding for the aspirations and desires of the community.

My department administers approximately 200 statutes, which are under constant review to ensure that the law reflects current community interests and standards and protects the public from those individuals who would prey upon the less fortunate among

us. At the same time, care must be exercised to maintain the delicate balance between the necessity to regulate and the need to preserve the freedom of the individual.

It is my policy that, whenever possible, the law should be explained in terms able to be understood by the average citizen. The aim is to create an awareness of those laws which relate to common everyday situations.

Within this year's Budget allocation, \$280,000 has been set aside for the continuing reprint of all Queensland statutes in loose pamphlet form. The sum represents a 65 per cent increase on funds allocated for this purpose in 1983-84. It is anticipated that all Acts of public utility will be reprinted by the new year. I consider that the completion of the reprint is a high-priority task that will ensure that up-to-date copies of Queensland Acts are readily available to the public and the legal profession.

The rapid development of this State, together with an ever-increasing population, has created new challenges for the department. The Justice Department covers a very extensive area dealing with individuals from their birth and through their business and recreational interests. Apart from the Chief Office, my department comprises a number of subdepartments as well as the courts.

Growth and demand for services have encouraged the use of automatic data processing. Most areas of my department are now using computer systems in varying degrees. At present, large computer systems are being developed for use in the Titles Office, the courts and the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs. These systems, when fully implemented, will assist in controlling the escalating cost of administering the department and will ensure that the best service that modern technology can provide will be available in Queensland.

Minicomputers have been installed in the Licensing Commission, the offices of the Registrar of Auctioneers and Agents and the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs and also the courts. The speed at which such equipment can retrieve and reproduce information is well known and it is not difficult to imagine how this equipment is being used to streamline operations for the benefit of the community.

I propose to review the structure of the department in order that honourable members may gain an appreciation of its operations throughout the State. A policy of decentralisation is aimed at ensuring that the needs of the community throughout Queensland are met, either through the magistrates courts service or through branch offices of subdepartments. The major functions of the Chief Office of my department are to advise me, and thereby the Government, on a wide variety of matters, including legislation, and to accept responsibility for overall control and administration.

Early this year, I established a Legislation and Policy Branch within Chief Office. Presently staffed by three officers but soon to be expanded to five, the branch is responsible for the co-ordination and development of legislative proposals and for overseeing the legislative implementation of these proposals.

Research is undertaken into areas of the law that may be amended, with particular emphasis being given to policy considerations. Policy advice is also formulated on matters of sensitivity, particularly in relation to inter-Governmental relations and the many ministerial committees upon which I serve. The branch works in close consultation with the Constitution and Legislation Branch of the Solicitor-General's Office in order to ensure that the policies of the Government are properly carried into effect.

During the term of the present Parliament, a number of Bills introduced by me have become law, and many more are under preparation. Some of these will be discussed during my comments on the subdepartment or branch that administers them. Some of the more significant amendments include that to section 49 of the Building Units and Group Titles Act, which was amended to ensure that the original intention of this Assembly in protecting purchasers of lots or proposed lots was maintained while ensuring that, in the interests of continued development, the rights of developers were also protected adequately.

Amendments also were passed to the Judges' Pensions Act to improve the pension entitlements of judges, towards ensuring that the high standard of the judiciary in this State is maintained.

Another amendment ensured that guide dogs used for the purpose of assisting hearing-disabled persons are permitted, under the Guide Dogs Act, to accompany their owners in public places and on public transport.

Assessment procedures for determining criminal injury compensation have been amended and the maximum level of compensation has been increased by more than 800 per cent.

Provision has been made for the establishment of a Privacy Committee for this State, and arrangements are presently being made to enable appointment of the committee so that it may begin its work.

Sections of the Criminal Code have been amended and a new section inserted to ensure provision for offences of a terrorist nature.

I am determined that every effort will be made to review the practices and policies of all areas of the department and its subdepartments for the purpose of maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of the department and, at the same time, providing a better service at reduced costs. The Management Services Branch of Chief Office has been assigned the special task of carrying out intensive studies of the procedures and methods used within the department. The branch operates under a program management structure and administers two programs—systems development, and personnel development. Systems development incorporates the assessment and introduction of equipment ranging from basic office essentials through to microprocessors, systems review and special projects including EDP feasibility studies. Personnel development incorporates staff-training and development, establishment matters such as requests for additional staff, position creations and reclassifications, accommodation and miscellaneous matters. Recently, officers of the branch co-ordinated the compilation of a strategic plan of computing for the whole of the department, which has been submitted to the co-ordinating committee.

Major systems and staffing reviews have been undertaken by the branch since 1981 in areas of the Registrar-General's Office, the State Electoral Office, the Licensing Commission, the Magistrates Courts Office, the Public Defender's Office and the Acts Section and Justices of the Peace Section of Chief Office.

Productivity reviews aimed at establishing staffing levels, introducing management controls to assist the supervision of work flows and identifying problem areas for future detailed study, have been carried out in the Court Reporting Bureau as well as in the Building Units and Group Titles Division, the Small Claims Tribunal, the Art Unions Section, and the Staff and Records Sections.

Many departmental officers undertake studies, from technical through to post-graduate levels. The Study and Research Assistance Scheme currently provides assistance to 448 departmental officers.

Among the 201 Acts which I administer is the Art Unions and Amusements Act 1976-1984. More than 13 500 organisations are registered as approved associations under this legislation for the purpose of conducting minor art unions in which the gross proceeds are less than \$500.

Fees paid for permits and registrations granted during the year ended 31st July 1984 amounted to \$3,292,674—an increase of \$214,960 on the previous 12 months. During that 12 month period, permits were issued for 4 304 major art unions, comprising bingo (3 018), single art unions (992), sweeps (204), multiple-drawing art unions (86) and art unions in a newspaper (4).

It may interest honourable members to recall some of the actions taken under that Act during the last year. A recent investigation into the conduct of bingo at Southside

Bingo Club, Palmdale Shopping Centre, led to the licence held by the then manager being not renewed. Upon my initiative, the clubs concerned formed an incorporated association to assume formal control over the operations to the exclusion of the former manager—I might add, for the overall benefit, financial and otherwise, of the clubs concerned.

In 1983, a regulation was made to enable the drawing of art unions conducted in contravention of the Act to be stopped and moneys collected to be refunded. Those provisions have been used in three instances recently. A Caloundra builder who was unable to sell three beachfront units had attempted to dispose of the units by offering them as a prize in an illegal art union. An unlawful art union was also conducted by the promoter of Treasureland Markets in Fortitude Valley and was brought to a conclusion before a draw by using the powers of that regulation.

The licensee of the Queensport Hotel at Hemmant was conducting an unlawful art union offering an overseas trip to ticket-holders in a 250 club. The provisions of regulation 37A were used to bring that unlawful art union to a conclusion.

The conditions under which lucky envelopes may be conducted by approved associations have been amended to restrict the price of tickets to 40c, to authorise the use of electronic lucky envelope dispensing machines, and generally to improve supervision of this form of fund-raising so as to ensure that the proceeds are directed to the organisation holding the permit.

The Associations Incorporation Section within my department administers the Associations Incorporation Act 1981, which was introduced to enable any association (including a society, institution or body) that is formed or carried on for any lawful object or purpose, but not for pecuniary gain to its members, to apply for incorporation in a simple and inexpensive manner. Such associations include sporting, educational, patriotic and pastime bodies. Increasingly, this Act is being used to advantage by the associations it was intended to benefit. At 31 July 1984, 434 associations had been incorporated under the Act.

During the past year, a number of major investigations have been conducted by the inspectorial staff of the Inspections and Investigations Section. Those investigations included assessing the operations of the Sunshine Association. As a result of the findings that that association was spending only a small percentage of the funds collected from the public on assisting terminally ill children, the sanction issued to the association, which authorised public appeals, was not renewed upon its expiry in March 1984.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: I thought you and I handled that well, actually.

Mr HARPER: I thank the honourable member.

General inspections of the operations of charitable and community purpose organisations registered under the Collections Act have been conducted in an effort to ensure that funds donated by the public are used effectively and efficiently.

Prosecution action has been taken against a person who was conducting unlawful appeals for support by falsely representing that collections of old clothing would assist the physically handicapped. The inspectors in the section are continuously on the lookout for such unlawful activities and, where sufficient evidence exists, appropriate action is taken, and will continue to be taken.

The justice of the peace section administers the Justices of the Peace Act and, at 31 October 1984, there were in excess of 40 000 justices in this State.

Mr Davis: And growing.

Mr HARPER: In the light of the obvious interest shown by Opposition members, it may be appropriate to indicate to the public of Queensland that, in assessing the eligibility of a person who is nominated for the office of justice of the peace, consideration

is given to the traffic offences that that person may have committed. That point is worthy of note. Of course, it is known to honourable members.

A training scheme to assist justices of the peace in the performance of their duties has been introduced through metropolitan and regional TAFE colleges.

My department was also instrumental in a correspondence course being developed for justices of the peace. This course gives all justices in this State, regardless of location, an opportunity to advance their knowledge of their responsibilities and duties.

Funds are being provided this financial year for the preparation and printing of a manual for use by justices of the peace. The manual will set out their duties and responsibilities, which include taking affidavits and sworn complaints, issuing summonses and warrants and witnessing signatures.

During the 1983-84 financial year, 31 claims for ex gratia payments of criminal injury compensation were approved for payment pursuant to the provisions of sections 663C and 663D of the Criminal Code. Those payments amounted to \$120,450.

On 1 July 1984, the maximum amount of compensation payable to victims of crime was increased. The upper limit is now set in accordance with the levels of compensation awarded under the Workers' Compensation Act. The maximum amount payable under that Act is presently \$44,130.

In Queensland, the unfortunate victims of criminal injuries will now benefit from the best scheme available in Australia today.

The research branch of Chief Office has continued to develop management information systems which will assist the department in the forward allocation of monetary and other resources.

A significant initiative by the research branch has been the development of an information base of population statistics for all magistrates and higher courts districts throughout Queensland. The research branch has also developed a number of court work-load information systems. This means that the determination of court infrastructure and other resource needs are based on a broad range of statistical information, including population trends, work-load trends and crime trends. This information should enable a quick response to emerging needs throughout the State.

Since the introduction on 3 November 1980 of the Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980, the facilities provided by the referee's office have been increasingly in demand. During the 1983-1984 financial year, some 5 670 inquiries were received from persons associated with or interested in the legislation, either through living in building units or group titles situations or through being associated with those forms of living either as managing agents or developers. An inquiry service is provided by the office as a means of assisting these people with any problem that they might be experiencing with the legislation.

During the same period, some 204 applications for orders from the referee were received. These applications for orders are made in order to settle disputes or complaints that might arise within building units or group titles parcels.

The next subdepartment to which I will refer is the State Electoral Office. This office has undergone significant change since 1981. On 1 August 1983, the Elections Act 1983 came into force. This Act provided for the appointment of a chief returning officer to be responsible for the conduct of elections throughout the State. The Act altered one of the qualifications for enrolment so that, to qualify for enrolment, a person must be an Australian citizen. Provision was also made for the Governor in Council to declare an electoral district to be a remote area, thus allowing electors in that district to register as general postal voters.

New computer systems based on the automatic allocation of electoral district and division codes have been introduced. Indexes of electors are now maintained on

microfiche records, eliminating the need to retain and maintain the old bulky and labour-intensive card index. The office has also been the subject of an organisational review resulting in the adoption of a strengthened and more effective management structure.

A State general election was held on 22 October 1983 and by-elections were held in May and August 1984.

A State-wide roll canvass was commenced on 1 August 1984, and continued for two months. A house-to-house canvass carried out by civilian canvassers was intended to ensure that every qualified elector is correctly enrolled and to ascertain those electors who have left the address shown on the roll or are otherwise not entitled to remain enrolled.

Steps are being taken to make identification cards available to 18-year-olds on a voluntary basis when they register on the State Electoral Roll. The cards will carry a photograph, full name and date of birth and are intended for use as proof of age in circumstances requiring such proof, such as being on licensed premises.

The State Electoral Office has recently vacated very cramped and inadequate accommodation in the old Treasury Building. Along with many other sections of my department, including the Solicitor-General's office, it is now located in suitable accommodation in Comalco House.

Another important subdepartment under my portfolio is the Licensing Commission. The internal systems of the Licensing Commission have been reviewed and new microcomputer-based accounting systems are currently being developed to replace manual systems. A feature of the equipment purchased is its capability of communicating with the State Government Computer Centre's main frame computer on which the commission's present licence-fee-assessing system is operated. This communication feature is also expected to provide future benefits in the exchange of information with other States in relation to fee evasion resulting from cross-border trade.

Additionally, staff adjustments will provide for more comprehensive policing of the provisions of the Liquor Act and much improved overall control over liquor sales and distribution.

The holding in Brisbane in 1984 of the thirteenth annual conference of Liquor Licensing Authorities of Australasia provided an opportunity for this State to share, with other authorities, essential information of common interest and to expand existing avenues of co-operation towards ensuring the collection of all licence fees through an exchange of information between States.

Grants are being made from the Liquor Act Trust Fund for the 1984-85 financial year as follows: The sum of \$188,212 to the Honourable the Minister for Education for the purposes of assisting in an educational program to discourage intemperance; \$200,113 to the Honourable Minister for Health for the purposes of assisting in a health program in relation to the problem of alcoholism; and \$194,875 to the Honourable the Minister for Transport for the purposes of maintaining a publicity program to emphasise the dangers in the consumption of liquor to road-users. The Honourable the Minister for Health is making part of his grant available to the Honourable the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs to maintain a program relating to alcoholism in industry.

At present, the Licensing Commission is housed in inadequate premises. However, in the first quarter of the new year, it is proposed that the commission will move into more adequate accommodation in MIM House.

The Registrar-General's Office is yet another subdepartment. Since 1 March 1856, the Registrar-General has been responsible for the compulsory registration, under the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act, of all births, deaths and marriages in Queensland. In addition to effecting these registrations, his responsibilities include the notations of registrations with respect to changes of name, deeds poll, divorces, registration

of adoptions and the supply of extracts or certified copies of registrations to eligible applicants. The Registrar-General also has responsibilities under the Commonwealth Marriage Act 1961 with respect to the registration of celebrants and ensuring that all legal requirements for a marriage are met.

The Registrar-General is assisted in carrying out the objects and purposes of the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act 1962-1982 by a staff of 54 in Brisbane and by 35 district registrars throughout Queensland.

With increasing public interest in genealogical research, microfiche sets of indexes of marriage and death records for the period 1856 to 1899 are now available. Informative publicity material covering genealogical research, civil marriage and birth registration has been produced in brochure form. At 31 December last, 4 529 554 registrations were held by the Registrar-General in Brisbane.

On 5 May 1982 legislation came into operation to allow the change of the registered christian names of a child before the child attains the age of 18 years and to extend the 1981 provisions for the change of surname of a child to that of the stepfather to apply also to an ex-nuptial or an adopted child.

All freehold land in Queensland comes under the provisions of the Real Property Act or the Registration of Deeds Act. Both Acts are administered by the Registrar of Titles through offices at Brisbane, Townsville and Rockhampton.

The expansion and development of this State are mirrored in the level of subdivisions and other dealings with freehold land. This year the Titles Office experienced an increase of 14.7 per cent in documents lodged for registration over the numbers received in the previous year.

It is appropriate for honourable members to give some consideration to the fact that an average lodgment of 1 499 documents per day was received throughout the State. At times honourable members tend to be critical of departments. Bearing in mind that such a volume of work is processed daily, I suggest there is some justification for occasional delays.

Documents lodged in the three offices during 1983-84 totalled 376 341. Moneys received for 1983-84 were the highest on record. This occurred principally because of a substantial increase in the number of documents lodged.

In 1983-84, 6 924 plans of survey were lodged. The level of lodgment of building unit plans is in excess of the 1980-81 figures but has decreased from the peak attained in 1981-82. In 1983-84, 584 plans relating to 4 651 units were lodged. Activity in group title developments has remained static in the Brisbane office, with sharply increased lodgments evident in Townsville. The average number of new lots created by each group title plan has increased from 5.3 to 5.6.

The activity in the real estate market has resulted in lodgments in the Titles Office which are equal to those existing during some periods of the 1981-82 land boom. Factors underlying the activity include a continuing conversion of Crown land to freehold. The Titles Office now registers the majority of land dealings and land subdivisions effected in this State.

The State Government Computer Centre officers, in conjunction with Titles Office staff, are well advanced in the development of a mainframe computer system which will modernise and automate the procedures of freehold land title registration in Queensland. In addition, the system will allow for future expansion in work-loads without a concurrent increase in staff resources. It will also improve the quality of service expected of the Titles Office in a computer-oriented environment and will provide flexibility to enable abnormal cyclical land boom work-loads to be processed without the accumulation of massive arrears. It is intended eventually to extend decentralisation of Titles Office facilities by the establishment of on-line terminals in major provincial centres.

The computerisation of the operations of the Public Trust Office is also progressing satisfactorily. It is expected that all major functions of the office will be converted to computer processing by the end of 1985. Already, increased efficiency has been achieved.

As honourable members will be aware, the major functions of the office include—

The administration of deceased estates;

Acting in a wide variety of trusts;

Managing the estates of incapable persons and certain long-term prisoners; and

Dealing with unclaimed property.

The Law Reform Commission also comes within my portfolio. The commission presently comprises five members. The Honourable Mr Justice Bruce McPherson is the chairman, and other members are the Honourable Mr Justice G. N. Williams, Mr R. E. Cooper, QC, Sir John Rowell and Mr J. R. Nosworthy.

Two working papers have recently been completed and widely distributed—a working paper on a Bill to prevent the avoidance of civil liability in cases of death or personal injury caused by negligence; and a working paper on a Bill to establish limited partnerships.

Items on the third program of the commission, presently receiving attention, include—

Juries in criminal trials;

Legislation taking account of developments in computer technology;

The Property Law Act;

Real Property Acts; and

Methods of execution of judgment.

The legal work of the Crown, its departments, Crown corporations and Crown instrumentalities, is carried out by officers of the Solicitor-General's Office. The office is one of the largest in Australia.

The Solicitor-General is the Government's chief legal adviser. He represents the State at interstate conferences on constitutional and international law matters and, if necessary, at similar conferences overseas, such as the Law of the Sea Conference recently held in Switzerland. He is frequently engaged on constitutional problems arising from recent or current Commonwealth legislation and proposals.

As well as criminal prosecutions, a great variety of work is performed by legal officers; for example, the commencing and defending of civil proceedings on behalf of the Crown in all courts and tribunals, including the High Court; the providing of assistance at royal commissions and other committees of inquiry and in arbitrations; the preparation of major contracts, leases, instruments of security and other legal documents; the drafting and settling of proclamations, Orders in Council, regulations and other forms of subordinate legislation; the provision of legal advice to the Crown and other departments; and the preparation of Bills relevant to my own Department.

I am presently reorganising the Justice Department and will appoint a Director of Prosecutions to take responsibility for that activity. I intend to appoint an outstanding lawyer to the position. He will be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the trials of persons charged with criminal offences will be prosecuted before the courts at the earliest possible date, and that delays in bringing matters before the courts will be kept to a minimum.

I aim to provide incentive to the Crown's prosecutors. They are, and will be, called on to work outside what may be termed a nine-to-five routine. That should be recognised—and will be recognised.

As well as criminal trials, Crown Prosecutors handle all appeals to the Court of Criminal Appeal and the High Court. They are also involved in appeals in the less

serious criminal matters and quasi-criminal matters to the District Court, to single judges of the Supreme Court and to the Full Court as well as to the Public Service Board, Industrial Court and Land Court.

The Public Defender's Office has operated as a separate branch of the department since 1968. The Public Defender's duty is to render to needy persons legal aid in criminal trials and sentences, in appeals to higher courts, committals to the Supreme Court, and in certain Children's Court cases.

In the financial year ended 30 June 1983, 2 231 persons were granted public defence. In all, these persons faced a total of 8 735 charges in the Children's, Magistrates, District and Supreme Courts and the Court of Criminal Appeal. My Government's single-handed contribution to this sector of legal aid is sometimes overlooked. It is a very significant contribution direct from consolidated revenue. During the financial year ended 30 June 1984 public defence was granted to 2 871 persons who faced a total number of 10 344 charges in the various courts.

I now turn to that part of my department which is immediately identified with justice: the court system, principally comprising the Supreme, District and magistrates courts. There are now 43 judicial officers in Queensland—19 justices of the Supreme Court, 2 masters of the Supreme Court and 22 judges of the District Court.

Mr Davis: And no women magistrates.

Mr HARPER: I am looking forward in the near future to the appointment of the first woman magistrate in Queensland. That was announced earlier this year at a conference of magistrates. A lady who has the necessary qualifications will, I believe, accept appointment to that high office.

Unlike the Federal Government, the Queensland Government is intent on providing decentralised service to the people of this State. A District Court judge was recently appointed to Southport to sit in the new court complex, and Emerald has been appointed as a place for holding District Court. Circuit court work has increased enormously in recent years and Brisbane judges are being called on to spend more and more time at circuit court centres, for example Cairns, to ensure that justice is done expeditiously.

I have recently arranged for the appointment of a chief executive officer to supervise the functions of the registries and to relieve the Chief Justice of the bulk of administrative duties which, of necessity, previously occupied a substantial portion of his time.

A word-processing system has been installed for the preparation of Supreme Court judgments. Further, a microcomputer system for recording and obtaining comparative sentencing data for use by the Court of Criminal Appeal has been developed and installed. A similar system for the Supreme Court is the subject of a feasibility study. In addition, a preliminary investigation of the needs relating to the development of a higher and lower courts computer system has been undertaken with a view to minimising the delay in having cases come before the courts.

A court system data model has been constructed and analysed. From this a series of proposed subsystems leading to a complete courts system has been identified and the department has placed a priority in its computer strategic plan for the development of Supreme and District Court information systems, followed by a court scheduling system. The planned court information systems for criminal cases coming before the Supreme and District Courts are a necessary prelude to a court scheduling system. The implementation of these systems will have a major positive effect on the organisation of court sittings. Systems will greatly improve the administrative efficiency of the Supreme and District Courts by recording all criminal cases which are heard in the Brisbane Supreme and District Courts and providing on-line access and updating of a criminal action up to the result stage.

In the magistrates courts, there are now 68 stipendiary magistrates appointed throughout the State. In addition, the clerks of the court at Cooktown and Thursday

Island are appointed acting stipendiary magistrates to enable expeditious dealing with court matters in those areas.

To provide an essential service to the people of Queensland, since 1981 new court houses have been opened at Ipswich, Southport, Yeppoon and Toogoolawah. Planning is in progress for the construction of further new court houses at Beenleigh, Weipa and Noosa. Additional stipendiary magistrates have been appointed in each of the major growth areas of Southport, Beenleigh and Ipswich.

We continue to extend tape-recording facilities into magistrates courts throughout the State. Improvements in tape-recording technology in recent years have enabled conversion from the more expensive reel-to-reel equipment to high-quality cassette-based systems. The program of change from the much slower typed depositions system to the tape system has greatly improved court processes and resulted in reduced legal cost to litigants. To support the extension of tape equipment into centres in the north and north west of the State, an extension of the Court Recording Section has been established in Townsville. This section is responsible for the transcription of tape-recorded court depositions.

A conference of stipendiary magistrates was held in Brisbane in June of this year and was attended not only by Queensland magistrates but also by representatives from other States and the Northern Territory.

A tribunal which is worthy of mention is the Small Claims Tribunal. Since the inception of the Small Claims Tribunal in 1973, over 14 000 claims have been lodged with the tribunal. The tribunal has enabled residents of Queensland to avail themselves of the opportunity to have disputes between consumers and traders resolved in a quick, informal and inexpensive manner. The tribunal's jurisdiction now extends to matters arising out of contracts between traders and traders as well as between consumers and traders, the supply of goods or the provision of services, as well as tenancy bond disputes and dividing fences disputes, if the amount involved does not exceed \$1,500. More than 5 000 orders totalling more than \$1m have been made by the tribunal.

I record my tribute to the outstanding services performed for the State by the Court Reporting Bureau. The bureau records verbatim in shorthand by Pitman or stenograph shorthand machines the evidence given in all the courts of higher jurisdiction throughout Queensland. These include the Court of Criminal Appeal, the Full Court, the Supreme Court, the District Courts, the Industrial Commission, the Land Appeal Court, the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, commissions of inquiry and other tribunals.

The office of the Registrar of Auctioneers and Agents was established in July 1982 with a staffing establishment of 36 officers. Formerly a branch of the Corporate Affairs Office, the registry is responsible for the administration of the Auctioneers and Agents Act. I believe that the wisdom of the Government's action in separating this responsibility from the Corporate Affairs Office will be seen in the near future. The office is required to maintain registers of licence-holders and holders of certificates of registration for real estate agents, auctioneers, motor dealers, commercial agents and salesmen or subagents of those categories.

Through the Auctioneers and Agents Committee constituted under the Act, the registry is also responsible for the maintenance of the Auctioneers and Agents Trust Account Deposit Fund and the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund. As at 30 June 1984, the fund balances were \$25,993,655 and \$21,993,991 respectively.

An important arm of the registry is its inspectorial branch, which carries out investigations into breaches of the legislation by licensees and claims made against the fidelity guarantee fund. Prosecutions launched by the registry during the year ended 30 June 1984 numbered 24, the majority of which concerned unlicensed operation or a failure to observe the beneficial interest provisions of the Act. In addition, a large number of investigations were performed which did not result in court action and a considerable number of claims were made against the guarantee fund.

During the financial year just completed, the registry introduced a microcomputer to cater for the receipting, banking and cheque-writing functions and, in addition, transferred the deposit fund ledger, representing about 1 500 ledger accounts, to this mode. It is hoped in the current financial year to make additional progress in this direction so that, ultimately, all of the registry records and licence-issuing functions are computerised.

When arrangements were completed for transition to the co-operative national scheme for the companies and securities industry, there was a substantial body of commercial legislation then administered by the Corporate Affairs Office but falling outside the ambit of the national scheme. The Government determined that a separate administrative structure should be established to allow for that other legislation to be effectively administered as a State responsibility, distinct from the matters for which the national Companies and Securities Commission would be responsible.

Thus in 1982 the office of the Registrar of Commercial Acts was established. The Registrar of Commercial Acts was assigned responsibility for the administration of 15 separate pieces of commercial legislation relating to building, housing, friendly, co-operative and other societies, bills of sale and other mercantile activities. At the same time the Government initiated a program for review of various statutes relating to commercial operations and this initiative is now bearing fruit with the imminent finality of a number of Bills. These will totally replace much existing legislation in the area of commercial law, particularly that relating to consumers.

As its first major task, the new office of the Registrar of Commercial Acts has been fully committed in the preparation of new legislation and in assisting me in the determination of future administrative requirements. As these new Acts come into operation, it will be necessary for commercial organisations and others to become acquainted with the new requirements. In many cases, higher standards will be required, and some functions will be subject to controls not previously existing.

Although the Government believes in less regulation, rather than more, it has an obligation to respond to demonstrated community need. An example of the results of this program of review is the Funeral Benefit Business Act passed at the end of 1982.

The Government recognised that provisions relating to funeral benefit businesses in the existing Friendly Societies Act were unsuitable, and the Funeral Benefit Business Act was prepared to establish appropriate supervision to protect the many people who make payments to funeral directors for a future funeral service or other benefit. Under the new Act, assets are required to be placed in trust to secure the future performance of all contracts of this nature.

Even more recently, the Government has responded to a need to provide for the protection of employees' entitlements to superannuation benefits. The Registrar of Commercial Acts will also be the Registrar of Superannuation Trust Deeds under this legislation.

Another area of interest to consumers relates to the provision of credit. New legislation will deal with the licensing of persons who provide credit, and lead to creation of a register that will set out details of all motor vehicles which are subject to some form of encumbrance. By means of this procedure combined with provisions in the new legislation, anyone buying a vehicle should be able to ensure that good title is obtained.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Hear, hear!

Mr HARPER: I thank the honourable member for his support, and I look forward to it when that legislation comes before the Assembly.

At present, it is possible for an innocent purchaser of a motor car to find that a vehicle is subject to some form of charge, with the result that, without any redress, it can be repossessed by another party. This is a totally unjust situation, which I am determined to correct.

Another important commercial area, and one of the fastest-growing sectors in the financial community today, is the credit union movement. In the five years to June 1984, assets of credit unions in Queensland have grown from \$234m to well over \$600m.

Presently, they are regulated under the Co-operative and Other Societies Act 1967-1978, which is inadequate, being silent on many matters that are essential in the regulation of major financial institutions. A new Bill will be introduced to govern those bodies. It has been developed to ensure that credit unions will meet appropriate standards.

Other equally important legislation relating to building societies and friendly societies is also to be introduced soon.

I have enjoyed the challenge of bringing to a conclusion reform so long mooted in these areas.

The Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs is largely responsible for the administration of legislation emanating from the co-operative Commonwealth-State scheme for companies and securities regulation. Additionally, the commissioner is responsible for administering the Business Names Act 1962-1979.

I draw the attention of honourable members to the fact that I am speaking about a co-operative scheme, and I point out that Queensland was a signatory to the formal agreement underpinning the scheme on 22 December 1978. Legislation effecting the first stage of the scheme became operative on 1 July 1981. Companies legislation followed on 1 July 1982.

The purpose of the co-operative scheme is to achieve uniformity in laws concerning companies and the regulation of the securities industry in the States and Territories of Australia. Political direction for the co-operative scheme—I stress again that term—comes from the ministerial council, of which I am a member. Members of the council are the Attorneys-General of the States and the Commonwealth. The council meets formally four times every calendar year and has often deliberated on matters outside of its formal meetings by telex vote. Decisions of the council are, except for certain specified matters, made on a majority basis.

The council has been able to show considerable flexibility in catering for unique State situations. The collegiate attitude of the council and its flexibility is its main strength over similar central regulatory regimes, such as the Trade Practices Commission, which do not sufficiently recognise individual State priorities, needs and wants.

A matter of great importance that has occupied the attention of the ministerial council during the last 12 months has been the consideration of new stock exchange membership rules. The Trade Practices Commission considered that the previous rules were anticompetitive and it refused to authorise them. We have been concerned to see that, within the competitive requirements of the Trade Practices Commission, the rules adopted are workable and provide investor protection.

I have been active in assisting the Brisbane exchange in setting up a second board market, which should enhance the standing of the exchange nationally and add to the already considerable role that it plays in facilitating the raising of capital for investment in Queensland projects.

The Corporate Affairs Office is coming under increasing pressure because of the number of prospectuses and trust deeds being lodged. In particular, the area of prescribed interests is attracting attention. Such diverse interests as time-share projects, retirement villages, various types of plantations and property trusts are all being processed by the office. The co-operative scheme has made it easier and less expensive for prescribed interests to be marketed interstate. Since the commencement of the co-operative scheme, increasingly large amounts of interstate finance have been attracted to Queensland projects that have been marketed through prospectuses registered with the office of my Commissioner for Corporate Affairs.

During the last 12 months, two new bodies have been created under the co-operative scheme, namely, the Companies and Securities Law Review Committee and the Accounting Standards Review Board. The Companies and Securities Law Review Committee has been given a number of company law references for report to the ministerial council.

The Accounting Standards Review Board has the power to approve accounting standards. The ministerial council has the right of disallowance within 60 days of standards being promulgated. This is aimed at providing a statutory backing for accounting standards and more certainty in corporate reporting.

A Bill that has been exposed for public comment contains a provision to enable the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs to require a person, who was a director of two or more companies that failed and paid unsecured creditors less than 50c in the dollar, to show cause why he should not be prohibited from taking part in the management of corporations. This will be a major step in the fight against those few directors who try to misuse the corporate form. I am surprised that Opposition members do not show more interest in that proposal.

In the office of my Commissioner for Corporate Affairs, there are presently two operational computerised systems. One is associated with the business names records and operations which were converted from a manual system to a computerised system on a State-wide basis in early 1983. The second system exists for the recording of certain central company information and the maintenance of limited financial controls.

More advanced computer systems are currently being developed in conjunction with the State Government Computer Centre to meet the needs of the Corporate Affairs Office and its obligations under the Commonwealth-State scheme.

Under the Commonwealth-State wage pause program this year, a project, which employed 65 previously long-term unemployed youth in the Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville offices, successfully converted company paper records of all active companies on the public register to computerised systems utilising the State Government Computer Centre's Univac and Mapper facilities.

New systems will increase the ability of the office to identify defaulting companies and their principal officers (including directors) and, coupled with the use of microcomputers, will enable the office to be more effective in carrying out statutory and administrative responsibilities.

These systems, scheduled for implementation early in 1985, will be the most advanced of any Corporate Affairs Commission in Australia. Already, other States are looking closely at systems and programs being developed here with a view to adoption in their own areas. Two States have sent, or are about to send, electronic data processing expert staff to examine at first hand these developments.

I pay tribute to officers throughout my department who are very capably led by the under secretary, and to my personal staff. Without their efforts and dedication, the department would not function efficiently. I also record my appreciation to the members of all committees and bodies associated with the department, particularly the members of my parliamentary committee.

Restructuring within the responsibilities of my portfolio and new legislative initiatives promise to make the next 12 months a period of satisfaction for all who have contributed to past achievements and those planned for the near future.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I inform honourable members that, on the Vote proposed, I will allow a full discussion on all of the Minister's departmental Estimates (Consolidated Revenue and Trust and Special Funds).

For the information of honourable members, I point out that the administrative acts of the department are open for debate, but the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in Committee of Supply.

Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (12.56 p.m.): In the few minutes prior to the luncheon recess, I will refer to the figures in the Estimates of expenditure for the year 1984-85 for the Minister's department.

Unfortunately, I did not hear the Minister's comments about advertising, and I hope that he will expand on it later.

In 1983-84, \$150,000 was expended on publicity on legal affairs. This financial year, there has been a mammoth increase of 94.7 per cent from \$150,000 to \$292,000. I hope that the sum will not be abused by the Minister's department as it has been in the past. For example, in the State election campaign last year, the Minister could be heard frequently on radio and advertisements containing his photograph appeared in the papers. Obviously, those pointed advertisements were intended to promote not only the National Party but also the Minister personally above his ministerial colleagues. I assure the Minister that, if that is the sort of advertising that is intended this year, the Opposition will make a lot of noise about it.

One of the latest Justice Department advertisements featured the J-team. I thought that that was an appalling piece of advertising, and one could be forgiven for thinking that it was a combined advertisement for "V" and "The Avengers" I refer to the way in which the people who appeared in the advertisement were dressed and saluted into the air. It was most unbecoming, to say the least.

The increased expenditure for advertising should be directed towards educating the public about their legal rights and to bring to their attention the practices of charlatans within the community. I hark back to my exposure of Quality Kitchens Design in this place on a number of occasions. Yesterday I received a telephone call pointing out that that company has a display set up all this week at the Springwood shopping centre. That company is going bankrupt, and it has criminal directors who are getting away with blue murder.

I note with concern the dramatic increase in 1984-85 for travelling and transfer expenses from \$401,000 to \$745,000, an increase of 85.9 per cent. I am not aware that there has been a dramatic increase in the daily allowance allowed to departmental officers who travel round the State frequently. However, I ask for an explanation of that huge increase.

I will refer to a couple of other sections in the Estimates that I would like the Minister to comment on. Because the rights of people must be protected, the Opposition does not object to the increase in the allocation to the Funeral Benefit Trust Fund. The expenditure for 1983-84 was \$80,000. For 1984-85, the figure is \$200,000—a massive increase of 150 per cent. Perhaps an explanation can be provided for that as well.

In the time that remains, I wish to make a number of points on certain matters that have been raised in this Parliament.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Before I continue, Mr De Lacy, might I say that an excellent choice has been made in appointing you as Temporary Chairman and rostering you to take the chair for the proceedings this afternoon.

Before lunch I mentioned a number of financial aspects of the department's operations. I wish to raise an issue that I have constantly drawn to the attention of honourable members. I have also mentioned it to the Minister before. I refer to the activities of the Queensland Law Society.

In recent times, I have become aware that the Queensland Law Society has taken a progressive step by appointing a director of professional conduct. I compliment members of the society for that. I have had discussions with members of the Queensland Law Society about the complaints that honourable members are consistently receiving about the legal profession. Without making a political statement, I think I can say on behalf of all honourable members that we do receive constant complaints about members of

the legal profession. In fact, fairly recently, a Government member referred to this matter in the Matters of Public Interest debate. He was concerned, as all honourable members are, that, although from time to time complaints are taken up with the Queensland Law Society, very little disciplinary action is taken against members of the legal profession. The legal profession is a very fine profession, but it is no different from any other profession. Naturally enough, it has a couple of rotten apples in its barrel.

I urge the Minister to give very serious consideration to the appointment of lay persons to its disciplinary committee. My next comment is not based on a lack of confidence, but during the latest discussions I had over lunch with members of the Queensland Law Society, they indicated that they really had no objection to lay people being appointed to the society's disciplinary body. The sooner that that takes place, the better.

Mr Harper: That is in train.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I am very pleased to hear that.

The Government should examine ways of assisting the legal profession to bring itself up to date. I believe that it is unacceptable to have two tiers in the profession—barristers and solicitors. I realise that that would be a sore point with some members of the profession, depending on whether they are barristers or solicitors. Nevertheless, I see no reason why those barriers cannot be broken down to enable solicitors to practise at the bar at the same time as conducting business in chambers.

Another issue that I have previously raised in this Parliament is that the Government should adopt a responsible approach towards controlling the expense of litigation, particularly taking cases to the Supreme Court. In many such cases, a senior barrister is briefed and he is required to be accompanied by junior counsel. I understand that the basis for this practice is that it gives junior counsel an opportunity to gain experience in courts. I reject such a practice because in those cases people are paying an additional and unnecessary fee on top of the large amounts of money that are involved in proceedings before the Supreme Court.

The Government should be endeavouring to save people as much money as possible. I see no reason why members of the profession should not be allowed to establish joint practices. I see nothing objectionable in allowing a group of professional people, such as solicitors, to set up business under one roof and conduct their business like companies. Members of the legal profession should be able to have a legal service in a complex that also contains, for instance, a chemist's shop and a doctor's surgery. At the present time, that cannot be done. The Government should act responsibly and examine that possibility as well. In other words, if it is necessary, such a business would be established under a company name, or the name of one person or group of people. Such a centre would make it easier for people to seek professional advice when it is required.

As I have in the past, I reiterate that the Opposition would be opposed to advertising in the profession. I realise that steps are being taken in southern States to examine the matter. In a recent case in Great Britain, advertising restrictions were lifted or cut back. In the first advertisement that appeared on television, a rather portly barrister gave a very good impression of "Rumpole of the Bailey". Of course, the advertisement did not go over very well with members of the profession. We would be lacking in discipline if the advertising requirements in the profession were allowed to be relaxed.

The licensing laws in Queensland need to be examined carefully by members. I know that in the past the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General has taken an interest in that matter. It was regrettable that the Premier and Treasurer saw fit to publicly discipline the Minister for his actions. There is a crying need for the licensing laws of this State to be updated. Members have a responsibility to consider 24-hour trading. When I refer to 24-hour trading, I am not speaking about a pub being open for 24 hours but about giving that hotel the right to choose its 12-hour trading period for each 24-hour day. Once a hotel has made application to the Licensing Commission to trade

during those hours, it should be required to operate during that period. In other words, the hotel should have a freedom of choice. The Minister likes to talk about the private enterprise system under which the Government operates. Under that system, hotels should be allowed freedom of choice so that they can trade during those hours that would best suit the business establishment.

Members should be looking at the possibility of allowing bottle shops to open on public holidays. We are all aware of the high overheads involved in operating a hotel. It could be fairly said that on many occasions those persons involved would still appreciate the right to be able to have that public holiday instead of going to work and, of course, there are times when it just does not pay to open certain sections of a business on public holidays, but I see nothing wrong with hotels being allowed to operate their bottle shops so that, if people want to have a drink on a public holiday, they can drive to the hotel and take their liquor home.

That is one matter in which we have been very lax. I say "we" because there has been laxity by members on both sides of the House about the financial problems being encountered in the hotel industry at present. I reject the lobbying or the heavying that took place in certain sections of the industry when, some time ago, it was mooted that the number of hotel licences in Queensland could be cut down. I believe that it is necessary to reduce the number of hotel licences in this State, because a number of them do not come up to par; they do not provide the amenities and service that should be provided in what is an important industry. Serious consideration should be given to the culling of licences to make the market more competitive than it is at present.

In addition, taking into account the financial problems presently facing the hotel industry, it is high time that the Government, which always talks about its interest in small business, low taxation and low costs, gave serious consideration to examining the licensing fees that are charged. It is practical to suggest a reduction of up to 1 per cent in licensing fees. If that is not acceptable, the Government should be at least adventurous enough to examine the unit reduction of licensing fees on a sliding scale. A certain limit could be imposed according to the amount of liquor sold or the amount of revenue earned by the licensee. A certain fee could be charged according to the revenue, whether it be \$50,000, \$75,000 or \$100,000. There is a real need for the Government to give serious consideration to that matter.

Contrary to what many people in the community may say, I do not subscribe and have never subscribed to the theory that a hotel licence is a licence to print money. In a business and professional sense, I have a very close association with the licensees in my electorate, and I am aware of the problems faced by them.

The honourable member for Fassifern can smile, but all politicians must mix with the community, be able to talk to people in all walks of life and appreciate the problems that they face.

Mr Lingard: What about Sunday lunch-time in private bars?

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I do not go to private bars at lunch-time on Sundays. I suggest that the honourable member for Fassifern should not talk about drinking habits. His reputation when playing football for Western Suburbs was something lamentable. I remember, after a hard training session at night, when I was a 17-year-old junior footballer seeing the member for Fassifern staggering out of the shed. That shattered my illusions of the physically fit footballer.

Mr LINGARD: I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive. I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I withdraw my comment that I was disillusioned by the appearance of the member for Fassifern.

Mr LINGARD: That is not a sufficient withdrawal, and the member for Wolston knows it. I ask that his comments be withdrawn.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I withdraw the comments that the member for Fassifern finds offensive.

As politicians, we have to face up to what I can only describe as the wowers in the community who want television advertising of alcoholic beverages banned. I do not support them in any shape or form. I, along with many other Queenslanders, have a great admiration for footballers, not just Rugby League players or Rugby Union players but players of all codes. It is a downright insult to attempt to con the community into wowerism by claiming that a well-known footballer appearing on television advertising one brand of beer or some other type of alcohol will induce people to hop into their cars and rush down to the local hotel and buy a dozen or a six-pack. I certainly have not been persuaded to partake in a convivial drink because of television advertising; nor would most other sensible people.

The liquor industry is facing dire problems. It is time that the fine contribution of this State's licensees and brewers was recognised. They make a big financial contribution to sport in Queensland. I reject out of hand the argument of those who claim that, if liquor industry money was withdrawn, others in private enterprise would be prepared to make up the shortfall. That is a ridiculous assertion. Amounts totalling millions of dollars are involved. I do not believe that others in private enterprise would be prepared to contribute that amount of money to sport. I need only refer to the contribution to the group of athletes who competed for Australia at the Los Angeles Olympic Games. It is a futile argument.

I wished to raise a number of other issues today, but it is difficult to do so in only 20 minutes. It is time that the Government very seriously considered the problems faced by people performing jury service. I complimented the Government at the time of the introduction of the Jury Act Amendment Bill. However, it is still full of loopholes. One anomaly is that, until a juror completes 12 days' service, he is out of pocket. He receives less than his usual income. The Government has a responsibility to ensure that jurors are not left out of pocket. The Minister should give serious consideration to amending the legislation to remedy that anomaly.

The Minister mentioned justices of the peace. In Queensland, 46 000 people are registered as JPs. The appointment of justices of the peace has become little better than a joke in the community. When asked to nominate a person as a JP, I suppose I ought to face up to my responsibilities. As a politician, not wishing to lose votes, I feel obliged to nominate anyone unless something is wrong with his mental capacity or his ability to write and communicate. All politicians fall into the trap of nominating people as JPs. That is evidenced by the fact that 46 000 Queenslanders are JPs. Greater selectivity ought to be exercised in the appointment justices of the peace. The Government should either introduce a moratorium on the appointment of JPs for at least a two-year period or, alternatively, introduce a quota system.

Mr Lingard: You recently asked me if I would make a recommendation for a person known by you.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: That is right. I make no secret of the fact that I asked the honourable member for Fassifern to nominate a person known to me. I will recommend that person. The honourable member will find that she is an excellent member of his community.

The system should restrict the number of people per year who become justices of the peace. Perhaps a limit of six persons per year would have the desired effect.

I remember that, when the Peace and Good Behaviour Bill was introduced, it was welcomed as being a major contribution towards alleviating the problems that plague members of Parliament and police, that is the community brawls and neighbourhood disputes. Although that legislation has gone some way towards solving the problems, it contains a major flaw in not allowing for those disputes to be heard by the Small Claims Tribunal. By going to court with legal representation, people are abusing the legislation.

When the Bill was under debate, all honourable members agreed that it would be much more preferable for people involved in neighbourhood disputes to appear in court on their own behalf so that they could personally put their cases to the magistrate. That is not happening. Those who can afford it are being represented by a solicitor who charges anything up to \$300 for his services. However, some others cannot afford those fees and do not know of the legal aid system. As a consequence, it is becoming a lopsided battle between the haves and have-nots. The Minister should be examining the legislation in that regard.

Time expired.

Mr SIMPSON (Cooroora) (2.32 p.m.): I have pleasure in supporting the Minister's Estimates. Without the provision of finance, the system of justice in the State could not carry on. The High Court is a part of the nation's system of justice. Some of the decisions of the High Court are shameful. Perhaps that is because, as the member for Wolston mentioned, there is one a bad egg. That is Mr Justice Murphy.

Mr Vaughan: Hold on. In this Chamber you are not allowed to cast aspersions on the judiciary. Cut it out!

Mr SIMPSON: What has happened is a reflection on every good judge in this State. That is the problem.

Mr Hamill: What do you call a "good judge"—one you can buy?

Mr SIMPSON: No.

Mr Hamill: I am surprised.

Mr SIMPSON: I hope that the honourable member for Ipswich believes in the judiciary having high ethical standards.

Mr Hamill: I do.

Mr SIMPSON: Right.

Mr Hamill: I am sure you don't.

Mr SIMPSON: Well, why are there political appointments such as the one that Mr Whitlam made in appointing—

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SIMPSON: Now I hear the cries of anguish from the other side of the Committee.

That is the very sort of politicising of the High Court that should not happen. If honourable members opposite are responsible and care about justice in this State, they should agree with what I am saying.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I rise to a point of order on the basis that on past occasions in this Chamber, when I have attempted to refer to members of the judiciary, I have been prevented from doing so under the relevant Standing Orders of this Assembly and have been asked to resume my seat. I ask for clarification. The honourable member for Cooroora is referring to a judge of the High Court in a very derogatory fashion on the basis of a recommendation made by people who were members of a Star Chamber.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr De Lacy): Order! I quote from "Eriskine May—Parliamentary Practice"—

"Unless the discussion is based upon a substantive motion, drawn in proper terms, reflections must not be cast in debate upon the conduct of . . . judges of the superior courts."

In the light of that I uphold the point of order and ask the honourable member for Cooroora not to cast aspersions or reflections on a judge of the High Court.

Mr SIMPSON: Thank you for your guidance, Mr De Lacy. It is interesting to note who took the point of order and his connection with that High Court judge.

Without casting aspersions on anyone, I bring to the attention of the Chamber a recent High Court decision. The court delivered a six-one judgment in favour of Mr Clunies Ross and prevented the Commonwealth from resuming his Cocos Islands property. There was one dissenting judge—Murphy. I am not casting aspersions on Mr Murphy in any way. To be fair to the gentleman—and in no way casting aspersions on him—he said that it was for political and social considerations.

Mr Hamill: So?

Mr SIMPSON: Opposition members defend that statement.

I turn again to the editorial in today's "Telegraph" Again without casting any aspersions on the judge, the editorial reported him, on leaving the Senate and moving to the High Court, as saying, "No more politics."

Mr Hamill: No more party politics—that is what that meant.

Mr SIMPSON: The honourable member is now interpreting the judge's remarks. It is informative to have learned counsel opposite. I will not cast aspersions, I will leave it to the record in this place and to the determination of the people.

Fairness and justice must not only be done but must be seen to be done.

Mr Hamill: They are not the same thing.

Mr SIMPSON: It is interesting to hear how quickly Opposition members spring to the defence of court members.

Only recently this Assembly discussed whether a person's property is sacrosanct or can be resumed willy-nilly, but the greatest perpetrator of illegal property resumptions has to be the Federal Government. I draw that to your attention, Mr De Lacy, because today the Committee is debating the proposed appropriations for the Department of Justice so that the Government can ensure that justice is done in this State.

The other interesting point about the court decision—once again I am not casting any aspersions on the judges who made the six-one determination—was that it removed the right of Mr Clunies Ross to vote. The right to vote is a fundamental right that must be protected in this place. It is one of the most important responsibilities of the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. Members opposite adopt a double standard, as does the Federal Government when it attempts to inhibit a person's right to vote.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr SIMPSON: I support his right to vote, yes, because I believe everyone's vote should be equal.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SIMPSON: Ah, here they come out of the woodwork!

Although our words are accurately recorded by the Hansard reporters, the record cannot depict the atmosphere in the Chamber, so I will have to spell out for the Hansard reporters the fact that after I made that comment, Opposition members almost as one rose——

Mr FitzGerald: Like a pack of hounds.

Mr SIMPSON: Yes, like a pack of hounds.

I was referring to equality in the electoral system, but perhaps I should be more specific and refer to equality of representation. The Westminster system of government

began with the struggle by people to be represented in Parliament. The struggle continues even today. But in Australia the only time it is put at risk is when the Federal Government, and Opposition members here, try to take from people the representation——

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SIMPSON: I believe that Opposition members are being consistent, just as the Federal Government is being consistent in its attitude towards Mr Clunies Ross. Their attitude would be to remove the right to vote altogether if a person did not vote for the Labor Party.

But I was referring to equality of representation. For instance, people in suburban electorates who have ready access to their representatives have an advantage over those who live in a remote electorate containing the same number of electors. The remote electorate is thus far more difficult for the elected representative to service. Inequality in representation does occur with equal numbers in electorates.

In Britain, the country from which our Westminster system comes, the weightage is 4½ to 1, that is, four and a half times where access is easy to one where it is not.

Mr Davis: That is not true.

Mr SIMPSON: It is true. The figures are 11 to 1 in Canada, 7 to 1 in Western Australia and 2½ to 1 in Queensland.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr SIMPSON: I can understand why the honourable member is getting upset. He wants to take the vote away from the people, as happened to Clunies Ross.

Mr Booth: Tell him about the Soviet Union, where the same thing applies.

Mr SIMPSON: Who votes in the Soviet Union? The honourable member for Brisbane Central refers to those people as his comrades.

I intend to draw the Committee's attention to a few other facets of the Minister's portfolio. One relates to the Coroner's Act.

Mr Vaughan: I have got to sit here and listen to this trash.

Mr SIMPSON: I hope that the honourable member sits there and has some sympathy for the man to whom I am about to refer. He received an urgent telephone call informing him that his mother had died on a train and he was asked to identify the body. Because his mother had not visited a doctor for quite some time, under the Coroner's Act, a post-mortem had to be performed. When he was called to Rockhampton to identify the body the police were very helpful and provided a car to take him to the morgue at the hospital.

In the morgue, a young man started opening the drawers in a very insensitive way. Perhaps he was young and inexperienced, but he did not show a great deal of sympathy, and was rather casual about it. The man was very upset at being in the morgue and having to identify the body of his mother.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr SIMPSON: I believe that we can all learn.

I appreciate that, in discussing the Estimates, we are not allowed to talk about the necessity for legislation, and I doubt whether the problem could be overcome with legislation.

Finally, when the man was asked to identify his mother he saw that she was completely naked, and that the post-mortem had already been carried out. He was left

with a very traumatic, lasting memory of his mother. Apparently the body should be covered, and, for identification purposes, only the face needs to be uncovered.

I ask the Minister to look into the matter to see whether the problem can be overcome in the future. It worries me that such things can happen.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr SIMPSON: That saddens me even more. It means that it has happened before. A system should be devised to overcome that problem in the future. Perhaps it gets back to the doctors and the consideration that they should extend to people who may have to identify a body.

The Minister is responsible also for friendly societies. The Cooroy District Hospital is run by a friendly society, which does a tremendous job in providing medical services.

Friendly societies tend to be the poor cousin. They are non-profit-making organisations. The society which runs the Cooroy District Hospital has to battle on with private contributions to provide the necessary services before it can receive a worthwhile contribution from the Federal Government under Medicare. It does not have access to public hospital funding.

The Cooroy District Hospital is classified as a private hospital, but it is not. It does not get the same support as public hospitals. It is run by a friendly society, does a marvellous job and provides the cheapest medical service at a very high standard. That is because of the contribution of the community.

Some people may be discriminated against in the provision of legal aid. Primary producers are particularly affected. In a dispute in which the wife may claim part of her husband's property, discrimination occurs. Even though the property is mortgaged and cannot realise any further borrowings, it is a capital asset and the primary producer is denied legal aid. That is unjust, and consideration should be given to altering the system of legal aid.

I turn now to trust accounts. I always thought that trust accounts could not be interfered with. The example that I mention concerns a lady living in Maryborough who paid money into a trust account and received a receipt. Her house was never built. She has been told now that her money was not paid into a trust account and that the company directors are in another company that has gone into liquidation. That is not justice. The administration of trust accounts should be tightened or improved.

The Minister for Justice and Attorney-General is responsible for scouts and guides associations. Because the dedicated workers in those worthy bodies train our future citizens, the Government supports them.

I turn now to corporate affairs. The television program "Towards 2000", which, unfortunately, I do not see very often, demonstrates many new high-technology ideas that have gained acceptance.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: I hope that your constituents note that, when you started off your speech, you went in to bat strongly for someone like John Clunies Ross, but when talking about property in your own constituency, you are lethargic and you don't give a damn.

Mr SIMPSON: Incredible!

New technology excites people and many think that if they get onto the bandwagon, there might be a bob in it for them. However, some exploit new technology to the disadvantage of the unsuspecting. They try to get away with their schemes under old legislation, but members on this side of the Chamber are quick to respond to protect the rights of those who may be at risk. Government members try to protect people so that they are not caught by fly-by-nighters who try to rip them off in the hope of making a good deal of money. This has happened in the development of new agricultural crops

such as oil-producing plants. Operators exaggerate the potential value of the new crops and make them appear to be very lucrative. Unsuspecting people buy shares in such ventures. The indications are that companies selling such products are not properly constituted, and the public are not given the opportunity of obtaining a proper prospectus. The staff of the Corporate Affairs Commissioner's Office have been very helpful in ferreting out and checking the credentials of persons who promote such products. The officers give advice to the public, quite often in time to save the public from being adversely affected. This whole matter should be looked at.

The rates of stamp duty imposed on property transfers in Queensland have been criticised.

Mr Davis: See how much they have gone up?

Mr SIMPSON: The rates in Queensland are higher than those in some other States, but they are also lower than those in others.

Mr Mackenroth: We have a graduated scale.

Mr SIMPSON: Yes, a graduated scale, as in all States. The maximum duty imposed in New South Wales is \$2.50, which is commendable.

Mr De Lacy: Are you talking about stamp duty?

Mr SIMPSON: Stamp duty on property. The honourable member was not listening. The maximum rate in Queensland is \$3.75.

Mr Davis: \$3.75!

Mr SIMPSON: That is certainly higher than I would like it to be. However, if the honourable member for Brisbane Central, instead of addressing members on his side of the Chamber, were to listen to me, he would hear me say that in Victoria the maximum rate is \$5.50.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr SIMPSON: Mr Row, could I have this document incorporated in "Hansard"? It sets out the rates for the various States.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The document cannot be incorporated without my seeing it first.

Mr SIMPSON: I took the matter up with the previous occupant of the chair. I checked it out with him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Rockhampton.

Mr WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (2.53 p.m.): As honourable members will be aware, this speech will be my last in the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

Government Members interjected.

Mr WRIGHT: It is regrettable that few parliamentarians have the opportunity that I have, that is, to deliver a valedictory in this Chamber. Many honourable members die in office, as happened with friends of some of those Government members who, a few moments ago, acted like hyenas. Some members, because of an unexpected long illness, do not return to Parliament. Others are defeated quite unexpectedly.

Knowing that this speech would be my last, I pondered long and hard on what I should say. I took note of the comment published by one journalist, Marion Smith, to the effect that this occasion would be "bucket-time" I took exception to that comment.

However, I am aware that her column, which is supposed to publish facts behind the scene, is often dubious and that Marion Smith has something of a fertile or fertilised mind. Later I shall make another comment about Marion.

Although this is the Estimates debate, I shall take the liberty of placing on record my personal thanks to many people who helped me during my 15½ years as a member of Parliament. Together with Ed Casey, I am the longest-serving member in the Opposition. As my maiden speech in this Chamber was made from a place beside the honourable member for Brisbane Central, it is coincidental and fitting that I should be making my last speech from a place beside him.

During my lengthy term in Parliament I came to know many people. I have achieved things with the help of others. I realise that it is impossible to do a "Vince Lester" and name everybody; somebody has to be missed. However, it would be remiss of me if I did not place on record my appreciation to some people.

I particularly want to thank the people of my electorate, who, for six consecutive elections since 1969, have seen fit to choose me as their parliamentary representative. I also thank the local members of the Australian Labor Party and the trade unions for their backing. I thank my campaign director, Blair Jamieson, and my senior advisers and political counsellors, Roy Coker, Brian Bleney, Kev Deasoy, Jack Duffield, Evan Schwarten, Frank Campbell, Gordon Hayman and Paull Braddy. I realise, of course, that I have missed some.

I particularly want to thank my political colleagues in the Rockhampton area—Doug Everingham, Les Yewdale and Bill Prest—and, at local government level, Jim Webber, Col Brown, Trevor Wright and Bray Gray.

It is impossible to represent an electorate without grassroots support. People such as Lionel Hayes, Stan Radloff, Arthur Timms, Eddie Ford and Hec Sinclair made my life a lot easier. Politically, it was made easier for me because I had close to me colleagues such as Les and Bill. When I was away I had no trouble in finding somebody to care for my electorate. When I was Leader of the Opposition and constantly travelling throughout the State, I had my two hard-working parliamentary colleagues at my side. I sincerely thank them both.

I pay my respect and give credit to all members of the Opposition for the support that they gave me as Leader of the Opposition for 22 months. I thank them for their commitment and dedication and for giving me the opportunity to lead the party.

Two people influenced my political life greatly. The first was Sir John Egerton. If it were not for Sir John Egerton, I would not have been here. He was the man who held the belief that I could win the seat of Rockhampton. He chose to ensure that I received the support of 75 per cent of the Queensland Central Executive, which was necessary to contest the plebiscite. I will not forget him.

The other person who moulded my political career was Tom Burns. I place on record my thanks, appreciation and respect for him. If I had to pick one political person who had the influence to help mould my philosophy and my style in politics, it would be Tom. I believe that he is the best grassroots politician I have ever met, and he is probably the most sincere man I have ever met in the political arena.

I thank also my deputy, Neville Warburton, for his assistance, his loyalty, his caution and his strength during the period when I was Leader of the Opposition. Members could not have given me a better deputy. I wish him well. I believe that the day will come when he will lead this State as Premier.

One makes friends on both sides of the House. I place on record my respect for and thanks to John Lockwood. I had a long association with him. He was the Liberal member for Toowoomba North and was defeated at the last election. His defeat was a personal loss to me. Other members of the Parliament with whom I had a long association

are still here. I decided not to mention them by name because I may give them the kiss of death. I thank those members both in the Ministry and on the back bench who have helped me. They know who they are.

I again thank the parliamentary staff. They have been totally dedicated. I do not know of one person on the parliamentary staff, whether it be in the library, serving the Parliament or in the refreshment rooms, who has not done his or her fair share. Mr Speaker can certainly be proud of the persons he has round him. They are men and women to whom nothing is too much trouble. Regardless of a member's political persuasion, they have never discriminated against any member.

My life was made so much easier by Maurie, Malcolm and Monica—the three Ms—the two Kerrys, Kay, and Joe Begley. I could have used another dozen like them. I think that they were worth three or four ordinary persons. I particularly thank Monica because she served with me when I was an ordinary member of Parliament and joined my staff when I became Leader of the Opposition.

I thank and pay a tribute to the party officials, the trade union and business leaders, the organisational groups and individual friends who supported me.

I turn now to the media. As all honourable members know, it is impossible for a member to do his job without the media. I place on record my thanks for the willingness of the media to report the many issues in which I was involved. I was given enormous coverage on a local and State basis. Recently I had the task of going through the television records since 1979 to choose just a few copies to keep. It was an immense task because of the coverage given to me by the electronic media. When I went to "The Courier-Mail", the "Daily Sun" and the "Sunday Sun" to pick out photographs that I might keep, the task was too much. The coverage was enormous. I ended up taking only a couple of photographs.

Central Queensland has a very competent news team—"The Gladstone Observer", "The Morning Bulletin", 4RO, RTQ7, 4CD and "The Central Queensland Express". I again thank them for what they have done for me. Without their support I could not have been the effective member of Parliament that I think I was.

As to the Queensland media generally—memories of the media are like remembering one's school-days—there have been good and bad times. In general, I was treated extremely fairly by the press. I believe that journalists attempt to report the truth. I did not expect special treatment from anyone; I did not ask for it. I did not want forewarning of questions to be asked at press conferences. To my recollection, I have never refused to be interviewed.

I do not criticise the quantity of reports. However, on occasions quality left a little to be desired. Fortunately, they were isolated, as I will demonstrate, and were not always the fault of the reporter. I refer to one that has plagued me for the last couple of years—

"Wright promises to change the law"

The subject was abortion. Members know my stand on abortion. I am totally opposed to abortion on demand. I have never wavered in that belief. That newspaper headline and the accompanying article were printed over and over again in a filth campaign waged against me by Right to Life. As I said, on the subject of abortion, the headline read—

"Wright promises to change the law"

In fact, the story disclosed that the Labor Government had a policy to decriminalise abortion.

I refer to yet another headline—

"Wright urges means test on aid to blacks"

No such thing was ever said by me. There is no substance whatever to that headline.

One headline related to the Labor Party's staying in Government for 33 years after a Labor gerrymander. Another was that I would name the parents of children who misbehaved. Again, I was totally misreported. The journalist quickly pointed out that that was not what she had submitted.

I am not the only one to complain of unfair treatment from the media. To illustrate that, I refer to a front-page banner headline in the "Telegraph"—

"Mafia chief rang Sir Jack—Hinze reveals tapes".

That was accompanied by a huge photo of Sir Jack Egerton. That front-page story, I believe, would have been devastating for Sir Jack Egerton's family.

People read headlines. It is an age of headline journalism. The Parliament should look hard at that type of approach. No newspaper has the right to brand and destroy individuals in society by publishing headlines. I recently asked people whether they recalled Sir Jack Egerton being mentioned in a newspaper report. They thought that he was linked with the mafia, because that is what the headline said—

"Mafia chief rang Sir Jack"

It may be accurate to say that someone rang Sir Jack Egerton, but what was reported was not the truth.

Sir Jack Egerton and I are not the only ones to have suffered. Many of my colleagues and, no doubt, members opposite have also suffered. The Minister for Justice should look carefully at that type of journalism. If I had been able to advocate one innovation and have it accepted during my term in State Parliament, it would be the setting up of a media complaints tribunal.

It is appreciated that the Australian Press Council is made up of publishers and journalists. The system of approaching the editor and then going to the AJA may work in part, but it is not satisfactory for the final redress to be in the hands of the Australian Press Council or, in the case of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the board, because they have no independence.

After witnessing a "Nationwide" program covering a trip I made to Dirranbandi, I and members of my staff laid accusations against the ABC, which agreed to retain all of the tape shot there. Subsequently Mr Whitehead wrote to me, informing me that he could not follow up my complaints because the off-cuts had been destroyed. I was left with no redress. The proof of what I asserted was contained in those destroyed off-cuts. Even after promising to keep the off-cuts, the ABC destroyed them. There are many other instances in which evidence is destroyed and people are not able to receive justice.

The Parliament should consider the establishment of a media complaints tribunal. It would be a deterrent to newspaper subeditors. The day after I resigned as leader of the Labor Party the "Daily Sun" carried a story making all sorts of allegations.

After I spoke to the reporter, namely, Matt Robbins, I appreciated that it was not his fault. I rang the "Daily Sun" and received an apology. I was told that a sub-editor was to blame, but the newspaper could not find out exactly who wrote it. I do not know what checks were made to find who the sub-editor was, and to this day I have not found out who was the sub-editor who wrote that story. A media complaints tribunal would be a deterrent to sub-editors, reporters, parliamentarians and to anyone using the media as a weapon. That is not what the media is for. The vast majority of journalists would have nothing to fear from a media complaints tribunal, but a few of them would wear out the carpets in the tribunal's waiting-room. The professionalism of most journalists deserves admiration and commendation. I could start listing them—Peter Morley, Tony Koch, John Stubbs, Jamie Collins, Lindsay Marshall—and every one that I can name is matched in the electronic media.

Unfortunately, a few journalists have trouble spelling the word "professionalism", let alone understanding its application to their job. I never cease to be amazed how some reporters have different rules when dealing with the Opposition and with the

Government. With some reporters, members of the Opposition must prove everything not just beyond a reasonable doubt but beyond total doubt. Government members are rarely pressed. When the Premier is involved, it is a matter of backing off. The Premier often says, "Leave it to us. It will be all right. You should have known that."

It is time that certain journalists took a hard look at themselves. Legal blocks have stopped them from continuing a number of investigations. A legal block was used in the Samford Valley drug raid. Reporting of the Redcliffe Hospital scandal was stopped by a writ. However, on many other occasions issues could have been pursued further, Ministers and others should have been pressed, but they never have been.

It has been said that certain journalists are looking after their future because they want to get jobs with the Government. I have heard all sorts of stories about handshake deals on classified advertisements that occurred when a certain newspaper was starting in Queensland. The classified advertising has now been made contractual. I have heard how, because they do Government television features, some Government departments have links with the electronic media. Regardless of the reasons, I suggest that all has not been well.

Generally the media in Queensland is of an exceptionally high standard, and I pay tribute to those who have tried to maintain that standard, especially those within the AJA.

I want to comment with some care about one journalist, namely, Marion Smith. My intention was to hit back at Marion for some of the things that she has said, firstly, about my pension. Most honourable members know that unless the law is changed I will be the only Queensland member of Parliament who will not receive a pension. I also resented her ABC Geraldine Doogue crack. She knew that when the man in the south wrote the story he was drunk. Although she was warned that the story was untrue, she proceeded to write it. Recently, she commented in the press that I was not in the Assembly for all of last week. The records show that the only day I missed until Thursday, 25 October, was in fact that day, the Thursday.

Mr Mackenroth: For the whole year!

Mr WRIGHT: Yes, for the whole year.

Because I have found out that Marion has an excuse for her aberrations, I do not expect an apology from her. I do not intend to canvass or elaborate on the day-to-day trial that that woman faces. It is also not my intention to add to her trauma. However, I would ask her in the future to act as I am and try to be more caring.

I do not intend to miss one particular person—Mr Ric Allen, the man who is known as "Mr Venom" or "The Poison Asp". On many occasions I have been the butt of his attack. The last attack that hurt concerned the time of the funeral of the late Kevin Hooper. An estimated 240 people attended the wake after that funeral. As we went in, most of us, except for the family, contributed \$10. Three of us who went to get soft drink or spirits were told that the contribution had been for beer only. Because I thought it was so strange for soft drink not to be included in the \$10, I went back to Ric Allen and said to him, "Ric, you had better watch that. That may cause some embarrassment." He turned on me with bitterness and said, "Can't you afford even \$10?" Although he knew that it was not true because I had explained to him what had happened—I was not talking about spirits only; I was talking about soft drink, as well—he gave that story to the columnists to write for the newspapers. That did great harm to me and to my reputation. I want the people in the journalistic field to judge that man on the actions he took on that day.

Let that man's credibility be judged on the facts I present. On Tuesday, 13 March, a wake was held for Kevin Hooper attended by an estimated 230 to 240 people. At least 180 people, if not 200, paid \$10 a head, the idea being to pay for the food and drink. During that session Ric Allen brought to the attention of the ALP the fact that there would not be enough money, whereupon we then contributed another \$150 to him

personally. It was paid by a cheque sent by our secretary. Members should keep in mind that if 180 people paid \$10, that would amount to \$1,800, plus our \$150, making \$1,950. I repeat that that is only if 180 people paid. The cost of the liquor was \$960.65, the cost of the food was \$436, making a total of less than \$1,400. And, the Hoopers paid for the food! I ask journalists, when considering that man's credibility, to keep that in mind, because any man who takes advantage of his friend's death is not a man.

I close by saying that I have had reservations about leaving this Parliament. I have gained enormously from my experience here. The highlights have been mainly in the area of consumer affairs, and I thank people such as Sir William Knox for the major changes that occurred when he was Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and I was the shadow Minister. Other highlights were in education, legal aid, the appointment of the ombudsman, the setting-up of the Small Claims Tribunal and the passage of the Retail Shop Leases Act. Although that legislation was not entirely satisfactory, at least it was a start.

My only regret in all of this is that there have been two casualties—my wife and my daughter.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (3.12 p.m.): It is a pity that the member for Rockhampton is not leaving this place with a more optimistic view of the future and without having raked over the past.

I suppose we all have problems with the media, but could I just give the honourable member a parting piece of advice? As long as he uses words like "scandal" and refers to the "Redcliffe hospital scandal", which has not been proved as a scandal and is really a scandal only in the allegations made by him and his party, he will find it difficult to escape from the trap for which he criticises others. If one deals in the currency of scandal without the obligation for proof, and involves others—one's colleagues, other members of Parliament and other parties in Parliament—in that allegation, it is a case of living by the sword and dying by the sword. Let us hope that we can all find some safer ground of combat than merely that of headline and allegation, and the use of the word "scandal".

I want to address my remarks in this debate to the very central institution of our courts. In particular, I want to deal with the issue of appeals. It has been said that, without a right of appeal, the rights and liberties of the individual are not protected. That is correct and sound. Human judgment is frail. Even people selected and appointed as judges can go wrong. No one person can know everything. Nobody can be on the ball all the time. People can err, and indeed the legal system recognises that and provides a right of appeal. There is even a right of appeal from an administrative decision, from the decision of an officer to a Minister or to a special committee. That is done because it is recognised that people can go wrong.

Indeed, the legal system is built upon a hierarchy of courts and a system of appeals that recognises that people can go wrong. That reserves the right of people to pursue what they believe to be their rights because of some internal compulsion, or because they are told by their advisers that there is still some light at the end of the tunnel, or some room to move in order to achieve what they claim.

Previously in this Chamber I have advocated the establishment of a permanent court of appeal, and, because of something very important that has happened since the last time I raised the matter, I advocate it with renewed vigour on this occasion. My own views have had to undergo a modification.

I do not suppose that it has percolated into the minds of the majority of members of this Chamber that action taken by the Commonwealth Government in altering the Judiciary Act has significantly changed the established rights of appeal of the citizens of Australia. There has been an enormous reduction in the rights of appeal of ordinary Australian citizens because of the circumscription, or limitation, of access to the High Court of Australia, a court that was deliberately set up to be the ultimate court of appeal in this country.

There were parallel appeals to the Privy Council. Over the last century there has been a popular move towards providing appeals to a single court, that is, to the High Court of Australia. I supported that move on the assumption that the High Court stayed at the apex of the pinnacle and that the access that was previously allowed would remain. But that access has been greatly reduced and there has been removal of the previous provisions that allowed people to take appeals to the High Court as of right. I will not bore members by speaking in specific terms, but appeals to the High Court were allowed as of right in actions involving amounts over a certain figure and, of course, on all constitutional matters.

During the last year, a vast restriction has been placed on appeals to the High Court. In short, the High Court has to certify that the matter of appeal involves something that is so important that special leave to appeal should be granted. For a start, that involves the making of two applications. Apart from the couple of weeks a year when the High Court sits in Brisbane, a citizen of Queensland usually has to fly with his legal advisers to Sydney, Melbourne or more often Canberra to obtain special leave to appeal. Then, after getting special leave to appeal, they have to return to Brisbane, and return south again for a substantial hearing. That involves an enormous cost.

That is the situation in which citizens of Australia find themselves at the moment. They have to seek special leave to appeal before they can get into court to have their appeal heard. There is a two-tier approach.

There has been an enormous removal of the right of appeal in the specified circumstances that previously applied. In fact, the term "court of appeal" has acquired a new meaning. A citizen can get into court only if the case that he brings appeals to the court. He is allowed to appeal only if the issue appeals to the court. Some people have said that it is no longer an exercise of right; courts are now exercising not just judicial powers but really executive powers.

Sir William Knox: Legislative powers.

Mr INNES: Courts are virtually exercising legislative powers. It is the delegation of a legislative type of power.

In Australia in the last 10 years, there has been a clear pattern of court decisions following the personality and inclinations of the judge hearing the case. There is no doubt that selection occurs on the basis of the sympathies of the judge or what he considers to be important. A good example is the States against the Commonwealth; federalism against centralism. It cannot be doubted that Mr Justice Murphy has taken his political and personal views——

Mr Davis: Like Barwick.

Mr INNES: Yes, Barwick had his own blinkers and took his own views of taxation with him to the bench; that is, that it is yours unless the law clearly says that it belongs to the Government.

Mr Justice Murphy has a far more extensive personal view of the world. Senator Bolkus also has very strong views and it is interesting to note that he was the dissident in the decision of the Senate inquiry. I understand that the provisions for travel by the de factos of Federal parliamentarians were written around the personal circumstances of Senator Bolkus. Last year he embarrassed Australia considerably by insisting on including his de facto wife in the parliamentary delegation in a number of conservative Roman Catholic countries. The Spaniards and Italians could not comprehend her designation.

A pattern emerges from the combination of a person's views and maladjustments and what he is prepared to do legislatively and judicially. In the United States, the selection of people with a political motive has been clear. I make this point because it is extremely dangerous when the right of appeal depends upon what appeals to the

personalities of the judge or judges who grant special leave. Because of the make-up of judges, it can no longer be assured that an appeal will be heard. A person may feel that, because his case involves X thousand dollars, it is his right to pursue it to the highest court of appeal in the land.

A dangerous practice has developed and it involves the removal of the rights of Australians. It has been suggested that the work-load of judges has become too great. If that is so, the size of the bench should be increased by a couple of members. I understand that the statistics do not disclose such a large increase in the number of cases before the High Court that would warrant the increased inclination of the judges, because of the diversity of their personalities, to write individual and longer judgments. Traditionally judges attempt to compromise so that a dominant judgment is written with which the other judges concur or from which they dissent. They would only make a few comments in that situation.

The Franklin Dam case is a good illustration of my point. The judgments of all the judges were different. It becomes a nightmare to extract a central and single principle on which lawyers can advise their clients, or on which lay people can advise themselves, so that they can stay within the law and understand their rights.

This is a retrograde step and the Queensland Bar Association, which regards it as a serious matter, has approached the Minister. Although some still believe that there should be an additional right of appeal to the Privy Council, the general attitude today towards appeals to the Privy Council has changed dramatically. It is strongly felt that people should have the right of appeal. That right should not circumscribed or limited merely to a single judge or to the Full Court of Queensland. As above reproach as many Queensland Supreme Court judges may be, there are still times when a right of appeal has to be availed of. For instance, a recent case involved consideration of the Common Law Practice Act. Because such a diversity of opinion exists among courts, an authoritative and ultimate court of the land should determine the matter.

The High Court of Australia has enjoyed an extremely high reputation for the quality of the appointments made to it, its professionalism and its judicial skills. Judgments by members of the High Court have frequently been cited with approval and respect by high courts of justice, such as the superior courts of Britain and other Commonwealth countries and the United States of America.

However, the High Court will not retain its eminence unless it continues to deal with the ordinary rights of Australians and people who are entitled to exercise a real right of appeal. The inclination towards the exercise of a personal preference, a political or philosophical viewpoint is encouraged by the system.

I refer to the actions of Senator Gareth Evans. I suggest that it would be a disaster if ever he were appointed to the bench of the courts of this country. Although his significant intelligence has been finely honed by lauding it over undergraduates, it has never been refined by real practice. He is responsible for passing laws in this country that will enable courts to have regard to, amongst other things, speeches in Parliament to ascertain what the legislature intended. What ratbagery! What nonsense! How could any consistency or understanding of legislative intent be gleaned from reference to anything said in debates in Parliament?

Mr Davis: Certainly not in this one.

Mr INNES: No, certainly not in this one; and by the time "Brother" Wright has gone to Canberra, certainly not in Canberra either.

Mr FitzGerald: He will not be joining them, so don't worry about that.

Mr INNES: If he joins them. Having in mind Senator Bolkus, I suspect that the same also applies in Canberra.

However, if rein is given to the use of personal preference in a judicial system, certainty is removed. Without certainty, no real legal rights obtain. People cannot put their affairs in order, and they need to be able to consult someone about their legal rights.

I express my concern about the removal of or limitation on rights of appeal. I ask the Minister to respond to my request for an indication of what the Government's attitude is. In my view, a permanent court of appeal is needed in this State. One of the reasons is that the work-load has intensified.

Mr Davis: You miss the old Privy Council.

Mr INNES: No. I am happy to go along with the High Court of Australia as long as there is a real right of appeal. But after this "smell", I would preserve any right of appeal.

I realise that there is reluctance on the part of present members of the Supreme Court to support the establishment of a permanent court of appeal in Queensland. That is understandable, because someone has to miss out on appointment to the permanent court of appeal. Nevertheless, as I have said before in this Chamber, that can be rectified. By the appointment of one or two rotating members for one or two years, a certain stimulation can be effected and there can be a cross-fertilisation.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: As you are a respected member of the legal profession, perhaps you should be appointed.

Mr INNES: I would hope that, unlike other political appointees, I could leave my political hang-ups behind me.

An Opposition Member: Would you look after your little mates?

Mr INNES: I would not want to look after either the little mates or the honourable member's new little mate, Senator Bolkus. I could need a lot of mates.

The time has come for the establishment of a permanent court of appeal in Queensland. I do not think that the High Court of Australia has been in greater crisis since its establishment than it is at present. The consequences of the Senate committee of inquiry and its ramifications for the reputation of that court are enormous. Never before has any member of the High Court been dealt with in such a fashion. It is interesting to remember the words that Senator Evans recalls when it suits his argument. He displays a facile and glib attitude. Several years ago, when he did not enjoy his present position, he said that judges of the High Court should be like Caesar's wife—beyond reproach.

In view of the ruling that was made earlier today, I will not trespass upon the specific findings of the Senate inquiry. Any person who holds judicial office and who goes out of his way to talk about cases with people who are his judicial inferiors and make it known that he has friends involved in the litigation process before them, be they magistrates, District Court or Supreme Court judges, is acting imprudently and is bound to bring his court into disrepute. No court can afford to be in disrepute. Without any proof to the extent required by the Constitution, on the standard of Caesar's wife set by Senator Gareth Evans so long ago, that behaviour is in itself enough to require the resignation of that judge.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (3.32 p.m.): I am very pleased to support the Minister and to commend him and his department for the Estimates that are now being debated. The scope of responsibilities with which the Minister and his department must cope and oversee is remarkable. When one looks through the "Queensland Government Directory" at the ministerial responsibilities and the Acts that are administered by him, the mind boggles. A tremendous work-load is placed upon him, and the Minister and his department have many serious responsibilities. Obviously, Acts must be reviewed constantly. A great deal of work is involved in the introduction of legislation.

The practical attitude of the Minister and his department is showing through very forcefully in the Queensland Government. In the last 12 months, members have seen the coming together of realistic, responsible and practical attitudes. That is to be commended. There is hardly a facet of life that does not in some way come under the Justice portfolio. Most people tend to gloss over the matter and say, "Justice has nothing to do with me." A brief run-down would show that the Minister's responsibilities include auctioneers and agents, justices of the peace, of which there are many throughout Queensland, Magistrates Courts and title to lands. The list goes on and on. The scope of those activities places a tremendous responsibility on everyone concerned with that area of operation.

I commend the Minister for his actions and for his attitude to the recently introduced superannuation scheme. It has been shown positively that the line taken by the Minister was correct. Throughout the industry and the community there has been an acknowledgement that the initial criticism levelled at the Minister was unwarranted and unwise.

My contact and communication with the department has been minimal. Until I became a member of this Assembly, I had no reason, perhaps fortunately, to come in contact with the other side of the Justice Department. In the last 12 months, because of my involvement in the Minister's committee, I have had some contact with the Justice Department. The legislative load with which members of the committee must assist the Minister is only a small portion of the work that is done in the department.

Mr FitzGerald: You are a very good member of the Minister's committee.

Mr STONEMAN: I thank the member for Lockyer. I try to play my small part.

When an active Minister and his department make decisions about legislation, obviously they will attract criticism. I prefer the old adage that a person who makes no decision makes nothing; perhaps he will not get into trouble, but he certainly will not achieve anything. I commend the Minister and his department for their application and attitude.

I commend the officers of the department in the country, particularly in my electorate. Mr Doug Evans, the magistrate at Ayr, moved into the district not long ago, but already he is playing a positive and forceful role in the community, not only as magistrate but also as chairman of the hospitals board. Ted Quinlan, the clerk of the court at Home Hill, is a long-time resident. He is approaching retirement. Anybody who has had the slightest contact with him would be appreciative of the work that he has done. He plans to stay in the Home Hill district after he retires. John Brennan is the new clerk of the court in Ayr. He has very quickly earned the respect of the community. It is important that a department place the right officers in country areas.

My main points in the debate relate to the Licensing Commission, which is administered by Mr Merv Stubbins. I congratulate the Minister and the commission on their initiative in organising a conference of those involved in the liquor industry. It was held in the temporary Chamber in the Parliamentary Annexe. It brought together one of the largest cross-sections that it would be possible to gather. It was wonderful to witness the co-operation and spirit of cohesion exhibited. The political views and philosophical attitudes were wide-ranging. The consensus evident could only have emerged under the careful guidance not only of the Minister but also of the officers of the Licensing Commission.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: You have just used the word "consensus". You have been knocking us for saying "consensus". It is all right in one place——

Mr STONEMAN: When I heard the member interjecting, I at first thought that he had a sensible contribution to make to the debate. I do not back away from the use of the word "consensus" when describing that conference of people involved in the liquor industry. However, in my opinion, it is impossible to achieve a consensus of 15 000 000

people, as the Federal Labor Party claims to be doing. The Minister achieved consensus of the people within one industry.

It is a pity that publicity emanating from the conference tended to overshadow the positive mood exhibited and the gains made. Everybody who attended learnt a great deal. There should be a continuing interchange of ideas so contact with all areas of responsibility under the Justice portfolio can be maintained. There is a need for ongoing communications. In my electorate, I plan to continue similar conferences at the local level. One problem that emerged from that conference was that of underage drinking. It was unanimously accepted that that is a major problem confronting the industry and the community. Young people who have access to alcohol in the home, hotels and clubs unfortunately, and in the community generally, present quite a problem.

Underage drinking is very difficult to police. Those who are charged with the responsibility of stopping it have a very difficult task. In most cases publicans who serve young people do so in good faith and really would not know whether they are aged 18, 21 or 12 years. A case in point is my own family. My eldest daughter is 20 years of age and rarely goes into hotels or clubs. However, when she does she is accepted as being of the required legal age. However, my twin daughters, who are 19 years of age, are always being asked to produce their student identification cards; they look about 15 or 16 years of age. Those who have asked to see their identification should be praised. They say, "Sorry girls, you will have to show me how old you are." That is an example of the difficulty of assessing ages, even with members of the one family.

For that reason I commend the initiative of the Minister in introducing voluntary identification cards. Right across this nation, particularly in Queensland, recognition has been given to the fact that no longer can this matter be walked away from, that it is a very positive means of coming to grips with the real problem of underage drinking in the community. My daughters are delighted with the idea, as is everyone else. I hope that the scheme is broadened so that not only will people have voluntary access but also they will have ready voluntary access to identity cards. After all, every honourable member of this Assembly has an identity card. When I first came here I had my photograph taken and put on an identity card. I do not feel threatened by having to have that card; in fact, I am honoured to have it.

I carry all sorts of credit cards. The only document that I carry that is capable of duplication is my driver's licence. I look forward to the day when that problem is also overcome by the use of a driver's licence that carries the holder's photograph. I commend the Minister on his initiative.

I have discussed the problem of underage drinking with the hoteliers in my electorate and they are unanimous that identification cards should have been brought in 10 or more years ago. The Government has had to wait for technology to catch up so that cards can be produced economically and efficiently. It is a wonderful initiative for which I commend the Minister, the department and all those who have been associated with it.

The Burdekin electorate has 11 hotels and they have a very positive attitude towards maintaining a high standard. At the conference with the Licensing Commission, moves to provide for a greater accessibility to, and availability of, liquor at sporting clubs were discussed. I am one who believes that a balance has to be maintained. I originally came from New South Wales where poker machines seem to have taken over. When poker machines were introduced, one of the first things to happen was a lowering of the standards of hotels. They very quickly became second-rate establishments. The Licensing Commission has a responsibility to make sure that a balanced provision of liquor enables hoteliers to maintain their current high standards. If I could digress very slightly, I make the point that, without poker machines, there is, in Queensland, greater communication in the community because of fund-raising. Queensland does not have clubs making huge amounts of money through the pulling of a handle, which entails very little physical activity. What happens in my area—and I am sure it happens in many other areas—is

that local sporting clubs and p. and c. associations run goose clubs. In that way the people running the raffles mingle with the rest of the community, which is able to have an input into those clubs and associations. At the same time, they enjoy good quality hotels that are properly controlled. They are also viable, and I hope that they will continue to be so for many years.

As I said, there are 11 hotels and numerous clubs in the lower Burdekin area, of which I am very supportive. Care must be exercised to ensure that clubs do not become pubs. It is essential to preserve a clear distinction between the two. After all, a club is established for the benefit and use of the members. It is not meant to take the place of the traditional hotel. The Minister is well aware of that, and I am sure that the Licensing Commission will continue to be mindful of it, too. Because I do not want the hotels in my electorate to degenerate into dives, a balance will have to be maintained between the services offered by golf-clubs, all the other sporting clubs with liquor licences, and the traditional hotels. Nothing is better than having a game of golf, cricket, football or whatever followed by a cold beer in the club with one's fellow members. However, the serving of drinks in the open sense must remain the domain of the traditional hotel. With that in mind I maintain continual contact with the clubs in my electorate, with the local branch of the Queensland Hotels Association and, in particular, with the president, Mr Tom Bungey.

I again commend the Minister and his department on the wonderful job that they do and the very positive way that they serve the best interests of this State. I again emphasise that if a person does not take a position he does not get rocks thrown at him, but by the same token he gets nowhere. I commend the Minister for taking Queenslanders down a practical road.

Mr COMBEN (Windsor) (3.47 p.m.): It would be remiss of me not to comment on the speeches of the last two speakers in this debate. Not since the day of the maiden speech of the member for Caboolture have I heard such banal generalities. That comment applies particularly to the 14-minute speech of the member for Burdekin, who obviously comes from Fairyland. The only value that he can be said to have in this Chamber is for stroking the Minister's back—he is certainly a good back-patter.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr COMBEN: He certainly rivals the members for Cooroora and Lockyer in saying the right things to Ministers. But all three of them need to protect their backs from each other. At the next election they will need a hide thicker than that of a rhinoceros. I assure the Committee that one person who will not make the Ministry is the member for Cooroora; the member for Caboolture will get there before him.

Mr Hamill: He brings papaws to the Ministers.

Mr COMBEN: He does, and from what one can understand of what the member for Caboolture says, he seems to put them all in his mouth.

Prior to the speech of the member for Burdekin we heard the usual legal lecture from the honourable member for Sherwood. I could not understand why he made an impassioned plea for a permanent court of appeal in this State. It must have been for one of two reasons. The first is that if a permanent court of appeal was established the honourable member could continue his legal practice, which we all know he has, because he can never be found in his electorate. He knows what will happen to his electorate after the general election. Upon the setting up of a permanent court of appeal the honourable member could continue his legal practice without having to worry about appeals going to Canberra, which takes a little more time. The second reason is that the honourable member might be thinking about an appointment to that bench one day. He knows that he will be out of a job in 1986, because the Premier has made no secret of that. I am quite concerned about the future of the honourable member for Sherwood.

I support the comments of the shadow Minister for Justice and Attorney-General relative to justices of the peace. It is unfortunate that the ancient and honourable position of justice of the peace is being debased by this Government and by the Queensland Justices Association.

Mr Innes: Are you one?

Mr COMBEN: The honourable member for Sherwood well knows that I am a JP. It was the honourable member's good friend and colleague John Greenwood who had the discretion and foresight, of his own volition, to appoint me as a JP. The honourable member for Sherwood would not remember whether he had recommended me because he recommends about 100 people per week to become justices of the peace. He is trying to buy votes in that way.

Mr Hamill: Mr Greenwood is discerning in personalities but not in politics.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, Mr Greenwood is discerning in personalities but certainly not in politics.

The number of JPs in this State now totals more than 46 000, and new appointments are being pushed through at the rate of about 2 500 a year. Virtually nothing is expected of nominees in terms of training or community status. The status of the office has become so low that justices of the peace are no longer allowed to even witness passport applications. Here, again, the Federal Government is adopting a realistic attitude. On the other hand, the Queensland Government says, "Oh, well, if you have become a JP because you have not got a criminal record, that is OK, and you can do anything in this land."

Mr FitzGerald: It is the same in every State.

Mr COMBEN: The member for Lockyer had better wait for a few minutes. I shall quote figures and facts and then rub his nose in them.

The position of JPs is not aided by the present executive of the Queensland Justices Association, which has recently acted in a high-handed, inept, incompetent and illegal manner. Led by the acting registrar of the association, Mr Peter MacDonald, a former press secretary to the Premier, the only purpose of the association now seems to be the promotion of Mr MacDonald's personal financial advancement.

This afternoon, I will look first at the appointment of JPs in this State before returning to examine the role of the Queensland Justices Association and Mr MacDonald.

The position of justice of the peace goes back many centuries in England to the time when they were local peace-keepers. In Queensland today, the position is given legal validity by effect of the Justices Act. The powers given to justices of the peace are extensive and important yet, in Queensland today, appointments are made at the second-highest rate of any State in Australia, without proper consideration being given to the persons being appointed. The member for Lockyer had better listen instead of going to sleep.

Every member of this Chamber knows that members no longer recommend only local community leaders as justices of the peace; rather, any person requesting appointment is appointed as a justice of the peace. As the shadow Minister stated earlier, it is a case of members' looking at the political realities and asking anyone who comes in seeking an appointment as a justice of the peace, "Why do you want to become a justice of the peace?" At the same time, a member says to himself, "I have got to appoint him, otherwise I will lose a vote." That is true of every member. I wonder whether any member has knocked back the application of a person to be appointed as a JP.

It is interesting to compare the population of the States, the number of justices of the peace in each State, the rate of appointment and the percentage of justices of the peace to the population of the State. The following table gives those figures—

State	Population	Number of Justices of Peace	Rate of Appointment	Percentage of State Population
Victoria	3 981 900	5 500	200 pa	.1381
Western Australia	1 260 000	2 550	200/300 pa	.2023
Tasmania	450 000	1 750	50/60 pa	.3888
South Australia	1 300 000	10 000	300 pa	.7692
New South Wales	5 150 000	150 000	5 000 pa	2.9126
Queensland	2 250 000	40 000	2 500 pa	1.7777

I do not think the Queensland figures can be justified as being necessary or relevant to the status or ability of JPs. The figures clearly show that Queensland is appointing JPs at a rate far in excess of the rate in all States other than New South Wales.

No attempt is made in Queensland to have prospective appointees interviewed by the Justice Department. Optional courses are available. There is no test of powers and duties. No attempt is made to establish whether a community benefit is to be derived from a person's appointment. As all honourable members know, all that a member does is sign the back of a form, after which the person sends off the form with two references that he has obtained from his closest mates. After that an inquiry is made into whether he has a criminal record. The fact that he does not have a criminal record because he is a bit sharper than the next criminal is irrelevant.

If one considers the powers and duties that JPs may undertake, one realises very quickly the need for compulsory training. How many State JPs, for example, would know their duties in regard to sworn complaints brought to them under the Peace and Good Behaviour Act or the Mental Health Act? How many would know what precautions should be taken if they were asked to witness a consent form for a girl aged 17 under the Marriage Act? How many would know what extra words they would need to write into a document if they were assisting a blind or illiterate declarant? How many would know whether they could validly witness an affidavit if it had already been signed or whether, in their capacity as JPs, they could legally witness the signature of a family member? How many would know whether they could use a rubber stamp signature or whether they could refuse to issue a search warrant that had been requested by a police officer? How many State JPs would know whether an affidavit is legal if it is not sworn on the Bible? How many would know how to administer an oath to a Jew or a person of the Islamic faith? Those sorts of questions may need to be answered by JPs from day to day, but very few would know the answers.

To ensure that JPs regain their proper status in Queensland, what is needed is a selection process that ensures that only people of proven responsibility within the community are appointed and that appointment is made only after a compulsory training program that is passed by way of a written examination.

Because of the burgeoning numbers of JPs in Queensland, a moratorium on their appointment should be put in place for a selected period, say, five to seven years. That would allow natural wastage to bring their number down to a more acceptable level. During that period, all JPs of less than 10 years standing, for example, could be given the opportunity to undertake a suitable training course or a course such as that run by TAFE colleges. If the JPs undertook such a course and demonstrated an adequate level of understanding, they could be reregistered. If such a course was not undertaken, JPs could be asked to show cause why their registration should not be revoked. As a result of such moves, the office of JP would once more have status attached to it and it would not be debased as it is at present.

The other matter that I wish to address today is the present executive administration of the Queensland Justices Association. As most honourable members would be aware, the Queensland Justices Association is an incorporated voluntary association of Queensland justices of the peace. Its present membership is approximately 10 500, which represents about a quarter of JPs in the State. Membership of the association is optional, but is

restricted to registered JPs. The association has been in existence since 1918 and was incorporated in 1948.

In the past two years, a number of newspaper articles have suggested that the association was striving for a new image. This supposedly new thrust and image has only appeared since Mr Peter MacDonald, a former press secretary to the Premier, became involved in the association.

One of those articles appeared in the "Sunday Sun" of 28 November 1982. The Queensland Justices Association claimed in that article that it had been hampered for years by increasing numbers and dwindling standards and that many JPs believe that they have become no more than virtual rubber stamps for documents. It claimed in that article that it wanted to rectify the situation. The article went on to say—

"The association's new State president Mr Owen Curtis said on a population basis Queensland had by far the largest number of JPs—Western Australia, with a similar population, having only 1 200."

The article also reported that in other States, JPs sit on minor cases and are widely used in country areas. Apparently, in other States JPs receive compulsory training and are selected by a more formal interview method.

The period since Mr Peter MacDonald has taken over the administration of the association has been marked with incompetence, ineptness and, now, illegality. That is hardly the type of behaviour that should be expected from such an association.

Peter MacDonald first entered the picture in mid-1983 when the association moved its headquarters to the first floor of MacArthur Chambers on the corner of Queen and Edward Streets. This is the office of Peter MacDonald Consultancy and the association and Mr MacDonald's business have the same telephone number. The profit to Mr MacDonald of this move is \$6,000 a year. Until a change of premises was made, a nominal yearly rent of only \$110 was paid by the association. The new rent of \$6,000 is paid to Mr MacDonald's business.

The next interesting point in this saga was the appointment of Mr MacDonald as the acting registrar of the association. That followed the appointment of Mr A. Greenwood, who is a retired stipendiary magistrate, as registrar. Mr Greenwood did not take up that position because his salary had not been finalised and his duties were not defined clearly enough before he was employed.

As a result, in September 1983, Mr MacDonald was appointed acting registrar, a position he still holds, at an annual salary of \$6,000. That is not bad for a very part-time position when the occupant is already getting a good slice of rent paid from the same source.

A recent letter circulated by Mr MacDonald referred to him as editor/acting registrar. I wonder how long it will be before he receives another \$6,000 for the position of editor of the association's magazine.

But even in this job as editor he is proving inept and incompetent. Mr MacDonald's years as the Premier's press secretary and his association with glossy colour publications that are so pleasing to the eye, but contain nothing, is well seen in the most recent examples of the magazine "Justice . . . and the JP". Also, the standard case now shows the signature of a JP, as witness, on a blank form. Every schoolchild—but apparently not Mr MacDonald—knows that a person should never sign or witness a blank form. The cover of every copy of "Justice . . . and the JP" shows a memorandum of holdings and the signature of a justice of the peace, and absolutely nothing else. One can hardly think of a more misleading cover article for this magazine. When questioned about this obvious ineptitude and incompetence, Mr MacDonald's reply was—

"Don't judge us too harshly. We really couldn't publish a photo of someone's private legal forms—and anyway, the JP signature we used was fictitious."

That is hardly a convincing explanation. That is the sort of explanation one would expect that Mr MacDonald had learned from serving all those years as the Premier's secretary. Obviously, the learning process cuts both ways.

The forms were still blank and witnessed—an example of the incompetence and ineptness of Mr MacDonald.

Let me now turn to the running of the association. The Queensland Justices Association (Inc) was incorporated in Queensland on 20 August 1948 and has, as a requirement of Article 35 of its articles of association, a clear edict that the annual general meeting shall be held in the month of October in each year. In 1983, that annual general meeting was held on 6 December under the guidance of Mr MacDonald, 2 months late. That is the first time in 60 years of the association's existence that the meeting had been held other than when required.

This year, the only advice about the holding of an annual general meeting that is presently known is that it will be towards the end of November—perhaps 29 November. By having such scant regard for the association's articles, Mr MacDonald is flouting the very laws (the company code) that every JP in Queensland is expected to uphold.

Earlier this year Mr MacDonald attempted to call a special general meeting to alter the membership. One would have thought that that was a very simple matter; but not for Mr MacDonald. He could not even give the required 14 days' notice, and, as a result, was presented with a solicitor's letter informing him that if the meeting went ahead any resolutions passed would be invalidly considered and therefore of no effect.

The letter was sent by Messrs Cannan & Peterson, who were acting on behalf of a member of the association. They referred to clause 38 of the articles of association, which clearly required 14 clear days' notice to be given of all extraordinary meetings of the association. It reads—

“In accordance with your Association's Articles, notice is deemed to be adequately served on all members if published in your magazine ‘Justice . . . and the JP’ The first notice of the current meeting was given in the July edition of the magazine (Volume 2 No. 2).

Mr Alford instructs us that your magazine is distributed by a firm known as ‘Dependable Mailing Service’. Our client's enquiries of that firm indicate that the magazine was not posted until 23 July 1984. This posting date has also been confirmed with Australia Post.

In the circumstances, we must inform you that the extraordinary general meeting to be held tonight has been improperly convened both in relation to the Articles of Association of the incorporated Association and paragraph 242 (2) of the Companies (Queensland) Code. It follows that any resolution purported to be passed at the meeting will be invalidly considered and of no effect.

Yours faithfully,

Cannan & Peterson”

That letter gives the total picture of the incompetence and incapability of Mr MacDonald, and also of the Queensland Justices Association.

There is a need for the Minister to look closely at the running of this association and the part being played by Mr MacDonald in milking the association dry by way of rents and registrar's fees and also accepting commissions on advertising bought in the association's magazine via his consultancy. The majority of JPs are honest, hard-working people who perform their duty by law without fee. To have a leech such as Mr MacDonald preying upon those persons appointed by the Minister's high office is a blight and a blot on the judicial system.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (4.5 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join in the debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. I will refer to general matters pertaining to the Minister's responsibilities, the Estimates connected with them

and some matters pertaining to my electorate that come within the responsibility of the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General.

I compliment the Minister and his staff on the work that they are doing. In presenting to the Parliament his report on the activities of his department and in leading the debate, the Minister mentioned that major reviews are taking place in his department. He said that a major systems and staffing review was being undertaken in the Registrar-General's Office, the State Electoral Office, the Licensing Commission, the Magistrates Courts Office, and the Public Defender's Office and the Acts section and the Justices of the Peace section of the Chief Office. In his presentation of the Estimates, he said—

“Productivity reviews aimed at establishing staffing levels, introducing management controls to assist the supervision of work flows and identifying problem areas for future detailed study, have been carried out in the Court Reporting Bureau . ”

I wish to direct my remarks to the Magistrates Courts service in the Toowoomba area. In the last couple of years I have received a number of submissions from the Darling Downs and South Western Law Association. I thank the Minister for his prompt reply to my correspondence. That association has some ideas about what it would like to take place in its particular area. However, all its wants or needs are not able to be met at present. Quite often there is very good reason for that.

For some time, there has been a push to have a District Court judge stationed at Toowoomba. I took up that proposal with the Minister. He has pointed out to me some of the difficulties that would be involved. It appeared to the people of Toowoomba and surrounding areas that a District Court judge would be required to sit in Toowoomba for about 15 weeks of the year. They contended that the Charleville/Cunnamulla/Roma circuit would take up another six weeks, the Warwick/Stanthorpe circuit six weeks, the Dalby circuit three weeks, and the Kingaroy circuit about three weeks of the year. The Minister pointed out to me, through the association, that a judge is on call for a number of weeks during the year and is also required to catch up on his backlog of work and read reports and journals. He would be occupied for a total of 38 weeks of the year. As a judge works for 44 weeks of the year, it was suggested that he could spend those additional six weeks in Brisbane. I agree with the Minister that if the judge was based in Toowoomba, he would be away from home for 24 weeks of the 44 weeks that he would be working.

I can see the problems that would be encountered if a District Court judge was based in Toowoomba while those circumstances continue. If the Minister keeps an eye on the developments and the work-load, a District Court judge could possibly be based in Toowoomba at a future date, I know that the people in Toowoomba would appreciate that. Should circumstances change, I am sure that the Minister will be able to work out a system under which a judge could spend more time in or be posted to Toowoomba.

The Minister said that tapes are being introduced into more and more courts throughout Queensland. I understand the difficulty the Minister has in meeting all the demands placed on his department. I am told that officers of the court at Toowoomba have found the tapes to be a real asset. I have it in writing that trial time is cut by approximately half. Verbally, however, it has been indicated to me that tapes cut the trial time in the Magistrates Courts to a third. Tapes are thus a great advantage to the litigants as well as to court officials. The time saved keeps the cost of trials down.

Unfortunately, difficulties are being experienced in transcribing tapes from Toowoomba. I understand that, currently, the tapes are being sent to Brisbane for transcription. Court officials tell me that it sometimes takes one month to obtain the transcript of tapes. That causes problems. Quite often the time for appeal has lapsed when the parties finally receive the transcript. For that reason, an appeal must be instituted prior to the receipt of the transcript. When the transcript is received, the advisers may decide not to go ahead with the appeal because the grounds are not strong enough. Great inconvenience is caused to everybody.

Steps should be taken to enable tapes to be transcribed in Toowoomba. I understand that the problem can be quite easily overcome. A well-trained legal stenographer could type the transcript from the tape and make it available to the magistrate and to the parties.

A second set of recording equipment is needed in Toowoomba. Magistrates from surrounding areas visiting Toowoomba should be supplied with recording equipment, which could also be used in country areas on a roster basis. The ultimate objective should be that each magistrate have his own mobile recording equipment. The cost to the department may be substantial, but the cost of running the court, the availability of the transcript and the length of trials should also be considered.

Wherever possible, all evidence to be placed before a coroner's court ought to be tendered on the one day in the one centre. A coronial inquiry initiated in Toowoomba may have to take evidence in Surfers Paradise or Mount Isa. For instance, a police witness may have been transferred. Circumstances do not always permit a gathering of witnesses on the one day. However, much more could be done to minimise inconvenience to people wishing to be legally represented at coronial inquiries. When somebody has been involved in a fatal accident it would be wise for legal counsel to be retained so that when evidence is taken the witnesses can be cross-examined. Steps should be taken to ensure that sittings of the coroner's court are held at an advertised place and time.

The member who has just resumed his seat spoke at some length about justices of the peace. The Minister told us that as at 31 October this year Queensland had in excess of 40 000 justices of the peace. I point out to the honourable member that the Government has established a metropolitan region TAFE college training scheme to assist justices of the peace in the performance of their duties. The Minister's department has also been instrumental in setting up a correspondence course for justices of the peace. That is very important because justices of the peace need to be aware of their responsibilities and duties. I agree that advantage is gained in having over 40 000 justices of the peace in the State, in that a justice of the peace should be more readily available in the more sparsely populated areas of the State. Those who do not know how to go about looking for a justice of the peace sometimes have great difficulty in finding one, because they do not walk down the street with a "JP" tag on the shoulder. Those who regularly require the services of a justice of the peace should inquire from the local clerk of the court or member of Parliament for a list of the local justices of the peace.

The Minister should reconsider the whole system of appointment of justices of the peace. Some people consider that "Justice of the Peace" is a prestigious title. However, the regard in which justices of the peace are held in some areas is declining. In country areas two justices of the peace may be required to sit as a court. Although one of them is invariably the local clerk of the court, who is very familiar with court procedure, the other one seldom has that familiarity. In my opinion justices of the peace should be divided into two groups. One group should be authorised to witness signatures, and the other, which would be comprised of people with some legal training, could be asked to sit on the bench. Because the present system is very old, I would not like to see it abandoned.

The Minister is also responsible for the State Electoral Office, which has recently introduced new computer systems based on automatic allocations of electoral districts and divisions. A State-wide canvass for the updating of electoral rolls commenced on 1 August this year and ran for two months. The house-to-house canvass was carried out by members of the community. People who are not enrolled are faced with a problem, but the department undertook the State-wide canvass to try to ensure that everybody was on the roll. At election-time a few people will always complain that they are not enrolled or are on the wrong roll, but the registrar is not always at fault. It could be that the people were not at home when the canvasser called and did not answer the correspondence that was left for them. That can prevent a person's name from being on the correct roll, or any roll. The electoral rolls are currently in excellent condition. People enrolled in one electorate, who move around the State for a long period without

spending more than three months in one area are not eligible to have their enrolment changed.

It is possible for members of a family to be enrolled although they have not been seen in the area for some time. A man might be an itinerant worker, but because he has not been seen in the area complaints can be made about his being on the roll. A person has only to stay in an area for three months to be entitled to enrol. If he lives in another locality for three months, he must complete an application to change his electoral address. But I know that in some instances the person checking the roll says, "That person has not lived here for a couple of months so I will cross him off the roll." It is difficult to track down itinerant workers. That is one of the physical problems involved in keeping the rolls, but an accurate electoral roll must be maintained.

I congratulate the Minister on his initiative in issuing identification cards to 18-year-olds on a voluntary basis when they apply for enrolment. As has been said by other members, it is sometimes a great help if people carry personal identification. Some young people already carry identification at all times in the form of students' cards in order to obtain travel and other discounts. Young people should be encouraged to apply for the new identification cards.

I now want to discuss the activities of the Licensing Commission. In recent years many changes have occurred in the drinking habits of Queenslanders. Without doubt beer sales in some areas have taken a dramatic downturn, but in other areas sales have increased, particularly through drive-in bottle shops and liquor barns. Nowadays husbands are inclined to take their wives and young children to a beer garden. Hoteliers tell me that the old style of public bar drinking, with the men drinking for a number of hours after work, has been the worst affected. Drinking styles are changing. Some hoteliers blame the introduction of the .05 blood alcohol level for drivers of motor vehicles, but I am quite happy about that turn of events. Most people are becoming more responsible towards their fellow road-users. I do not think there was any great mateship in the old beer swill, and people are now drinking in a more responsible manner. The introduction of the .05 blood alcohol level in Queensland was not the only factor, because the trend has been observed right across Australia.

A change has taken place in the social life of Australians. Hoteliers have noticed that the decrease in liquor sales has affected their incomes, but because most of them are astute businessmen, no doubt they will find other ways to increase their profits. I notice that most hoteliers are keeping their hotels in excellent condition, to try to encourage more people to drink socially. It is excellent that people can enjoy the conviviality of their friends in a social drink without resorting to drinking large quantities of alcohol.

In the last financial year from the Liquor Act Fund a grant of \$118,212 was made to the Minister for Transport to promote an educational program to discourage intemperance. To some people, it is ironic that those moneys should be used for that purpose. However, I think that the move is to be commended.

The sum of \$200,113 was given to the Minister for Health to assist in overcoming the problem of alcoholism. The sum of \$194,875 was given to the Minister for Transport.

Time expired.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (4.25 p.m.): Today, in the Victorian Parliament, five volumes, that is, volumes 1 to 5, of the royal commission into the activities of the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union—commonly referred to as the Costigan investigation—were tabled. As I have the five volumes in my possession—

Mr Harper: Supplied through the courtesy of the Government.

Mr WARBURTON: As I was saying, as I have the five volumes in my possession, I believe it only proper that I make reference to certain matters contained in them.

Mr Harper: You are aware of my intention to table the volumes?

Mr WARBURTON: I was not aware of that until the Leader of the House came to me seeking assistance in that regard.

Honourable members would be well aware, as a result of the royal commission, that the tentacles of the Costigan investigation extended beyond the State boundary of Victoria and in fact penetrated deep into the heart of our own State of Queensland. The integrity and impartiality of Frank Costigan, QC, are beyond reproach. I am sure honourable members would agree that any criticisms, remarks or suggestions made by him would be made only after very serious consideration by both himself and senior counsel assisting, namely, Mr Douglas Meagher, QC.

Volume 1 of the report deals directly with an answer given by the Premier to a question asked by a Government member in December last. I wish to quote that question and answer. The question was—

“(1) Is he—”

that is the Premier—

“aware that allegations have been made by Frank Costigan in recent Federal Court proceedings in Sydney that the Comalco House Branch of the Bank of New South Wales (now Westpac) was used in 1980 and 1981 by the Painters and Dockers Union to finance drug transactions in this State?

(2) Has he made any inquiries regarding these allegations and, if so, what was the result of such inquiries?”

The Premier provided the following answer—

“(1 & 2) I am aware of these allegations and have made inquiries of the Police Department. The Queensland police have no knowledge of any painter and docker involvement in drug trafficking in this State; nor do the Queensland police have any knowledge or information which would suggest that the Comalco House branch of the then Bank of New South Wales was used to finance drug trafficking in this State. The Queensland Police have co-operated extensively with the Costigan Royal Commission. At no time, however, have these allegations or matters relating to them been raised with the Queensland police. I am most concerned that serious allegations concerning our State would be made without their first being raised with the Queensland police. I do not wish to add to the public controversy concerning several public figures currently in dispute with Mr Costigan, but I am concerned that allegations which, on their face, appear to be without basis would be made by Mr Costigan, particularly when they are calculated to cause serious damage to the reputations of such public figures.”

The reports, which obviously the Government has and which the Minister has indicated that I have received through the good grace of the Government—and I was not aware of that—rehash something that earlier this year was the subject of media attention. It is pertinent to point out that Mr Costigan saw fit to resurrect that matter in one of the volumes of his report.

I quote part of what Mr Costigan had to say about the Premier's comments when a question was put to him by a Government member last December. Mr Costigan said—

“The Premier is in error in suggesting that I have made public allegations in the Federal Court. Further, he is in error in suggesting I have made ‘allegations’, whether public or otherwise. The letter indicates the purpose of the investigations. So far as Messrs Packer, Ray and the other witnesses in that group are concerned, it makes no allegations and I make none: I merely seek explanations . . . The Premier has not written or spoken to me about these matters. If his concern is not abated by my remarks today, and he seeks further information, then I would be happy to explain to him, confidentially, for fear of prejudicing my investigation, the basis of my enquiries. These are not matters for public debate, nor are they matters

where I expect to be subjected to uninformed comment in Parliament by the holder of the highest political office in that state.”

Honourable members would understand that Mr Costigan’s remarks were directed straight at the Premier of this State (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen). I will table that section of the Costigan report. The information to which I will refer later will show the relevance of the question asked of the Premier by a Government member and the response, which I quoted, from the Premier.

Members of Parliament have become used to the Premier making uninformed comment. Opposition members have been critical of the way in which he twists matters to suit his own requirements and considerations. On this occasion, a royal commissioner has been scathingly critical of the way in which the Premier has conducted himself in respect of this matter. I realise that this matter has been aired previously, and it has been resurrected properly, I believe, by Mr Costigan in his report.

It is unfortunate that volumes 6 to 11 will not be made public. As I have said, only volumes 1 to 5 were tabled today in the Victorian Parliament. However, reference is made to very important issues in volumes 9 and 10 and in recommendations contained in volume 1. Volume 1 refers specifically to matters contained in volumes 9 and 10.

The first of the recommendations concerns the activities of persons referred to as Ray and Packer—Mr Brian Ray and Mr Kerry Packer. It is appropriate that these recommendations be placed on record in this Parliament today. Reference is made in volume 10 to the death in Queensland of Ian Percival Coote. It is appropriate also that those recommendations by Mr Costigan be recorded in this Parliament today. I will quote directly from the recommendations contained in volume 1 of the Costigan report and I will table that information for the interest of honourable members. The report reads—

“Volume 9—ACTIVITIES OF RAY/PACKER

I recommend that the matters described in chapters 2 to 5 be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions (Commonwealth) for completion of the investigation and the initiation of criminal proceedings.

I recommend the establishment of a joint task force comprising police officers of the Australian Federal Police, the New South Wales Police and the Queensland Police supported by officers of the Australian Taxation Office and the Corporate Affairs Commission of New South Wales and the Corporate Affairs Office of Queensland, to investigate the matters described in chapters 6 to 10.

I recommend that the Commonwealth of Australia advise the New South Wales Government of my recommendation that the criminal charges on which Phillip Kingston Carver presently awaits trial should be discontinued.

I recommend that all of these investigations be under the supervision of the National Crime Authority and that consideration be given to the grant of a reference to allow their proper completion.”

Volume 10 refers to the death of Coote. In due course, I will have something to say about him and his background. I quote from the Costigan report in respect of the death of Coote, as follows—

“I recommend that the joint task force referred to in paragraph 10.026 investigate the circumstances of the death of Ian Percival Coote to prepare evidence to be led at an Inquest into that death, and to explore the other matters referred to in Volume 10.

I recommend that the selection of the joint task force recommended in paragraphs 10.026 and 10.029 be in accord with the criteria recommended in paragraph 15.006 of volume 10.

I recommend that the Commonwealth of Australia transmit to the Government of Queensland Volume 10 of this Report, and my recommendations that there be an Inquest into the death of Ian Percival Coote.”

The report contains an operational overview, and it is contained in volume 1. In relation to a man named Ian Beames, this is what it says—

“As an offshoot of my collation of material in respect of Lockyer I was directed to the activities of a Queensland accountant Ian Beames.”

I refer to this matter because it relates to some of the discussion that was covered by Costigan and resulted from a question asked of the Premier and Treasurer himself. I continue—

“This man already had a criminal history following his involvement in what might be termed white collar crime. At the time I commenced my investigation into his activities he was still in prison. I knew already something of him. He had been Brian Maher’s ‘representative’ in Singapore in 1978 and in that capacity, had been involved in dealings with the Nugan Hand organisation.

Beames gave evidence in regard to a company P. & S. Meats Pty Ltd. This company, despite its name, had nothing to do with the butchery trade. Its major activity was in the field of tax minimisation through film schemes. The directors of this company were Beames, Lockyer (at one stage) and a man called Brian Ray. A great deal of money passed through the accounts of this company despite the fact that it was of no substance.

My enquiries took me to a man called McCarthy who was a financial adviser employed by Lockyer. He had formerly been employed as a manager with the Comalco House branch of the Bank of New South Wales in Brisbane. He was dismissed from the Bank for misconduct having allowed the bank to become a creditor of the Lockyer group of companies to the extent of \$2m. He was dismissed in December 1980 and thereafter sought and obtained employment with Lockyer. He was examined in a public session of the Commission in June 1983. His activities and the evidence given by him have been referred by me to the Queensland Police Fraud Squad for its attention.”

Under the heading “Kerry Packer” Mr Costigan had this to say—

“From other information I had received, but which it is not appropriate to detail here, I was anxious to pursue the financial arrangements of P. & S. Meats. I discovered that in February 1980 cash payments totalling \$225,000 were made by this company to Kerry Packer. I received conflicting evidence in relation to Mr Packer’s involvement with the company P. & S. Meats. Those matters are developed more fully in a separate volume of this Report. All I need say here is that depending on which view is accepted, Mr Packer was either a financier/investor or an investor in the film schemes promoted by P. & S. Meats. A matter of separate interest is that Mr had borrowed the sum of \$925,000 from a company Progress Credits in Singapore at the end of 1979. This money was brought into Australia pursuant to Reserve Bank approval. \$800,000 of the amount received was invested, in a manner contrary to the advice given to the Reserve Bank, in P. & S. Meats.

I was anxious to probe the film scheme. Because of my previous experience with the personnel involved in the Hamidan exercise I was sceptical as to the legitimacy of this scheme. I was also most anxious to establish precisely what happened to what otherwise appeared to be unexplained cash payments. There was a further cash payment of \$120,000 from the accounts of P. & S. Meats later in 1980 in respect of which no explanation has ever been received by me despite earnest enquiry.”

The report indicates that the person stated that he had no knowledge of it, although his signature was on the cheque.

I referred to Mr Coote when I quoted material from volume 10. Mr Costigan indicated that, as part of his investigation into the connection between Ray and Packer, he was informed that those men had dealt in a number of joint land transactions in Queensland. One of them was at Victoria Point. In the course of looking at that development he became aware that the manager of the branch of the Bank of New South

Wales at Capalaba had resigned and subsequently had become employed by Brian Ray. That man was Ian Coote. The report states—

“This had a familiar ring to it. Mr Coote’s branch of the Bank was involved, prior to his resignation, in lending money to purchasers of land at Victoria Point. The circumstances of those loans were suspicious and, once again, they are dealt with at some length in the separate volume dealing with those matters.

Mr Coote died on 16 December 1982 of gunshot wounds. The view at the time was that he had committed suicide. I am satisfied that it was murder. My views and recommendations are set out in the separate volume.

The investigation into these matters was, from time to time, interrupted by Federal Court proceedings taken by various of the parties involved. However, as at December 1983 all court proceedings were abandoned. I was therefore able to continue my investigations until 30 June 1984 when, in keeping with my agreement with the Government, I suspended operations. There are matters still to be investigated in this area. They are of considerable importance.”

Mr Randell, I will also table that document which has been taken from the report, which I understand the Premier and Treasurer is about to table. It could be of great interest to honourable members.

I was unaware that the Queensland Government had any intention of tabling the volumes today.

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen: It all hinged on whether they gave them to us or not. We have been asking for them so that we could table them.

Mr Warburton: I am simply making an explanation. I was unaware of that. I felt that somebody had an obligation today to at least make some mention of the pertinent facts that affected the State of Queensland and that they should be reported in this Parliament and included in “Hansard”.

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen: This morning the Prime Minister rang my secretary and said that it would be available at about half past 2 or 3 o’clock this afternoon, which it was.

Mr Warburton: I understand that volume 10 will be transmitted to the Premier in due course. It now remains to be seen whether the Queensland Government will be prepared to co-operate in accordance with the recommendations and the very serious matters that apparently affect our State, which are contained in volumes 9 and 10 of the Costigan report.

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

Progress reported.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Final Report of Royal Commission into the Activities of the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (4.45 p.m.), by leave: I lay upon the table of the House volumes 1 to 5 of the final report of the royal commission into the activities of the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union. I table \$12m worth and hope that something worth while comes out of it.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the report on the table.

SUPPLY

Resumption of Committee—Estimates—Ninth and Tenth Allotted Days

Mr MENZEL (Mulgrave) (4.46 p.m.): I compliment the Minister on the way in which he handles his portfolio. I wish to deal with the manner in which action may be taken against unscrupulous lawyers.

Mr Comben: Crooks.

Mr MENZEL: I will not go as far as calling them crooks. However, people aggrieved by lawyers, whether for overcharging or for not doing a job, probably have no right of appeal. People lose court cases and even go bankrupt because a lawyer has not carried out his duties in the correct manner.

I have raised this matter previously. The Queensland Law Society dealing with complaints about lawyers is a bit like Caesar judging Caesar. It is ridiculous. A tribunal should be set up that has on it at least one consumer representative. Obviously, the legal profession should be accountable. Lawyers in the Chamber may or may not agree with me. Opposition members say that the Government should be accountable—I will deal with that later—but the Queensland Law Society is not fit to judge lawyers who might be known personally to members of the committee. I continually receive complaints about lawyers.

Mr Mackenroth: Is it true that the Queensland Cane Growers Council has cane-growers only on it?

Mr MENZEL: I will answer that interjection. That is not true. A cane-grower lodges an appeal first to the local Sugar Cane Prices Board, the chairman of which is the clerk of the court or the magistrate. There is a representative for the mill and one for the cane-growers. If the cane-grower is dissatisfied with that decision, he appeals to the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, which is chaired by a Supreme Court judge and also has on it a millers' representative and a growers' representative. It could be said that the judge has the casting vote. Cane-growers do not judge each other. Perhaps the Queensland Law Society could model itself along similar lines.

Mr Davis: That is an indictment of the Law Society, and the solicitors up here won't cop it.

Mr MENZEL: I am trying to be constructive and sensible about this. It is not a joking matter.

Soon after I was elected to this place, a lady from Atherton telephoned me because she was having difficulty getting hold of the papers relating to the transfer of her house. Every time she rang her solicitor in Cairns, the girl who answered the call said that the solicitor was out. Supposedly he was in court. I have received similar complaints on many occasions. The same may be said of accountants. In fact, I have heard of people who have gone bankrupt through the negligence of members of other professions.

Many people are not aware of how simple it is to apply for legal aid. Perhaps the availability of legal aid should be better advertised so that those who cannot afford to pay their legal costs can be legally represented. A woman could be fighting to retain the custody of her children, or there could be a legal battle over access to those children. If one party has a great deal of money and is continually trying to gain custody, the other party, who has lawful custody but very little money, needs legal aid. When one party to an action can afford the best lawyers in the country, the other party also needs a very good lawyer, and, in some cases, that lawyer must be paid for out of legal aid. That might cost a great deal, but a better system is needed to ensure that legal aid is readily available. Those who need legal representation should not have to go to their local member of Parliament and ask him to make representations on their behalf. Although legal aid should be more readily available to the public, the concept is very good and should be encouraged.

The Minister is also responsible for voting. I am concerned about electoral visitor voting. Certainly those in the Mulgrave electorate who carry out electoral visitor voting cannot be faulted. Because only one person goes along with the ballot-box, I would hate to have that job.

Mr Davis: Would you ban scrutineers?

Mr MENZEL: I will come to that.

When a person is carrying out electoral visitor voting, he tells the scrutineers at what time and from where he will be leaving. If the scrutineers happen to be a little late, the person has to carry out that electoral visitor voting by himself. If any queries are raised about possible irregularities, the onus rests upon the person who has carried out the electoral visitor voting. If for no reasons other than for their own protection and so that the public can be sure that everything is above-board, two people should be appointed to carry out electoral visitor voting. Even though only a handful of votes may be involved, everything must be seen to be above-board. I have not received any complaints about electoral visitor voting, but I have often thought that the present system is not the best one possible.

Mr Vaughan: The candidates are entitled to send along scrutineers.

Mr MENZEL: I have mentioned that.

I now want to discuss an incident that occurred when the Prime Minister visited the Pacific International Hotel in Cairns on the night of Thursday, 25 October. I understand that there was a drunken party in the Prime Minister's suite. I understand that a game of bowls was played up and down a corridor of the hotel using empty stubbies. I call on the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General to investigate that incident. I want to know whether tax-payers' money was used on the grog that was drunk in the Prime Minister's suite.

Mr Stephan: Did they break any bottles?

Mr MENZEL: I understand that there were a lot of broken bottles, and that photocopier fluid was spilt on the carpets. I understand that the staff are still trying to clean them. It is an absolute disgrace. I want to know whether the Prime Minister was at the party, and in particular whether John Gayler was there.

Mr De Lacy: I want to know, because I didn't get an invitation.

Mr MENZEL: Perhaps the honourable member——

Mr Booth interjected.

Mr MENZEL: If my information is correct, quite a few reputations will be destroyed.

I call on the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police to conduct an investigation. That sort of activity during a prime ministerial visit is an indictment of the Federal Government. I call on the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General to conduct an investigation. It is an absolute disgrace and a waste of tax-payers' money. I want to know who paid for the grog they drank till 2 o'clock in the morning. I want to know who was at the party.

Mr Goss interjected.

Mr MENZEL: I was looking after some sugar industry representatives here today, and I introduced them to the member for Cairns. There is no need for the honourable member for Salisbury to worry about that. I will not be diverted. This is a serious issue. The Prime Minister and the member for Leichhardt should resign or stand aside until a full investigation is conducted. If the Commonwealth will not investigate the incident, I call upon the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General to do so. Something should be done.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr MENZEL: Somebody has to do it. I cannot imagine that the Prime Minister will do it; he will not judge himself. It is up to the State Government to conduct an investigation.

Mr Booth interjected.

Mr MENZEL: Yes. It would be like the Law Society, with Caesar judging Caesar. As far as I am concerned, this is a repetition of the Watergate scandal.

Mr FitzGerald: That shows the contempt with which he treats the north.

Mr MENZEL: Yes. Total contempt.

I now want to return to the subject of voting. Over the past couple of years the Minister has sent people round the State checking the rolls, and I compliment him on that initiative. Over the years, and particularly near election-time, I have checked the roll in my electorate. I often saw the names of people who were no longer living in the electorate—some of them had died. The omission in not removing the names of deceased persons from the roll can be exploited by unscrupulous people who, in an area where they are not known, might claim a vote in the name of a deceased person. For that reason, the electoral rolls should be continually upgraded, although in country areas where most people know each other the sort of exploitation to which I refer cannot occur as much as it can in the cities where nobody knows anybody else all that well, and in a way one's next door neighbour is a stranger. I hope that the Minister keeps up his surveillance of the electoral rolls to ensure that they are as near as possible to correct. There will always be a problem of one sort or another because people come and go and mistakes are made. People are not always prompt in applying for enrolment when they move to another electorate. Because of that, the Government has a responsibility to ensure that the rolls are kept up to date.

I again call on the Minister to investigate the scandal at the Pacific International Hotel in Cairns. There was a drunks' party. Who was at it? Were the Prime Minister and the Federal member for Leichhardt there?

Mr GOSS (Salisbury) (5 p.m.): I wish to raise certain matters that have already been touched on by the Leader of the Opposition. They relate to the findings of the Costigan commission's report as they have come through to this Parliament and through the media during the course of the day.

The Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and this Government have a heavy responsibility to respond in a serious and positive way to the findings of the Costigan commission. If the Government does not respond——

Mr Harper: You can be assured that we will respond adequately.

Mr De Lacy: He said in a positive way.

Mr Harper: In a positive way, too.

Mr GOSS: Simply a response from the Minister for Police will not meet the requirements of this situation.

What is needed is a commitment from the highest level—from the Premier, from the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and from the whole Government—to respond and act on the findings of Mr Costigan.

Mr Harper: The Premier has already given that commitment in a press conference this afternoon.

Mr GOSS: If the Minister is patient, I shall go into more detail.

The Justice Department should be looking at forming its own task force or contributing to a State task force to attack the problem of organised or major crime. I call on the Premier and the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General to give their absolute and unqualified assurance that such action will be taken and also that there will be full co-operation and participation in a joint Federal/State task force. In particular, I call on the Premier and the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General to give an assurance that they will not attempt to veto or block any of the recommended investigations into major crime in Queensland.

A Justice Department contribution to any task force is vital—not just because of the seriousness and complexity of the issues but also because of the wide range of activity requiring investigation. It reaches into every aspect of the law—not just murder, drug-distribution and SP book-making but also complicated land deals, fraudulent transactions, bankruptcy and tax fraud. That sort of activity requires the most comprehensive response ever mounted by a Queensland Government to defend this State against the threat of major crime.

I raised those matters in June of this year. I raised allegations of a major criminal network based on the Sunshine Coast and, in particular, the activities of that criminal network relating to cocaine importation and distribution. What was the response at that time? It was non-existent. It is all very well to give an assurance now that the evidence has hit the front pages of the newspapers of the country. Where was the Premier in June of this year when those matters were raised? Where was the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police when those matters were raised in June? Only now, when the evidence hits the fan, do we get the so-called assurance that there will be full co-operation.

The only response from the Government—if I could call it that—was a half-hearted response by the Minister for Police along the lines, "Put up or shut up. Produce the evidence and we will investigate." That was the response. The responsibility to produce the evidence is on the Government. It is the responsibility of the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Police to detect and deter major crime; not to put the onus back onto the Opposition or the citizens to do their job for them and then to act when the case is proved, and only then. What could be more calculated to deliberately and inevitably conceal those matters?

I must ask: What ability do the relevant Ministers have when it comes to investigating major crime and assuring the people of Queensland that they are in control of what happens in Queensland and, in particular, that they are in control of who comes here to go into business and the way in which they go into business, especially when it comes to dealing with the Government and obtaining valuable Government licences and permits of one sort or another?

The Minister may recall a discussion earlier in the year about Justice Department involvement in extending permits and licences to the Rooklyn organisation. Nothing more has been heard of that.

However, I will deal with the casino licences, which are more relevant and important. What assurances can Queenslanders have from this Government that the casinos will be free of infiltration by organised or major crime as has happened in many other countries? The Government claims that, in relation to the casino licences, it has given an assurance to the public that it has thoroughly investigated all the applicants and that the public can feel safe that there will be no criminal activity, much less major or organised criminal activity. The Government claims that it has cleared the applicants.

However, one of the applicants was Kerry Packer and what I understand to be known as the Majura casino syndicate. That syndicate was runner-up to the successful Jupiters casino syndicate. The Majura syndicate was cleared by the Government. Kerry Packer, through a company called Wentworth Enterprises Pty Ltd, had a 25 per cent stake in that syndicate.

Mr Harper: What is the point of this? He did not receive the licence, did he?

Mr GOSS: The point is that the Minister and the Government cleared all applicants, including that syndicate. The community must have serious doubts as to the Government's ability or willingness to investigate these people seriously.

If one assumes that the Government was genuine and demonstrated good faith in investigating the applicants, one must conclude incompetence on the part of the Government because it was not able to advert to any of the matters that Mr Costigan has come across. I assume that, in relation to Mr Packer, the Government does not share the concerns of Mr Costigan. That seems to me to be a fair assumption.

As I said, one of the applicants for the casino licence on the Gold Coast was a syndicate in which Mr Kerry Packer had a 25 per cent share. What about that investigation? Does the Government still stand by it, or does it now have qualifications about it?

As to criminal activity—the State is dealing with an extensive network based primarily on the Sunshine Coast. People are involved in complicated land fraud and very valuable properties are held under false names. None of this has been detected or thoroughly investigated.

On Monday of this week I made a statement about the problem of major crime, which is becoming located increasingly in Queensland; yet again I have had no meaningful response from the Government. I spoke also of the problems associated with the bureau of criminal intelligence and the inadequacies of the response by this Government.

The Government's response to major crime and the complicated networks developing across Australia is paltry compared with the response of Governments in the southern States. Within the mechanism of the bureau of criminal intelligence, about 20 officers work under ridiculous resource restrictions and incur large amounts of overtime. That compares with 100 officers in New South Wales and over 80 in Victoria. That is why major crime networks are increasingly locating in Queensland.

Although that number is at Police Department level—and I readily concede that—the Government will not get to the bottom of criminal activity and attack it unless there is a comprehensive response involving officers from the Minister's department. Officers of the Justice Department have been available at short notice to play a role—a convenient role—when it comes to assisting the police by vetting or assessing cases conducted by the police. Good examples are investigations into the Stock Act, the Brands Act and cattle-duffing offences in Charters Towers.

Mr Harper: You have egg on your face there.

Mr GOSS: It remains to be seen who has egg on his face because the Government will not table the report. What a joke!

The Minister's department and its officers conveniently assessed that brief or the evidence and gave the required advice. That was the end of the matter until the news was broken in the public arena.

Irrespective of the merits, and no matter whether the Minister is right, I am right or someone else is right—only time will tell—that was an instance in which the Minister and his advisers played appropriate roles. Why cannot such a role be played in relation to the more serious matters being discussed today?

I look forward to a response from the Minister that will indicate the precise role that his department will play in any kind of mechanism, such as a task force, that will deal with these particular issues. I am very keen to obtain an assurance on behalf of the public of Queensland about blocking or vetoing of any particular line of investigation that may be undertaken in Queensland. However, I think that enough has been canvassed on that issue for one day.

I am sure that, as the issue will be with us for some time, the Minister will have many things to tell members about the progress of such an investigation and the participation of the Queensland Government.

In the time that remains, I turn to the fifth annual report of the Legal Aid Commission, which was tabled by the Minister yesterday. On page 26 of that report, receipts for the year were listed as follows: from the Commonwealth Government, \$8,425,200; from the Queensland Law Society, arising from statutory interest, \$2,875,000; and from miscellaneous receipts, \$1,432,018. That makes a total of \$12,732,218. Notwithstanding that very substantial and generous contribution from the Federal Government—remember that the Queensland Government makes no contribution—the deficiency between payments over receipts amounted to \$721,037. Such a deficiency raises serious implications about the conduct of legal aid services and the legal aid system in Queensland.

As I have said, the Queensland Government makes no contribution to the funding of the Legal Aid Commission. The Queensland Government does, however, make an inadequate contribution towards the cost of legal aid in the form of public defence. The only comment that I make in relation to that matter is that fees allocated in that regard are inadequate. Everybody recognises that it will be necessary to revise the funding drastically to bring it more into line with the scale of fees applied by the Legal Aid Commission. Although those fees are based on legal aid rates, at least they ensure that people who are represented by private practitioners receive reasonable attention.

In any case, I hark back to the Minister's responsibility for doing all in his power to ensure that the legal aid system functions properly and is provided with adequate funding. Even if the Government decides that it will not contribute one cent of the Queensland Budget to the expenses of the Legal Aid Commission, the Minister has the power and the ability to take decisions that will correct this problem.

At the present time, far more than \$1m is held in an account in the name of the Queensland Law Society. That money has come from the interest on trust accounts, which is a voluntary payment made by the banks and credited to this account. The balance of the account is approaching \$2m. I am informed that it will probably be in the vicinity of \$2m from now on.

The Minister has known about this problem for six months. I am told that he wants to introduce legislation to control the account. Perhaps that is necessary—I am not sure. But, if it is absolutely necessary, I hope that the Minister will advance the reasons.

Why has it taken six months to draw up legislation? During that time, the money has been lying idle. It is money that has not been used. A number of bodies in Queensland have put in what might be described as bids for the money, but to date the negotiations are continuing. I am told that members of the legal profession lay the blame at the feet of the Minister, because the negotiations have continued and the legislation has not yet been brought forward.

Honourable members have not seen any Bill introduced into this House. If the blame should lie in some other quarter, I would be pleased to hear from the Minister where it should lie. I do not know whether the Minister knows that people are saying, "We are awaiting legislation from him." Clearly, that money does not belong to the Government, because it is money obtained by solicitors from their clients and deposited in trust accounts.

Mr Harper: To whom does it belong? You tell me honestly to whom you believe it belongs.

Mr GOSS: My first premise is that it does not belong to the Minister and the Government. Therefore, one must consider priorities as to where it should go. I argue that there is a responsibility upon the Government to ensure that the money goes to the

appropriate quarters. I say that the appropriate quarters are the Legal Aid Commission and community legal services. There is, perhaps, an argument that——

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr GOSS: I will answer the Minister's question when he tells me why that money has lain idle for six months, why he has been inactive and why legal aid agencies and community legal services are suffering from a drastic shortage of funds when, at the stroke of a pen by the Minister, that money could be allocated appropriately.

If the blame lies somewhere else, the Minister should tell me where it lies. That is not what the people in the profession are saying. The Legal Aid Commission is operating at a deficiency of around \$700,000 per annum. It is scaling down the amount of legal aid that is granted. It is making it more difficult to qualify for legal aid, and it is scaling down the services that are provided. For example, legal aid for committal proceedings is in the process of being cut out. That will be a great loss. The Legal Aid Commission could be doing more in that area.

There is an argument that the Queensland Law Society should keep some of the money. I understand that the society would be interested in keeping some of the money for research purposes or something like that.

Mr Harper: Whom do you believe owns the money?

Mr GOSS: The Minister does not own the money; that is the starting point. The Minister has an obligation that he is avoiding. He is not ensuring that that money does not lie idle. He should ensure that it goes out into the community where it can be used. Government Ministers continually say, "We will cut the red tape." The Government should get off its backside and get that money out where it can do some good. The money should not be appropriated to make up the deficiencies in the Government's Budget.

Because of problems with the Queensland economy, which are becoming increasingly apparent, the Government does not have the funds that should be directed into areas of public need. For that reason, it is rumoured strongly that the Government is considering giving hundreds of thousands of dollars to establish further library and computer facilities at the Supreme Court. If that is wrong, I would be pleased to hear the Minister's comments. If it is proposed to use the money in solicitors' trust accounts to supplement the shortfall in the Minister's budget in respect of necessary expenditures at the Supreme Court, he should come clean. If he is proposing to use that public money to make up any shortfall anywhere else in his department, he should come clean. If the Minister is not proposing to use that money to make up shortfalls, I would be pleased to hear from him.

A number of vital and important community legal aid centres are not receiving any assistance from the Queensland Government. In fact, some of them are being deliberately frustrated by the Minister by his refusal to allow them to raise money in their own right to supplement the services that they provide free of charge to needy members of the community. That is a serious charge. The Minister may not take it seriously, but he should respond to it. He should be moving quickly to introduce a Bill. If it is not proposed to introduce a Bill, the Minister should tell the Committee why there is a hold-up. The Minister should be introducing a Bill as quickly as possible so that that money can be used by those members of the public who can make best use of it—those legal aid services to which the Government makes no contribution. I repeat that it makes no contribution.

Worse than that, the Government is withholding money from organisations which, based on the experience of other places and according to any sense of fairness, logic and justice, are most deserving. If the Government accepts that there are deficiencies in the legal aid service and it is quite content to tolerate them, it should say so. If the Government proposes to use that money to make up shortfalls in the Budget, it should

say so. The Minister has known about this for eight months but has not done anything about it.

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (5.21 p.m.): The member for Salisbury made a rather knocking speech. It was a bit of a fizzer, too.

I thank the Minister for the civility with which I have been received by him and, better than that, for his very clear-cut answers. I also thank the Minister's staff, who are always willing to supply answers or give advice. That was so with the previous Minister, also.

By way of interjection, the member for Ipswich, I think it was, said that there is a difference between fairness and justice. That concerns me. Sometimes there is justice that is not fair. There is nothing new about that, and that is what makes the Minister's portfolio difficult to handle. A long time ago, William Shakespeare said, "The law is an ass." Everyone would like to think that that is not so today. However, it does not matter how legislation is designed; someone always gets hurt. That is a problem. All that the Minister can do is perform the administrative and executive work to the best of his ability.

I will refer to one or two comments that have been made this afternoon. The member for Wolston suggested that Queensland has far too many justices of the peace. I do not believe that having a large number of JPs is detrimental to the community. It is beneficial to those who live in the country to be able to obtain a JP's signature without having to drive too far.

If a justice of the peace lives up to the standards expected of him, that is something of which the community can be proud. The member for Windsor suggested that members of Parliament, because they might lose a vote, do not knock back anyone wanting to become a justice of the peace. I do not believe that. In fact, if someone approached a member of the party to which the member for Windsor belongs, and that member felt that the person was not capable of accepting the responsibilities of a JP, I am sure that he would find a way to say so. If a vote was lost, that would be too bad. However, in the majority of cases, if people are told why they have been refused, they will accept it.

The member for Windsor said also that aspiring justices of the peace simply get a couple of their mates to give them references. I do not believe that that is correct. Anyone in the community who has a good reputation is capable of giving a reference. What is wrong with that?

The member for Windsor made snide remarks about many people being lucky to have become JPs. He implied that even criminals can become JPs. I do not say that a mistake could not be made. However, I do say with conviction that, considering the few JPs who have gone astray, the people who nominated them have done an excellent job.

If the Minister is inclined to tighten procedures for the nomination of justices of the peace because he thinks there are too many, members would accept that. However, because the system has worked, it should be looked at very carefully before any drastic changes are made.

I know that the honourable member for Windsor said that some JPs would know nothing about certain technical matters and I am prepared to agree with that, but I say to him that if the average JP were confronted with a problem that he could not handle he would very quickly get advice. The main point is that the responsibility is in the hands of commonsense people.

An earlier contribution to the debate suggested that the State has fewer liquor licences and therefore fewer hotels. As a person who lives in the country, that concerned me a little. The reason sometimes given for the reduction in the number of liquor licences is that the public demands buildings and hygiene of a very high standard. Because of the problem of drink-driving, the more people who can go to a tavern or

something of that ilk and walk home, the better it is for the community. I am not a great believer in huge hotels with 10 acres of parking. I urge the Minister to be careful before closing down the small hotels. My electorate has some small hotels in country districts. They are by no means the same standard as the Crest International Hotel, but I am quite happy to have a drink there and I see quite a number of pleasant people enjoying a drink there.

Mr Hamill: One of the problems that has to be faced is the trucking of grog over the border and bringing it back again. That allows the larger hotels to undercut the small ones.

Mr BOOTH: I admit that that could happen.

Where a hotel licensee is making a decent livelihood and where his hotel has a reasonable standard, he should be allowed to remain in business. I do not want to go back to the times when people drank in shanties. I ask the Minister to retain as many liquor licences as possible.

Mr Veivers: Like those little local pubs.

Mr BOOTH: There is nothing better than a small country hotel. The people talk to one another and politics are not mentioned.

Mr Hamill: Like the English local pubs.

Mr BOOTH: Yes. I have not had the good fortune of going to England but I am prepared to believe that from those who have been there. That is quite a good system. I urge the Minister to proceed with great caution in regard to cancelling any liquor licences.

The difference between clubs and pubs has been mentioned. Clubs, which have a slightly greater degree of control on behaviour, have something going for them, but the atmosphere in a pub where good fellowship is the order of the day has something going for it, too. People should be able to select where they wish to enjoy a drink. The Minister will have to study that matter closely. I am not suggesting that those in charge of the Licensing Commission are doing anything wrong. As far as I know they are excellent people and do a very good job. One thing that I will say about the officers of the Licensing Commission is that even though some hotels are a long way out in the country, their standard of hygiene and everything else is quite good. In saying that, I pay a tribute to the staff of the Licensing Commission. Where the standards are OK and where the licensee believes that he can still make a livelihood, hotels should be left alone.

I wish to say something about the house-to-house electoral roll canvass that has just taken place. The Government is trying to update the electoral rolls to the best of its ability. What concerns me about the electoral system is that, although Australia has compulsory voting, the penalty for failure to vote is no longer meaningful. I am always amazed at the number of people who fail to vote. Federal electorates contain between 57 000 and 60 000 voters. Some political commentators have suggested that only 50 000 of them will vote—that more than 10 per cent of people will not vote. That is a substantial percentage. If that is allowed to continue, compulsory voting will become a farce. Perhaps if I canvassed members on both sides of the Committee I would find different opinions, but I believe in compulsory voting and that it has done something for democracy. We should stick with it, but the penalties should be reviewed. I do not suggest the imposition of a penalty that will be financially crippling, but it should be meaningful. Penalties should be increased to the extent that people will think twice about not voting. Of course, if people are sick or are delayed by floods or some other natural disaster, the Electoral Office should accept their reason for not voting. But a close look has to be taken at the decrease in the number of votes cast, because the number of people failing to vote is twice as high as it was 15 years ago.

The Minister made a comprehensive introductory statement this morning, and I will not deal with too many of the points he made. He mentioned the introduction of tapes for the recording of proceedings in Magistrates Courts. Anyone who has looked at the typewritten depositions of the Magistrates Courts would realise that there has to be a better way of recording proceedings. Most people who read typewritten depositions would have to use their imaginations to work out exactly what went on, so most people would agree that a taped system of recording evidence would be better than the old system. The department will have to be very careful about numbering and storing the recorded tapes so that none are lost or mislaid. If the Minister has not already laid down strict guide-lines for the introduction of the tape system to ensure that such problems will not occur, I urge him to do so now. I commend him for introducing the tape system, because it will be much better than the old system.

I now want to say something about the Queensland Law Society Incorporated. I will not hit it too badly, although I have never been a great believer in the way that it works. A great many improvements need to be made to the way in which the Law Society administers the trust accounts of solicitors. The provisions of the relevant Act relating to trust accounts need to be tightened considerably. I cannot say too much on the subject because I understand that there is a case before the courts, but there was a considerable amount of trouble about trust accounts in the Warwick area not long ago, and that case convinced me that an improvement in the method of auditing trust accounts was required. Extremely tight controls, particularly those relative to audits, need to be introduced.

I support the call by the member for Mulgrave for the introduction of strict guide-lines in the provision of legal aid. Many people find it very difficult to discover what, if any, guide-lines are laid down to obtain legal aid. Clear guide-lines need to be laid down. I sometimes wonder how a certain person has obtained legal aid, particularly when I come across the case of a little old lady who has a car accident and who, although she seems to have very little in the way of assets, has just enough to prevent her obtaining legal aid. I urge the Minister to clarify the position and to tighten the controls on trust accounts.

I thank the Minister once again for the way in which he performs his difficult and onerous task of administering the Justice Department. I hope that he keeps up his momentum and approaches his task with tenacity and energy.

Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (5.34 p.m.): The debate this afternoon concerns the Estimates of the portfolio of the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. I notice in the Budget papers that \$4,206,900 is set aside for the operation of the State Electoral Office. That might not seem a great deal considering the total amount expended under the portfolio, but it does constitute 6 per cent of the total.

Although it is a relatively minor expenditure in terms of the Minister's total responsibilities, it is nevertheless important, because expenditure on the maintenance of the State Electoral Office is critical to the health of a democracy. Although its more recent record may not be very bright, Queensland certainly led many parts of the world in electoral reform early in this century. In fact, as early as 1905, electoral reforms in Queensland provided that all British subjects, both male and female over the age of 21 years, were entitled to the adult franchise.

Since then, a number of modifications have been effected to extend the franchise in this State. The most recent significant extension of the franchise was, of course, the extension of the vote to 18-year-olds in 1973.

Another area in which Queensland led Australia was that of compulsory voting. This afternoon, other honourable members have expressed their views on compulsory voting. Indeed, the honourable member for Warwick, who has just resumed his seat, said he believed that the penalties for failing to vote should be substantially increased.

The Queensland Government was the first Government in Australia to introduce compulsory voting.

Mr FitzGerald: In 1915.

Mr HAMILL: I heard the honourable member for Lockyer say 1915. In fact, the obligation to enrol and to vote at State elections in Queensland was effected in 1914. In 1924, Australia as a whole adopted that system.

The statute-book contains legislation that requires people to participate in the political system in this State. Nevertheless, a number of impediments are placed in the way of the people of Queensland to effectively prevent their participating in electing the Government in this State. The first one that I shall mention is electoral enrolment. A Federal election is imminent, and advertisements in the media have encouraged people to enrol for that election. I wonder how many young people who are endeavouring to get their names included in the Federal roll are also aware that they have to fill out a separate enrolment card to be eligible to vote at State elections. Queensland is alone among the Australian States in requiring young people to fill out a separate electoral enrolment card for both State and Federal elections. Since the beginning of this year, Western Australia, the other State that stood outside the joint enrolment procedure, has adopted joint enrolment.

When the member for Auburn first became Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, I was pleased to note that he foreshadowed a similar reform in Queensland. It is unfortunate that that reform and a number of other worthwhile reforms that he has sought to introduce have been set aside because of opposition from no less a person than the Premier, backed up by Cabinet.

As long as the Queensland Government pursues a course that provides for separate enrolment in this State over and above the enrolment for Commonwealth elections, unnecessary expense will be caused to the Treasury of this State. That expense, of course, has to be met by the tax-payers of Queensland. The system also generates unnecessary confusion among electors. I repeat that many people are simply not aware that they have to enrol twice—once for the State and once for the Commonwealth.

At times, criticism is directed at the State Electoral Office. A certain amount of the criticism is well justified because the Commonwealth rolls, unlike the State rolls, are regularly updated. The checking of subdivisions is an ongoing procedure. An enormous disparity is apparent between the number of people on Federal rolls and the number on State rolls. I recognise that the State Government has instituted a door-to-door electoral enrolment update. That is another unnecessary expenditure.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: It does not work.

Mr HAMILL: That is right. It is another unnecessary expenditure that is being placed on the tax-payers of Queensland.

The procedure is already in place whereby that information may be obtained by the State Government authorities. The sooner the Government recognises that it will be cheaper and more beneficial to implement the joint enrolment procedure, the better it will be for Queensland.

It is appropriate that electoral matters should fall within the purview of the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General because, if we need justice, we need electoral justice. Electoral justice must be the corner-stone of any democratic system of government. However, if that is to be the litmus test of whether Queensland has a democratic system of government, I am afraid that Queensland falls short of the mark. It is obscene and extraordinary that, in this State, a person's residential address determines his worth to the political system and the society.

The inequitable electoral system in Queensland accords undue weight to some voters as opposed to others.

Mr FitzGerald: How many electors are there in Ipswich?

Mr HAMILL: My electorate has over 17 000 voters but many other electorates in this State have far fewer than 17 000 voters.

Mr FitzGerald: I have about 20 000 in mine.

Mr HAMILL: The honourable member for Lockyer shows no concern for the electoral justice of the voters of Lockyer because he represents an electorate with an enrolment that exceeds many other electorates in Queensland. I will develop that point later in my speech, so I ask the honourable member to hold on to his curiosity. He will have ample opportunity to consider his thoughts in the matter later.

The electoral system in Queensland has a long history of perversion and distortion. Prior to 1893, the Government of the day determined electoral boundaries by gazettal. After 1910, a one-quota electoral system prevailed throughout the State. Since that time, the electoral laws have changed and successive Governments of both persuasions have stooped to distort the electoral system. One of the greatest omissions of Governments in this State has been regular, fair and equitable electoral redistributions.

In 1931, the Moore Government adopted an electoral system that was weighted in favour of rural electorates. The Hanlon Government—I admit that it was a Labor Government—introduced a zonal system. It must be remembered that at the time these electoral redistributions were implemented, the distortions between the zones or areas within the State were not so great. Because redistributions have not been conducted regularly in Queensland, the electoral disparities between one part of the State and another have been enormous. As a result, for far too long, electoral injustice has been one of the corner-stones of the electoral system of Queensland.

The electoral system was refined when the National/Liberal Government first came to power. Under Nicklin, the electoral system was altered into a three-zonal system that was one of the most unbalanced systems in the history of the State. In 1971, and again in 1977, the Bjelke-Petersen Government rigged the system to its political advantage.

If honourable members do not believe what I am saying, I will cite an authority on electoral matters. Even the National Party has endorsed Professor Colin Hughes as a man who knows what he is talking about on electoral matters. Professor Hughes has stated—

“Once Government changed hands and the coalition is in office, and prescribing the electoral redistribution rules, the boot is on the other foot. Perhaps one should say in the other fellow’s ribs.”

That is the history of electoral laws in this State, and it is time the system was changed.

There is no justification for electoral manipulation, irrespective of which Government is in power. The terms “gerrymander” and “malapportionment” are bandied about, but the fact remains that distortion of the electoral system has occurred. Malapportionment is to be seen in differential quotas. The gerrymander exists in the present four-zone electoral system between the provincial city zone and the country zone.

I ask honourable members to consider the following questions. Why should the vote of one Queenslander be worth more than the vote of another Queenslander? Plenty of reasons for that have been advanced over the years. I ask honourable members to consider here and now the logic behind the assertion that the vote of a person in Longreach is worth four times the vote of a person who lives in the electorate of Fassifern. What is the justification behind the enormous electoral disparity? Is it the value of the economic activity of an area? From time to time, honourable members opposite say that rural dwellers create the wealth in this State. If maximum political representation were to be afforded to those areas of the State that produce the most wealth, Mount Isa would be accorded far more representation than one seat in this Chamber. Seventeen electorates have fewer voters on the roll than Mount Isa. Of those,

seven are in the far west of the State, where Mount Isa is located, and 10 are in the country zone.

Mr McPhie interjected.

Mr HAMILL: If the honourable member for Toowoomba North could settle down, he might learn something.

It is often said that isolation should justify greater electoral representation. Let me take Mount Isa as an example. Within its boundaries that electorate contains some of the most inhospitable and inaccessible areas of Queensland. The electorate stretches from the city of Mount Isa and extends to the towns of Cloncurry and Burketown, to the Gulf of Carpentaria and to Mornington Island. Some of the areas in the electorate are the farthest from Brisbane.

The area of the Mount Isa electorate is 134 215 sq. km, and it has an enrolment of 14 737. They are the most recent figures. By comparison, the electorate represented by the honourable member for Warwick has an area of 4 450 sq. km and an enrolment of no more than 10 972, and it is within two hours' drive of Brisbane. The Mount Isa electorate, which is far more inaccessible, has an enrolment of 50 per cent more than Warwick.

Let me examine another reason that was advanced, and that is the distance from Brisbane to the electorate of Barron River, which is located in the north of Queensland and has an enrolment of 23 000. The electorate covers an area of 4 690 sq. km and it is a long, long way from Brisbane. I compare that with the electorate of Wavell, which is represented by the Honourable the Minister for Health. His electorate has an area of 10 sq. km and is located five minutes' drive from the centre of Brisbane. It has an enrolment of 14 809.

Mr McPhie: You are repeating yourself.

Mr HAMILL: Yes, and I will repeat myself for as long as it takes to permeate the honourable member's skull, because I am making a very important point. No justification can be given for the enormous electoral disparities that are evident in this State. In case an attempt is to be made to justify the enormous disparity in terms of suburban enrolment, and as I have already referred to Wavell, I will turn my attention to the electorate of Mackay. It covers an area of 60 sq. km and has an enrolment of 20 904. The electorate of Townsville, which is a suburban electorate, covers an area of 4 090 sq. km and has a enrolment of 25 167. So the arguments advanced just do not hold water.

In case it is necessary to refer to more anomalies, I refer to those created because of the arbitrary dissection of parts of this State by the zonal boundaries. For instance, the seat of Cairns covers an area of 480 sq. km and lies in the provincial city zone. The electorate has 20 626 voters on the roll, whereas the neighbouring electorate of Mulgrave, which is situated a few kilometres from Cairns, and contains the town of Gordonvale, has 13 123 voters on the roll. Therefore, the electorate of Cairns has almost 75 per cent more voters than its neighbouring electorate.

Mr McPhie: What is the point you are trying to make?

Mr HAMILL: If the honourable member has not understood it yet, he must be slower than I thought.

Barambah, the seat represented by the Premier and Treasurer, has an enrolment of 11 867 and covers 7 950 sq. km. That contrasts with the neighbouring electorate, which is represented by the Deputy Premier (Mr Gunn) and has an area of 8 700 sq. km and an enrolment of almost 26 000, which is approximately twice that of the Premier and Treasurer's electorate.

In the light of these anomalies, none of the arguments from Government members hold water, and none of them can be justified. The Electoral Districts Act should be repealed and a fair and equitable redistribution should be based on the principle of one vote, one value. It has been a tragedy in the history of Queensland that the Liberal Party, when it had more numbers in this House and could have swayed the vote in divisions, did not implement its policies on this matter.

What are the implications of these reforms? Firstly, they are that all people's votes, regardless of where they live—whether it be Beenleigh, Brisbane, Bundaberg or Burketown—would be worth the same, and the representation that would be accorded to the people would be the same. Secondly, and contrary to the assertions made by honourable members on the Government side, Brisbane would not benefit from these electoral reforms. In fact, the number of seats accorded to Brisbane would fall. Where would the benefit be achieved? The additional representation would go to the far north—round Cairns and Townsville. They would also be accorded to the rural areas and the extra city areas outside Brisbane in the southern part of the State. That is the traditional support base of the National Party. The National Party forgets its support base. I have already pointed out that the member for Lockyer does not care about the representation accorded in this place by his own voters.

I would like honourable members to remember that electoral justice surely is the corner-stone of democracy. In the word "democracy", "Demos" means "people". We are not representing cows, sheep, goats or acres; we are in the business of representing people. The cause of representing people should be fundamental to electoral reform in this State. How can it be done? A leaf should be taken out of the Commonwealth Government's book. An independent electoral commission is needed. The person whom Government members held up as an authority on the electoral system in this State was Professor Colin Hughes. A person I have already named today in support of my arguments heads the electoral commission. Political manipulation must not occur in the determination of electoral boundaries. Queensland cannot continue to have a situation in which the electoral boundaries can be drawn up by Cabinet behind closed doors without public scrutiny or public accountability. That was done by amendment to the Electoral Districts Act in 1977.

Other States and the Commonwealth have now reformed their redistribution procedure to take it out of the hands of the politicians and have appointed an independent electoral commission to determine the boundaries. The procedures that were employed to arrive at the new Federal electorate boundaries are as follows. Public submissions were called. Members of the public were called upon to comment upon the submissions that were received. The proposed boundaries were brought before them so that they could consider those boundaries. They then had an opportunity to raise objections to the boundaries. The objections were put before that electoral commission by way of public hearings. That commission was able to give the reasons upon which its determination was made. A final determination was made.

I was interested to hear the cries from the other side of the Chamber, because Federal National Party members supported the new electoral legislation introduced by the Labor Government. There has probably been another split between the Federal Nationals and the State Nationals.

A fair and equitable procedure for the determination of electoral boundaries is needed. An electoral Act that is sensitive to the fact that growth can alter the balance in enrolments among electorates is also needed. A 10 per cent tolerance is required. The existing tolerance and the existing zonal system distorts the value of the vote. If a tolerance of 10 per cent is accepted Federally and in all other States, there is no reason why it cannot be accepted in Queensland.

The National Party faces an acid test. If it believes that it is a national party and representative of the people of Queensland, it should have nothing to fear from a fair electoral system. If it wants to continue with a distorted, outmoded, perverted system

of democracy in this State, it can only be construed that it is not confident of the support of the people of Queensland at a fairly conducted general election; it is not confident enough of being judged fairly and squarely on its performance to give the people of Queensland an equal vote throughout the State.

Mr JENNINGS (Southport) (5.54 p.m.): It was fascinating to listen to the contribution from "hammer" Hamill. He has obviously lost touch with reality, because——

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr JENNINGS: I thought that he must have been from the bush, but he is not; he is from Ipswich. He must not have read that Queensland will have a redistribution this year.

Mr Hamill: On what terms?

Mr JENNINGS: On the fairest terms available anywhere in Australia.

If the member for Ipswich had his way, the fellows out in the bush and the people in the north would never see their members of Parliament because the electorates would be so large.

The shire of Etheridge has an area of 15 000 square miles. It is larger than Holland and Belgium. When I was last in the Etheridge shire it had a population of 750.

Mr Hamill: It is well served by the member for Cook.

Mr JENNINGS: The member for Cook would be the first to agree that the system suggested by the member for Ipswich would not work. It has not worked in England; it would never work in Australia. The United Kingdom has electorates varying from 15 000 voters to 125 000 voters. Western Australia, under a Labor Government, has seven different zones, with electorates ranging between 3 000 voters and 21 000 voters.

Australia is different from the rest of the world. It is different from where the member for Ipswich comes from—the university. The real world is different from the student's world; it is living out in the bush. Life in the bush is areas of land and what can be produced. It is being able to see the local member of Parliament; it is representation. If the member for Ipswich had his way, this country would never have got off the ground. This country was made by pioneers who faced up to a challenge. They worked hard, and they had representation.

If the member for Ipswich had his way, all that would be represented would be the tiny city streets and the little people who run the businesses providing goods and services for people out in the bush. He should go out into the bush, work out in the bush, live out in the bush, eat out in the bush, fish out in the bush and run cattle out in the bush. Then he may have some idea of what the bush is all about, Australia was made in the bush. It was not made in the university. It was not made on the bulldust he is talking; it was made on the earth of the bush.

The Minister has handled his portfolio with aplomb and a degree of discretion and determination that is absolutely commendable. Those remarks apply to his staff as well. I am fortunate in being on the Minister's committee. It takes up a good deal of time and involves much reading. Even the shadow Minister has complimented the Minister on his achievements in his portfolio, particularly with the Licensing Commission.

The Minister has said that the Acts are to be reprinted. As the Parliament will learn in due course, a great deal of work has been done in other spheres of the Minister's administration.

The Judges' Pensions Act Amendment Bill is important. The member for Sherwood mentioned the importance of the judiciary. I agree with him totally. The High Court is the most important arena of justice in Australia. The member for Sherwood made the comment that never before has the High Court been in greater crisis.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: You would know as much about the High Court as you know about prize cattle.

Mr JENNINGS: I thank the member for his compliment. I appreciate it.

The High Court is people's last recourse to justice. The Federal Attorney-General, when in Opposition, said that judges of the High Court should be beyond reproach. No-one in this Parliament would disagree with that. Many people have been concerned, as I have been, about what is happening with the High Court.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Have you lost sleep over it?

Mr JENNINGS: In a way; I have lost confidence in the integrity exhibited in this country.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.

Mr JENNINGS: Today saw the release of one of the most dramatic reports in the history of this country—the Costigan report. I am fascinated by some of the comments that have already been made about that report, which is in 10 volumes. However, only volumes 1 to 5 have been released publicly.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Of the final report!

Mr JENNINGS: Only half of the volumes have been released publicly.

The Prime Minister has already said on television that the report does not affect the Government in any way. That is one of the most incredible statements I have heard from a politician. The Costigan report is the result of one of the most dramatic, intricate and detailed investigations into organised crime that the country has seen. The reports that contain all the detailed information—the information about the real crooks, the real organised crime run by those who are subverting all of our lives and the lives of our children—have been censored. They are not to be made public.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: How do you reveal their names without tipping them off?

Mr JENNINGS: I am not saying that. All I am saying is that the Prime Minister has claimed that the report does not affect him or the Government in any way. The Costigan report will affect the daily lives of every person in this nation.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What he is saying is that he will not be affected by the accusations that Mr Peacock has been making.

Mr JENNINGS: That is not the point at all.

The most important thing that has come out of the report is that there's organised crime in this country. No-one would argue with that statement. Years ago, during they years of the Menzies regime, Australia did not have organised crime.

Mr Davis: We have had it for years.

Mr JENNINGS: The member for Brisbane Central has just said that Australia has had organised crime for years.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What about Petrov?

Mr JENNINGS: The Petrov affair is fascinating.

When Sir Robert Menzies was Prime Minister of this land——

An Opposition Member: What about Arthur Calwell?

Mr JENNINGS: Ironically, and sadly, the then Leader of the Opposition (Arthur Calwell) is the only political leader of this country who was the subject of an assassination attempt. Thank God, he recovered from it. He was an honest man. When Sir Robert Menzies retired, Arthur Calwell said that for the period that Sir Robert Menzies had been Prime Minister of this land—he occupied that office for longer than any other Prime Minister—there was, without shadow of doubt, never any hint or sign of graft or corruption in the administration of the Government of the day.

Until the Costigan report was published, Australia had a world-wide reputation of being free from organised crime. That was the view expressed by Arthur Calwell, who was then the leader of the Labor Party. I have respect for Arthur Calwell, who had some definite views on the immigration policy, as honourable members opposite know. They would also know as well as I do that he was a man of the people.

However, tonight on television the Prime Minister said that in no way will the Costigan report affect his Government. Of course it will. The main parts of that report have not been published. It is terrible, it is wrong and it is disastrous that he should say that. He should have said that he was concerned that the parts that have been published reveal that organised crime exists in this land.

This afternoon, the Prime Minister referred to volumes 9 and 10 of the report. He rushed in and tried to gain political capital out of them. That was terribly wrong. Tonight I watched the ABC news. The first thing that the news-reader said was that the report recommended that a major investigation be made into one person. The painters and dockers were not mentioned until much later in the report. Yet it was the painters and dockers who threw an enormous number of people into Port Philip Bay in concrete cases. I know it, and everybody else knows it.

Mr Kruger: A lot of your tax-dodging mates.

Mr JENNINGS: Many of my mates are painters and dockers. I used to spar with them at Snowy Hill's gym at the Seamen's Mission in Brisbane in 1952 and 1953. I will not name them, because they are still mates of mine. They even said that they would come to political meetings in Melbourne and protect me. That was when I was involved in the exposure of graft and corruption in Victoria. I know what the painters and dockers are all about.

I thought it was terribly wrong for the Leader of the Opposition to say what he did this afternoon. He said that Mr Costigan had said that some matters were not for publication, and he then quoted selected pieces from the report. There is nothing more dishonest than for the Leader of the Opposition to use a few pieces of information that have been leaked to him. He could not possibly have read a report consisting of 10 volumes.

Mr FitzGerald: Only five were tabled.

Mr JENNINGS: That is right. Yet this afternoon the Leader of the Opposition rushed into the Chamber with those five volumes and quoted a few words from them in an attempt to incriminate people and throw mud at them. The report consists of 10 volumes, five of which will not be available for public scrutiny until the material in them has been used in court. What the Leader of the Opposition did was basically wrong, and he went down in my estimation from No. 1 to No. 10. He should never have done what he did. He should have said, "I am concerned about what is contained in this report and in the volumes that have not been tabled. The matters in them will be investigated, and we will have to sit back and wait until that has been done." I hope that the contents of the report will be investigated.

The Prime Minister's comments completely destroyed my confidence in him. He should have said, "Here is a report that discloses something that we in this country have never heard of before. It is not our way of life." But what he actually said was, "Oh, I'm right. The first five volumes don't mention me." The Prime Minister has not

said what the other five volumes contain. He has not revealed what they say about the New South Wales Premier. It is disgraceful. I hope that the Leader of the Opposition realises the seriousness of his actions. Mr Costigan began his investigations into the painters and dockers in the southern States. Everybody knows that the painters and dockers are standover men, boot men, concrete-case men.

I want to mention a number of other aspects in the time remaining to me. Thank God that in this country our leaders—I do not care whether it is Bob Hawke, Andrew Peacock, Joh or anyone else—can walk round with impunity and not be shot at as the Indian Prime Minister was shot yesterday. We are lucky to live in this country. In this Chamber I can say what I think about the characters opposite, and they can say what they like about me. I find it hard to listen to them——

Mr Borbidge: It takes a great deal of intelligence to understand them.

Mr JENNINGS: It takes so long to work out what Opposition members are saying that there should be different time limits for speakers from each side of the Chamber. It is hard for us to work out what Opposition members are saying.

The Minister's portfolio covers everything from births to deaths, the maintenance of an orderly life, the decentralisation of services, and so on.

A District Court has been established in Southport.

It was great that the Government realised the importance of amending section 49 of the Building Units and Group Titles Act.

The shadow Minister for Justice referred to the Licensing Commission. The Minister, in his wisdom, held a two-day seminar in the chamber in the Parliamentary Annexe. We were able to hear Opposition members better in that chamber than we can hear them in this Chamber. I do not know whether that is a good thing. At that seminar, all the people from the Temperance League and other organisations concerned with the control of alcoholism agreed that extending trading hours and providing flexible trading hours would not create any more problems with alcoholism; in fact it would tend to alleviate them.

Mr Vaughan: That is not what the Premier says.

Mr JENNINGS: Wait a minute. I am referring to what people at that seminar said. There were people there from cabarets, cafes, restaurants and hotels.

Referring to the Licensing Commission—as honourable members know, there have been a few problems on the Gold Coast; not in my electorate but the one adjoining mine. A particular hotel was having really rough shows with sheilas. If we do not do something about those rough shows and those rough sheilas, we will not be able to see any good acts. I congratulate the Minister and the Licensing Commission on doing something fair dinkum about those rough shows in pubs. Because of them, many good entertainers are not getting jobs.

Ms WARNER: I rise to a point of order. I think I heard the honourable member use the word "sheilas" in a derogatory way. On behalf of the women of Queensland, I ask him to withdraw that.

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

Mr JENNINGS: I realise the sensitivity of the member for Kurilpa about this issue, but I am sure that, if she saw them, she would say that they were sheilas, too. It is good that the Licensing Commission has done something about that matter.

As regards the JP system—it is good that a manual is to be published. JPs do a lot of good work. They accept the position voluntarily, and I think that that is good.

The Minister handles many other matters. It is important that justice be extended to people from all walks of life.

I would like to quickly read from an article. Although it deals with real estate, I shall not mention names. This is the sort of stuff that the Minister has to handle. The article states—

“All information given in relation to this property. ”

Time expired.

Ms WARNER (Kurilpa) (7.29 p.m.): That is a hard act to follow. The honourable member for Southport is extremely entertaining. I hope that his membership of the Actors & Announcers Equity Association is up to date.

What we are supposed to be speaking about in this debate are questions of justice. The previous speaker highlighted one of the areas in which there is no justice—that of sexism. It is a matter of justice that women not be described in the way in which he described them, and that people not adopt sexist attitudes towards women. After all, women represent 51 per cent of the population, and they are voters. That fact seems to escape the Government. Towards the end of his speech, the honourable member for Southport commented that his time in this debate was running out. I can assure him that his time is running out in more ways than one.

A basic principal of the system of justice in Australia is that all people are supposedly equal before the law. Unfortunately in Queensland that is not the case. Law is an expensive commodity and advantages can be gained by those who are wealthy enough to buy immediate legal advice. The speed with which advice is given is important in establishing a person's rights in the law. The fact that some people who are wealthy enough can buy immediate legal advice and representation exposes the plight of the poor who cannot expect to find equality before the law because they cannot get the same speed of advice, representation or expertise.

Those in the lower-income bracket find that a legal problem of any size cannot be resolved easily. They quite often ask advice in the first instance from friends and relatives who are simply not aware of the complexities of the law. When misinformation is passed round people can find themselves in severe difficulties and they may miss out on their legal rights.

A wealthy person in need of legal assistance has expert advice at the other end of the telephone because he is in a position to pay. The legal problems to which I am referring relate mainly to divorce or separation settlements, car accidents, insurance problems, minor disputations with neighbours, and conveyancing. Most people need legal services at some stage in their lives.

Discrimination also occurs in the criminal jurisdiction. Everyone knows that if a person can pay for a smart lawyer his chances in court are enhanced. A recent incident highlighted how the law is different for different people. A man, on finding his son in a spot of bother, lifted the telephone at 1 a.m. on a Saturday morning and obtained the services of one of the State's leading criminal barristers. The results of that case, which have already been raised in this Chamber by the member for Lytton, amply illustrate the difference in sentence that can be obtained if smart legal advice is given early.

Fortunately, the Federal Labor Government and State Labor Governments make attempts to redress the inequalities before the law by providing funding for free legal advice for those who cannot pay. The Labor State Governments contribute dollar for dollar towards the Federal Government's legal aid schemes; the Queensland Government does not. As a result, the poor in Queensland are more disadvantaged. That point has been raised by members on both sides of the Chamber today. I hope that the Minister has taken note of that.

Most honourable members would be aware of the magnitude of the problem because of the number of inquiries of a legal nature that constituents bring to them. My area is more fortunate than others because the South Brisbane Community Legal Service offers expert advice at no charge. The service operates only because of assistance from the

Federal Government; it receives no assistance from the State Government, which appears totally insensitive to the needs of the people in the lower-income group in the way of legal advice.

The South Brisbane service, the Caxton Street Legal Service and a legal service in Toowoomba are funded almost solely by the Federal Government and in a small way by their own fund-raising activities. The pressure of work on these legal services is intense. The demand is high and the resources are simply inadequate to meet the need.

The State Government's attitude to free legal advice is illustrated by its recent refusal to allocate funds and by a remarkable decision by the Minister for Justice to refuse a permit to the South Brisbane Community Legal Service to conduct a raffle to offset its costs. The service applied for a permit on the basis that it was providing a community service. The Art Unions and Amusements Act provides that permits may be granted for a community purpose, which is defined as—

“ . . . calculated to promote the general welfare to the public in this State (at large or in a particular locality)”

I cannot understand how the Minister could decide that such an organisation was not a community organisation dedicated to community welfare. The reason given by the Minister's department for the refusal was that the organisation did not come within the terms of the Act. That interpretation is simply beyond belief. It indicates clearly how much sympathy the Minister has for the community's legal service. He has denied it one of the few fund-raising activities for which the overworked personnel have time.

Is it to be assumed from the Minister's decision that football clubs operate in the interests of the community but legal services do not? I put it to honourable members that that is not a reasonable assumption for even a department of this Government to make.

The Legal Aid Commission of Queensland obtains its funding from two main sources. The first is the ever-generous Federal Government, whose performance can be contrasted with that of the parsimonious Queensland Government; the second is interest paid on statutory deposits from the solicitors' funds.

When that matter was raised earlier today by the honourable member for Salisbury, the Minister took some time to ask him who owned those funds. Honourable members are not even sure of the size of those funds and how much interest has been attracted.

I understand that the reason for negotiated decision was that a more caring Premier, the Premier of Victoria, told Westpac that if it did not allocate interest calculated on the balance of the funds, he would introduce in that State legislation to ensure that it was done. The bank paid the interest, and benefits flowed to every other State. I suggest to the Minister that those funds are the people's funds. They are legal funds, and they should be applied to legal advice for the people and general community welfare, but not for sectarian or small groups.

Mr Harper: Will you answer the question: who owns the funds?

Ms WARNER: I have suggested that the Minister's responsibility is to administer those funds in the best interests of the community. That is what those funds are for.

Mr Harper: I agree with you wholly.

Ms WARNER: The cost of the computerisation in the Supreme Court should have been met from the ordinary allocations by the Justice Department, not from the specific funds that have been set aside for legal aid services and schemes, as in all other States.

Not only is the money used in other States; other State Governments also provide dollar-for-dollar assistance for legal aid schemes. The point has been covered already, and I am relieved to hear that the honourable Minister will be distributing those funds in the interests of the community.

It is interesting to note that the chief of the Legal Aid office was unaware of the existence of those funds until he found out about them accidentally one night in a bar. That seems to be extraordinary, and it leads me to ask why their existence had been kept a secret. Why was the existence of the funds revealed by sources in the south?

I also remind the Minister that the means test in Queensland is ridiculously low. The level is \$5,000 for free advice and \$6,000 for free assistance. In Queensland, that scheme does not have funds for any more cases under the present system, so people are going without legal advice. People are suffering as a result of that, and the legal services that exist are completely overworked and overtaxed. Services they provided have had to be cut back. I urge the Minister to look at the situation as soon as possible.

I turn now to training for magistrates. It has been brought to my attention that in care and control applications heard by magistrates, girls outnumber boys in the ratio of two to one. There seems to be a propensity in the community for parents or guardians to make juvenile girls who, for instance, run away from home because of difficulties they are experiencing, and who stay with friends or relatives for a while, the subject of a complaint to the police. The police find the girls and take them before a magistrate to get a care and control order.

One problem is that magistrates are not specifically trained in that area. In many cases they do not have the expertise to assess the circumstances in which girls find themselves, the sort of needs that they have and what they should do about them. Frequently a magistrate will ask that young girls undergo a psychiatric assessment at Wilson Youth Hospital. That causes a great deal of distress for the young girls and puts a great deal of pressure on them. They think that society thinks that they are either mad or bad, and obviously very sad. In many cases circumstances from which those young girls are running are deplorable. I ask that there be some combined effort on the part of the Justice Department to make sure that the magistrates who hear those cases are properly trained to deal with such circumstances.

The system in South Australia is specialised. Matters are dealt with in the District Court, which is a high jurisdiction. A District Court judge specialises specifically in those cases. In Brisbane, girls are more fortunate than those in country areas, because a magistrate specialises in those cases. If a matter is heard by a magistrate in the country, there is no such luck. Legal personnel are being asked to make decisions about matters on which they have no expertise. It would be useful if they could be given that specialised——

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Specialist judges?

Ms WARNER: That would be one answer; or specialist magistrates, if nothing better is available.

The matter needs careful examination because a great deal of distress is being caused to the girls. They feel that the whole process through which they go is a dehumanising process. It is interesting to note that in the circumstances to which I have referred girls outnumber boys by two to one. It seems that society considers that young girls away from home to be in greater danger than young boys. The girls are said to be in "moral danger" However, it is said that boys will be boys and that their morals are not to be so checked. That is a gross illustration of the way in which society treats young boys in a way different from that in which it treats girls.

Mr Booth interjected.

Ms WARNER: I can understand the paternalism of the member for Warwick (Mr Booth), but I think that it is out of place in 1984.

I urge the Minister to view the problem with some sensitivity and try in the coming year to find some solutions. Perhaps in conjunction with the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs he could provide some services by which young boys

and girls may receive expert decisions when they get to court or perhaps avoid the necessity of appearing in court. Proper care and welfare organisations could perhaps deal with the problem before it gets that far. A great deal of distress is being caused. The girls who go through that experience do not receive many chances in their future life. I urge the Government to approach the matter with compassion and sympathy.

Recently, the press has made a joke about basic rights and the way in which people are treated. Last week, the Premier and Treasurer, supported by the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, displayed yet again his Government's complete disregard for the need to protect the basic civil rights of Queenslanders. I speak about the hoary old subject of the Bill of Rights that has been so contentious during the past few years, particularly as it seems to the Premier to be an anathema.

Bills of rights can hardly be regarded as some kind of radical innovation. Arguably, the most conservative nation in the world, the USA, has had a Bill of rights for 200 years. It has not——

Government Members interjected.

Ms WARNER: Have Government members seen the draft? Do they know that the draft is supposed to be based on the United Nations Convention on Human Rights? Shortly, I will read from that. It is totally absurd to suggest that Queensland will be abolished and that the whole Federal system will be destroyed because Australia has a Bill of Rights.

Government Members interjected.

Ms WARNER: Do Government members want a Bill of Rights? If so, what do they want in it? The Premier and Treasurer is saying that we should not have a Bill of Rights at all.

Perhaps in 1776 a Bill of Rights was radical, but not in 1984. It is amazing that the Premier can really be describing the USA as a socialist monster. He seems to be suggesting that any country that has a Bill of Rights is a socialist monster.

Mr FitzGerald: Is that the same Bill of Rights?

Ms WARNER: Do Government members want a Bill of Rights at all? The Bill of Rights that the Federal Government intends to introduce is based upon the United Nations covenant for civil and political rights. The Premier must have a remarkably fanciful and extravagant imagination.

I will examine his claims a little more closely. We are told that the Bill of Rights is to be based on the United Nations covenant. I challenge that, because I do not think Government members have seen the draft any more than I have. However, I have seen the covenant, and that is what the Bill of Rights is based on.

I will deal with the real content of the Bill of Rights instead of hypocrisy, stupidity and misleading statements. The Premier expressed particular distaste for Article 23 of the United Nations covenant, which states—

“The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society. It is entitled to protection by society and the State.”

The Premier interprets that as being an insidious attempt to undermine the family unit. Article 23 continues—

“The right of men and women of marriageable age to marry and to found a family shall be recognised.”

Translated by the Premier, that becomes a licence for homosexual marriages and encourages them to found families. I cannot see it. It is not there. The Premier is really hallucinating. It is a remarkable distortion of the sentiments that the Premier has so determinedly supported on many other occasions. I draw the Premier's comments to

the attention of women, especially the infamous Mrs Rona Joyner, who might have something to say about the Premier's apparent opposition to the family unit.

The Premier said also that the Bill of Rights eliminated the right of freedom of religious expression; yet the United Nations covenant upon which the Bill of Rights is based states in Article 18—

“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of his choice, either individually or in community with others, and in public or private to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.”

That is what the Bill of Rights is all about. For the Premier, protection of religious freedom becomes its opposite. Surely that is double-think. It is Orwellian 1984 new-speak.

The only comment of the Premier that may be correct is that a Bill of Rights would dismantle the anti-street march legislation in this State. That legislation is neanderthal. It takes Queensland back to the age of the brontosaurus.

Government Members interjected.

Ms WARNER: Government members suggest that we are talking about different time-scales. I would suggest that that is the time-scale about which Government members are speaking—the age of the brontosaurus. That is the backward thinking exhibited by the Queensland Government. The UN covenant protects the right of peaceful assembly as a basic right.

Time expired.

Mr PRICE (Mount Isa) (7.50 p.m.): Recently substantial media coverage was given to the comments in this Chamber by the former member for Rockhampton—I believe that tonight he submitted his resignation from this place—about police activities in Mount Isa. Some months ago, during a visit to that city, the former Leader of the Opposition interviewed solicitors, victims of alleged police bashings and the police themselves. “Hansard” records his findings, the denials, through the Minister for Police, of the Acting Police Commissioner and the Minister's reversal in attitude on 28 August when he revealed that seven complaints against police in that city were in fact under investigation by the Police Complaints Tribunal.

Through political representation, these happenings are brought to light from time to time. Because of their very nature, their distance from the personal lives of the majority of us and our perceived immunity to that sort of thing happening to us, they are invariably seven-day wonders. However, as late as last Sunday the “Sunday Sun” contained an article about the number of additional signed complaints that had been passed on to the office of the member for Rockhampton. Although they may be somewhat belated, those complaints are an example of victims of alleged ill-treatment by police still coming forward.

Surely Mount Isa is not alone with these appeals for assistance. Surely all the bad eggs are not sent west for punishment. Surely pork-barrelling does not extend to the Police Department. Prior to the 1983 election, the Premier and Treasurer went on record as having threatened my electorate should it have the audacity to elect me in preference to the then Minister for Health.

Mr Hamill: The electors made a wise choice.

Mr PRICE: I agree wholeheartedly. The electorate certainly made the best choice.

Approximately 27 signed statements or allegations have been sent to the office of the member for Rockhampton. Really, this is a police matter, but surely one that warrants a judicial inquiry. My point in dragging all of this up again is that I am convinced that

problems at that level of our pursuit of justice are symptomatic of the problems of the judicial system.

Although I have no legal qualifications, except those of a paying client, I proffer the observations of a layman at what is probably a very late hour, not only for this debate, but for redirecting the evolution of the legal system. The magistracy is part of the British legal system formed to relieve the court-rooms of England over a century ago—summary justice I think it is termed. Without the aid of a jury, the judge or magistrate is supposed to aid the defendant and his counsel, if he can afford same, through the intricacies of the legal process, thus enabling him to defend himself, if he so wishes. Unfortunately that is rarely the case. With the complexities of the legal jargon and procedures, a defendant who appears in his own behalf finds it easier to plead guilty. In fact, the Magistrates Court is only a rubber stamp and a sentencing machine for the police.

Upon apprehension, defendants confess to between 85 per cent and 90 per cent of the charges laid against them. I must admit that in my limited experience the evidence of police officers is accepted by courts far too readily. In charging a person, a policeman's role is that he must believe that person to be guilty of the offence. Very often, once a police officer has made up his mind, he is sometimes too ready to ignore, or to give insufficient weight to, other matters that may disprove his belief of guilt.

As in any other State Government system, the public service has difficulty obtaining people to serve in remote areas. Although, from the Minister's speech, he must be commended for his building program in country areas, I heard little mention of the north west of the State. Obviously it is now in the too-hard basket.

When appointed to small communities, public servants, including magistrates, are obliged to socialise with other public servants or local police officers or be ostracised, and so, unfortunately, they form a small clique. In those cliques the magistrates evolve and learn to forget their role in an independent judiciary, and it becomes very hard for them not to be influenced, particularly if their families are involved. It is very difficult to obtain the services of suitable people in country districts, and I sympathise with the department in that regard. It is very difficult to obtain people unless, as in other Government departments, they have the prospect of transfers to Brisbane or one of the larger provincial cities.

The magistrates fail to adhere to judicial independence through little fault of their own, and a rough version of justice befalls country regions. Police proffer confessions to friendly magistrates whom they meet both at work and at play, and the defendant becomes an outsider. In order that justice may be seen to be done, the first step should be to keep uniformed police out of the vicinity of magistrates courts. Police uniforms and court surroundings overawe people, including witnesses.

While researching this speech I discovered an item in the British Journal of Law & Society titled "Magistrates' Courts and the Ideology of Justice" I selected a couple of paragraphs, the first of which reads—

"Carlen would put the defendant's problems down to the games played by courtroom personnel, whereby the accused is the only outsider, the only one who does not know what is going on, what the cues passing between magistrates and policemen or social workers mean."

The other paragraph states—

"Procedural pedantics are not just emergency measures: they are what make a trial a trial, and the result is that the accused in the magistrates' courts is not just prevented from challenging the court but is routinely prevented from participating effectively in his own trial. In short, from my own observation, the accused is often not so much silent in court—inarticulate, afraid or outside the game—but silenced in court for not obeying rules of legal procedure."

In most Australian States magistrates have been moved out of the arena of the public service. Independence from the equivalent of the Public Service Act has been

granted to magistrates in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

Mr Innes: Mr Wran has some powerful control over his magistrates, doesn't he?

Mr PRICE: He certainly does at this moment.

Sir William Knox: Do you agree with that sort of thing, threatening the chief stipendiary magistrate in public?

Mr PRICE: We do not want that sort of thing, do we?

That judicial independence is commendable, and this Government must examine the granting of similar freedom to ensure the independence of the magistracy. Queensland magistrates are still under the administrative control of the public service, yet magistrates are unquestionably part of the judicial arm of the Government. How can they have any judicial independence, particularly in country areas with the social pressures and even more particularly with their ever-increasing duties covering now both commercial and Crown cases or cases in which the Crown has an interest? I might add that those cases are increasing daily. The backlog in the courts is appalling. I believe that South Australian magistrates are appointed from the ranks of retired solicitors. In Queensland the appointment of magistrates usually depends upon service in the public service, including a period of service as a clerk of the court. I am sure that experienced lawyers would be interested in applying for such positions if they were assured of judicial independence under the protection of the umbrella of the higher courts. Serving magistrates could be fitted into a new system, and I am sure that little difficulty would be found in working out transfers.

All too often I see evidence to indicate that there are grounds for believing that courts are unduly receptive to police evidence. Occasionally, defendants make inappropriate pleas and confessions are not always to be taken at face value.

Stories in signed statements that I have witnessed tell of police methods of obtaining confessions. The police know full well the result that will follow if a confession is obtained in the wording that they so often dictate. Coercion is exerted by threat. After considering the alternatives, victims have little choice other than to enter a guilty plea to get the matter over with.

Quite a few of the statements that have been made in Mount Isa recently involved hitch-hikers passing through the city on their way north. The police stripped them on the highway looking for drugs. Drugs may, or may not, have been found on them, or they may even have been planted on them. They have been brought back to the police station, placed in the cells overnight and charged the following morning. If they pleaded guilty, generally they got a \$300 fine and were released. If they pleaded not guilty, they ran the risk of not being released and of having to return to Mount Isa, many months later at great expense, to answer the charge. They were left with little choice.

I have with me a couple of statements from people who still reside in Mount Isa. To illustrate a few of the points that I have been making, I shall read part of the statements. The first was taken on Tuesday, 28 August 1984, and it reads—

“I did not take any notice of the car going past or turning around—it was only when I was grabbed that I took any notice.

But the one officer still hold of me and forced me into the car. I did not resist.

On the way to the Police Station in the car I said ‘Can you explain to me why you are picking me up?’

I was then taken into the Police Station at about 11.00 p.m. I was then told to take off my shoes, my belt and empty my pockets and I also handed over my watch. Then I was put in a cell.

Then I laid down and went to sleep because I was told that I would be there until seven in the morning when the Sergeant came in.

Roughly two hours later I heard the key rattling in the door and two officers came into the cell I looked around to see what was happening and one of them came over to me and gave me the book and said 'get up'.

I was sitting up then and I said 'What's going on?', because I knew it couldn't be seven o'clock—it was still dark outside.

And he said, 'We want your prints'.

When he said this I thought they wanted to take a photo for the file. Any way I had in mind why did they want my photo because I had just been picked up in the street.

Then he grabbed me by the hair and pulled me out—dragging me through the door. And the other bloke closed the door and he went into the office and very quickly—like he thought I was going to be behind him. So when we were outside the door the officer who had hold of me by the hair, I asked him again 'Why do you want my prints?'

I did not get an answer. I got knocked down on the floor and . hit me around the head and in the neck. I did not fight back but I yelled pretty loudly. I thought that if I yelled enough the others in the cell might wake up and make him stop but he just got completely wild. He was wild because I was screaming and I got a few more—I was lying down on the floor and I was hanging onto the bar because he wanted to drag me into the padded cell. He could not get me off because I hung on so tightly—I thought I was not going in there because I would not come out again. So he kicked me around the head and when he could not get me off he called out for his mate to come and give him a hand. His mate refused to come out and give him a hand."

Further on, it reads—

"I then went to the hospital—"

this was after he was released—

"because I had a pretty bad headache. The doctor check me around the head and checked my eyes. He also looked at the kick marks on my leg. The doctor said that if my head did not get better in a few days that I should come up again.

I then went home.

Three days later I returned to the hospital because the headache was no better and my front right hand side teeth were loose and bleeding. I asked the doctor about a pain in my left side and the doctor said that that was a broken hernia—I have never had this before. I think this happened when was trying to pull me into the padded cell."

The final paragraph illustrates the point that I am trying to make. It reads—

"I just got fed up because I thought that no one would believe me and I would be found guilty anyway so I might as well just plead guilty."

The attitude is important. The police, by coercing that man to get his confession, really sentenced him then.

I have a number of other allegations about police. A woman stated—

"During the course of a weekend I was finger printed and I was also made to strip naked in front of a male uniformed police officer."

That statement is signed.

Another statement reads—

"As I was also being walked up towards the alleyway the Policeman beside me elbowed me in the ribs and wacked me across the side of the head. When I was

taken to the car I was then pushed into the back seat so that I was face down in the back seat, however, my foot was caught between the door and the roof of the vehicle and the Police Officer kept on slamming the door against my foot and I kept on yelling out, 'my foot, my bloody foot is caught' and he just kept on slamming the door. Finally he let go of the door and I pulled my foot into the car."

Another statement reads—

"It was then that he struck me.

I then got up, pushed him out of the way, pushed past the other officer and got down the hall and called for help.

The blond haired officer grabbed me and forced me to the floor.

The blond haired officer held me by the arms. He grabbed me by the throat. They said 'get back in the room.' When he grabbed me by the throat, I almost passed out. They both applied more pressure.

I was then taken back into the room. After this they started hitting me. They caught me on the jaw. Then I said that I had done it—I was frightened."

Those statements illustrate very forcefully the point that I am making. The Magistrates Court has become just a rubber stamp. Verdicts are strongly influenced by the strength of the prosecution's case and, I am sure, by the nature of the defence. Findings may reflect a disposition on the part of magistrates to believe the police evidence even in cases in which police evidence is suspect. That, in turn, discourages defendants from challenging the police evidence even when they are innocent.

Because the subject is so vast, I cannot explore it in a few minutes. The present situation should not be allowed to continue. It may provide summary justice, but there is overwhelming public evidence, such as the statements that I have read tonight, of the need for the restructuring of the Queensland magistracy.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise) (8.8 p.m.): In entering the debate tonight, I take the opportunity to congratulate the Minister and his department on their handling of a very complex and important portfolio. The Minister and his staff administer a great many Acts of Parliament that have profound implications for the people of Queensland.

I commend the Minister for his innovations, for the reforms that he has brought forward and for those with which he is anxious to proceed. The officers of his department are extremely competent and are highly regarded throughout Australia. I make the point that this Minister is very highly regarded in the community, and I wish him well. I know that he has the support of most members in this Parliament.

My main reason for speaking to these Estimates is to comment on certain remarks that were made earlier this week by the honourable member for Salisbury. I am pleased that he is in the Chamber. I hope that he takes the opportunity to say once and for all whether the press reports concerned were accurate and whether he did say what he was reported as saying about the Gold Coast.

I raise this matter tonight because in an area such as the Gold Coast, to which tourism is important, it is vital that every effort be made to ensure that the people have a secure location, a safe area in which to live and an area that is not subject to false ridicule and attack.

I was alarmed, as were many people on the Gold Coast, when, on Tuesday, 30 October, the "Gold Coast Bulletin" came out with the headline—

" 'Coast is crime capital' Goss tells of drug dealing, illegal gambling."

The article under that headline said this—

"The Gold Coast is the crime capital of the southern hemisphere, according to the State Opposition spokesman, Wayne Goss."

Mr Henderson: Today it is the North Coast.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the honourable member for Mount Gravatt has interjected, apparently today it is the North Coast.

Mr Booth: They are pushing property values down.

Mr BORBIDGE: My friend from Warwick is quick to make the point that such wild assertions can have a very detrimental effect on the local community.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: I know that the credibility of the honourable member for Salisbury is not very high. I quote again from the article, as follows—

“He told a Brisbane press conference yesterday that the coast was a centre for the drug trade dealing and importation, distribution through massage parlours and also for illegal gambling.”

Mr Goss: Do you support the contention that your electorate has the worst police-to-population ratio in Australia?

Mr BORBIDGE: I will tell the honourable member a few facts.

Mr Goss: Are you happy with that?

Mr BORBIDGE: I am looking forward to the opportunity of telling the honourable member for Salisbury a few home truths.

Mr Goss: Do you know what the ratio is?

Mr BORBIDGE: The honourable member for Salisbury can just sit there and cop it. This week, without proper foundation, he viciously attacked the Gold Coast and the area that I represent. He will just have to sit there and cop it, because he is not in full possession of the facts.

The article goes on to state—

“And he added: ‘The Queensland Government is making only a paltry effort to stamp it out.

Some well-known figures on the Coast are highly involved in top-level organised crime.’ ”

Doesn't that make great copy! Next—

“Mr Goss said he could not name names for obvious reasons.”

Surprise, surprise! I do not know what those “obvious reasons” are, but I suggest that all this week he had the protection of parliamentary privilege and he will have it again when Parliament resumes after the forthcoming recess, so he will be able to name names if he wishes. He told the press that, for obvious reasons, he could not name names. He went on to say that his information had come from “senior police” whom he “regarded as highly reliable sources”. “Senior police” again! What that means is anyone's guess.

The article continues—

“Much of the money from drugs had been channelled into allegedly highly reputable businesses on the Coast.

Mr Goss was responding to statements made on Sunday by journalist and author Bob Bottom on a commercial television programme in Brisbane.”

I have here the story on page 1 of the “Gold Coast Bulletin”, which is circulated throughout Australia.

Mr Goss: Why won't you read the rest of it? What are you trying to cover up?

Mr BORBIDGE: The honourable member seems to be somewhat sensitive. I am quite happy to table this newspaper for the information of all honourable members,

because he has been caught out and he does not have the courage to apologise to the people of the Gold Coast for saying what he said. I suggest that the honourable member is not being fair and is not acting in a manner befitting a member of this Assembly. Of course, Government members have found that he tends to be a little short on substance but big on grandstanding. He adopts a hit-and-run approach to politics, which does not always do him a great deal of credit.

Again I make the point that I have tried to emphasise before. The honourable member's accusations can only harm tourism and business investment in the Gold Coast region. I say to the honourable member for Salisbury, "If you have a scrap of evidence or information in regard to organised crime on the Gold Coast I hope that you have the decency to hand it over to the proper authorities." Of course, such accusations have been made frequently. And, by golly, is not the evidence always very light on when the people who make such accusations are called upon to substantiate them?

Gold Coast police have been particularly active in recent times, in recent weeks; in fact, in recent days. Their efforts have met with considerable success. The honourable member for Salisbury makes such statements after the police have made massive drug raids. He is running a little late. He then says that the Gold Coast is a place where drug-dealing takes place.

In the year ended June 1980, 462 persons were charged with drug-related offences in the Gold Coast district. In 1981, the number increased to 747. In 1982, the number increased to 1 274. In 1983, the number increased to 1 694. In the year ended June 1984, the number increased to 1 806. Obviously, the police are meeting with a deal of success. The honourable member's allegations of drug-dealing are running just a little late. Last week, police action resulted in 61 persons being charged with 130 offences.

Mr Goss interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: The honourable member is a little excited. I will give him some more figures.

Mr Goss interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: I suggest to the honourable member that the Government members who represent the area have far closer contact with the local police officers than he has in his electorate of Salisbury in the south of suburban Brisbane.

As the honourable member wants to talk about crime statistics, I am delighted to compare the crime statistics in the area that he represents with those in the area that I have the privilege of representing in this Parliament.

Mr Booth: This will be interesting.

Mr BORBIDGE: As my friend from Warwick says, this will be interesting.

For administrative purposes, the Gold Coast falls within the South-Eastern Region. I understand that the electorate of the honourable member for Salisbury falls within the South Brisbane Region. Let me show how well this great crime-fighter is doing in his own back yard. I suggest that that is where the honourable member for Salisbury should be concentrating his efforts.

The statistics in the 1983 police report indicate that 35 976 criminal offences were reported in the honourable member's South Brisbane Region compared with 25 627 in the South-Eastern Region, which includes the Gold Coast. According to the annual report, there were over 10 000 additional offences reported in the area in which the honourable member's electorate is located. I suggest to him that in future he check his facts and make sure that he knows what he is talking about. If the honourable member wishes to make any allegations that he can substantiate——

Mr Goss: Do you know the respective populations?

Mr BORBIDGE: The permanent population of the greater Gold Coast area is about 200 000. In addition, two million tourists pass through the Gold Coast each year. I suggest to the honourable member that when he looks at the crime figures for the South-Eastern Region he should take into account the number of tourists who pass through the Gold Coast area each year. That makes the crime figures on the Gold Coast a far sight better than the crime figures in the South Brisbane Region.

Before the honourable member again makes such a fool of himself, it would be appropriate for him to check out what is happening in his own back yard before he charges down to the Gold Coast or makes accusations that have caused a great deal of concern. I would hope that, if he is to continue that line of action, he will have the propriety to make sure that in future he hands information in his possession to the appropriate authorities. If he is to make such statements, he should first of all check his facts.

I support the Estimates before the Committee. I commend the Minister and the officers of his department for the fine work that they are doing and the many measures they have taken during the last 12 months that have greatly benefited the Gold Coast area.

My friend the member for Southport mentioned the construction of the new court house. Honourable members realise how important that has been to the area.

Many legislative initiatives announced by the Minister and considered by the Parliament have also been of great benefit. I commend the Minister and his officers for that support.

Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (8.20 p.m.): I refer to enrolment cards. The matter may have been referred to previously in the debate. In my opinion, there should be a standard enrolment card. The Minister has probably indicated that in the not too distant future a standard enrolment card will cover both State and Federal enrolments. However, until that happens, the State enrolment card ought to be upgraded. A person witnessing a claimant's signature is only required to sign the card and state the electoral district of which he is a member. Everyone knows what signatures are like. The Commonwealth Government stipulates that a person witnessing a signature on a Commonwealth enrolment card has to fill out his name in block letters and state his full address. If that is done, the Electoral Office is able to ascertain whether a person is enrolled in the correct electorate. I ask the Minister to peruse the Commonwealth card very carefully and to ensure that the person who witnesses a signature on the State card is readily identified.

Many topics have been canvassed during today's debate. I will raise a couple of others. In particular, I refer to charitable collections at traffic lights. Every member would have received complaints about them. In view of the number of complaints that I have received, I believe that the practice ought to be stamped out. I realise that charitable institutions have to raise funds. Everyone realises the extent to which charitable institutions assist in the community. However, in my opinion the practice of collecting money at traffic lights is an inconvenience to motorists. It is an attack on motorists. I am sure that every member in the Chamber has had the experience of having a bucket thrust under his nose at the first set of traffic lights he comes to. At the next set of traffic lights another bucket is thrust under his nose. He could face a collection at six sets of traffic lights in one suburb.

Everybody supports charitable institutions. Nobody wants to knock them back. However, after being asked to contribute at several sets of traffic lights, the average motorist declines to donate. Why is the motorist picked on? After all, many costs are already imposed upon him to run his car on the road. He pays many taxes. In my opinion, if charitable institutions want to raise funds, they should obtain permission to engage in door-to-door collections.

Mr Davis: They don't accept Bankcard.

Mr VAUGHAN: They do not give a receipt, that is for sure, and they certainly do not accept Bankcard.

Quite some time ago I wrote to a former Minister for Justice and Attorney-General about collection procedures adopted at traffic lights. It had been brought to my notice that any group of people, without any identification whatsoever, could raise funds, particularly on a Saturday morning, by lining up with buckets and thrusting them under the noses of motorists waiting at traffic lights. The Minister advised me that the collectors were required legally to ensure that the collection tins were sealed, that the collectors were identified and had a permit, and had to observe several other conditions.

I subsequently took the opportunity, through the local press, to inform community groups of the legal requirements. The people who are now collecting are identified, but they appear with monotonous regularity. I do not believe that they comply fully with the requirements. However, they now have sealed buckets with a hole in the top through which the money can be dropped. That is not an appropriate way for charitable institutions to collect funds. The practice should be reconsidered.

Before I pass on to the main topic of my speech, I wish to speak about the necessity to train polling clerks for their duties on election day. I am sure that every honourable member has acted as an election scrutineer. Quite often the polling officer is new to the job and has a different idea of how the booth should be run. Occasionally, when counting gets under way at the end of the day, it can develop into a shemozzle, simply because the person in charge has not had a great deal of experience. Officers who have manned other polling booths are experienced and know how to conduct the count. However, a new fellow invariably applies the rules in a way that differs from the understanding of those who hand out how-to-vote cards outside the booth. New polling officers often want to rewrite the rules.

Returning officers and polling clerks should be given reasonable instruction in the procedures that are required in polling booths on election day, so that they can carry out their duties in a standard fashion, rather than haphazardly as happens at the moment.

The other matter that I want to raise is my hardy annual, concerning which I believe I will get some sympathy from the Minister. Judging by statements reported in the press from time to time, I believe that the Minister's genuine attempts to try to rectify the glaring anomaly that exists relative to the antiquated liquor laws that apply to golf and bowls clubs, have been defeated in Cabinet. We are not living in 1948 or 1924, but in 1984, in an era when clubs are being developed in suburban areas. In the main the clubs are frequented by elderly people or those who live in the near vicinity. They are distinct from hotels and the like.

I know that the Minister agrees with me that it is about time the antiquated laws relating to the sale of liquor by golf-clubs and bowls clubs—they are specifically singled out in the Liquor Act—were changed. Members of those clubs are, without exception, significantly mature people. The members of bowls clubs and golf-clubs cannot even consume alcohol in their clubs unless a game is actually being played. If a member of one of those clubs happens to win a bottle of alcoholic liquor as a trophy, he is supposed to drink it there, not take it off the premises. So if the trophy happens to be a bottle of whisky or rum, or half a dozen bottles of beer, the member is supposed to consume that alcohol on the premises, or at least not remove it from the premises.

Honourable members all know that that does not apply in practice. A club member can have a few beers and then decide that, having regard to the .05 blood alcohol limit, he has had enough and that he will go home. He might decide to take home a bottle or a can of beer. He cannot purchase it from his club; he must drive however many miles it is to the nearest hotel and purchase it there.

That same person might have a son who is a member of a football club, an RSL club, or virtually any other club, who can go and have a drink at his club and then purchase liquor to take home. I am not attacking football clubs in particular, and I do

not suggest that the law affecting them should be changed; but I am saying that the law relating to golf-clubs and bowls clubs should be brought up to 1984.

If my son joins the local football club, he need not even play the game in order to go down to the club and have a drink. It is not necessary that a game of football be played. As honourable members know, there is a football season. When he decides to go home, he can buy half a dozen stubbies, or whatever else he wants, to take home, and that is quite legal. But the mature, sensible member of a golf-club or bowls club cannot do that. Members of those clubs are invariably participants. They play the game; they do not join the clubs just for the social life. Yet they are supposed to drink on the premises only when a game is being played, and they certainly cannot purchase alcohol to take home with them.

It really is an antiquated law. I say in all sincerity that I cannot understand why the Premier of this State vetos any attempt by the Minister or anybody else to try to change it. Former Ministers for Justice have tried to prevail on the Premier. If the Premier does not have a drink, that is his business; but there are mature members of golf-clubs and bowls clubs who participate in those sports who cannot buy alcohol to take home with them. If they win a trophy, they have to drink it on the spot because it would be illegal for them to take it away. On the other hand, their sons can go to the football club, even though they do not play the game and even though the game is not being played on that day, and buy whatever alcohol they want to take away.

I know that the Minister is sympathetic, and I appreciate his attempts to reform that antiquated law. On behalf of those mature people in the community who are members of golf-clubs and bowls clubs and who play the sport, I again appeal to the Government to allow them to do what their sons can do at a football club. I appeal to all the other Ministers in the Cabinet to prevail on the Premier to change the antiquated attitude that he adopts in this regard.

Mr Davis: Wouldn't you say that it is the hotel lobby that is stopping it?

Mr VAUGHAN: As I understand the situation, it is the hotel lobby, through the influence that it exerts on the Premier, that is preventing a change.

Not long ago, legislation was introduced into this Chamber to lower the permissible blood alcohol level to .05. That is a wrong and unreal level. I am aware of the claims that have been made about the effect that the lowering of the permissible blood alcohol level has had on drink-driving. But the Government is still allowing hotels to be built in areas away from public transport and requiring large car-parks to be provided. Large liquor barns are being established in those hotels.

The Government should be trying to change people's drinking habits. I do not know why it does not accept the situation that exists across the border in New South Wales. Alcoholic liquor is sold in licensed stores. Small bars are established in shopping centres in the suburbs. A man is able to have a few drinks while his wife is shopping and then travel home on public transport.

I do not know why the Government will not change its antiquated attitude. I appeal to all those who are able to see the sanity of the argument that I have presented on behalf of the people in the golf-clubs and bowls clubs in my electorate, in particular, to support my endeavours to bring the laws up to date.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (8.38 p.m.): I shall make a very short contribution tonight, not the long one I intended to make about property trusts. The Minister has been very sympathetic in dealing with problems that have been brought to his attention.

Tonight, I wish to refer to the problems facing victims of crimes. A 15-year-old schoolgirl in my electorate was raped. The case has been proceeding for 12 months or longer, and it has been adjourned on a number of occasions. This has been to her detriment. A more integrated court system is needed in Queensland. When I or any

other member approaches the Minister about a problem, he is able to deal with it, as he did in the case to which I am referring.

This is not the first occasion on which such a problem has arisen. The sooner a crime, particularly a serious crime such as rape, is dealt with by the courts, the better it is for the victim. She is able to get on with her life, and the psychological problems can be overcome. When cases drag on for one reason or another, it is to the detriment of the victim.

I know that the Minister understands the problem in this regard and that he has discussed it with officers in his department. He has been sympathetic when the matter has been raised with him. Because of the back-log in the courts, this problem of cases dragging on is facing the people of Queensland, and it must be overcome.

The other problem in the electorate of Woodridge relates to the Public Defender. Unfortunately, the Public Defender's Office gets a tremendous amount of work from my electorate. However, when there is more than one defendant in a case, the Public Defender's Office should not represent every defendant. At present, the Public Defender's Office is handling the cases of both defendants in a murder trial, even though they have different cases. In intricate cases such as a murder committed by two accused, they may not necessarily be charged equally. How inequality could arise in relation to a charge of murder, I do not know, but it does in the eyes of the police. One accused may be the prime culprit, yet the Public Defender's Office takes an overall view and appears for both accused.

The Minister is aware of the two problems that I have raised tonight. He is handling them well, and I congratulate him on that. The people of Queensland should be aware of these problems. The time factor in bringing cases to court should be reduced, and I am sure that the department is aware of that. Only money and expertise will bring about that reduction.

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (8.41 p.m.): I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate.

The honourable member for Wolston referred to the increase in the allocations in certain aspects of my departmental Estimates. I will deal with each of them in turn.

As to the increase in the special allocation for publicity—I make the point that legal affairs are complicated and the increased allocation for publicity is simply in keeping with the department's policy of explaining the laws of Queensland to the community in terms that are easily understood by non-legal persons. I made that point when I presented the Estimates. I am sure that all honourable members are aware of the difficulties in translating the legal jargon of Acts and regulations into terms that can be easily understood by the community at large.

It is intended to spend \$50,000 for a number of purposes in addition to maintaining the ongoing program. As an example, I point out that a booklet to make interested parties better aware of the various functions of the department is being prepared.

A handbook setting out the duties and responsibilities of the functions of a justice of the peace is being prepared for distribution to the holders of that office in Queensland so that they can be better informed of their responsibilities.

A video tape is being developed that will inform appropriately aged schoolchildren of the basic functions of the law.

As to the increase in travelling and transfer expenses—a once-only grant of \$250,000 was made for the 1984-85 financial year to meet the transfer expenses of 100 officers employed in the service of Magistrates Courts throughout the State, who have to be relocated as a result of a major restructuring and reorganisation of the Magistrates Courts service. I am sure that the honourable member will accept that that cost must be met. It accounts for one-quarter of a million dollars of the allocation.

Investments from the Funeral Benefit Trust Fund increased from \$80,000 last year to \$200,000 in 1984-85. Such investments come under the responsibility of the Treasury Department. However, I understand that the increase is merely the reinvestment of loan funds maturing during 1984-85.

The honourable member for Wolston made a point about discipline within the legal profession. As Opposition spokesman on Justice, he raised the question of disciplinary proceedings within the legal profession. Meaningful discussions have been held with the previous president of the Queensland Law Society and the present incumbent of that office. I advise the honourable member that those discussions, aimed at completely updating disciplinary measures to be applied to solicitors within the State, have reached an advanced stage. I believe that before long I will be in a position to indicate what the measures will be.

The introduction of new tribunals is justified and, as part of that introduction, lay observers should be engaged in all stages of the disciplinary process. Although a significant amount of work remains to be done, I hope that I will be in a position to introduce legislation during the first half of 1985. It is appropriate that such legislation be introduced. I realise that this matter has been of concern to other honourable members.

The honourable member for Wolston referred to the hoary old chestnut of fusion of the two fields of the legal profession. Like fashions, that proposal comes in and out of favour, depending on the feelings and attitudes that prevail at the time. However, it is my understanding that no substantive case has ever been made out to justify this revolution in the procedures of legal practice within this State.

The honourable member also referred to persons who find themselves out of pocket because they fulfil their obligations to the community by serving on juries. Consequent upon the lengthy Russell Island trial, of which all honourable members would be aware, the Jury Act was amended to provide for the payment of higher rates to jurors engaged in lengthy trials. The amendment provided that any juror who considered that the higher payment still was not adequate compensation could apply to the Government for a special payment. Several Russell Island jurors took advantage of the amendment. As well as that, fees payable to a juror were increased from 1 October. The new amount is \$31.50 a day.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: The Russell Island trial was a unique example. People who were engaged on jury service that extended beyond 12 days could apply for special payment. However, I am referring to people whose involvement with jury services is for five or six days. You have admitted that jurors are still out of pocket until the twelfth day of jury service, and that is what I am requesting that you look at.

Mr HARPER: I take the point made by the honourable member. Recently I considered the situation, and I agree that it is a matter for concern. It is a problem that needs to be looked at. The honourable member seems to be suggesting that, in some sections of the community, people are providing more than others by way of jury service. That was a matter for concern, and the daily payment has been increased to \$31.50. Of course, in some cases that does not compensate in real terms for losses. I will give the matter some attention, and I will have regard to the honourable member's comments.

Reference has also been made to the number of justices of the peace in Queensland. Queensland is a large State, and it would be recognised that it is necessary to have sufficient justices of the peace to carry out essential duties. Prior to the appointment of a justice of the peace, investigations are carried out by my department as to the suitability of a nominee. I agree that the present number of justices of the peace would not justify a substantial increase, but, at the same time, I would not agree to a stringent restriction on the number of persons who may be nominated by an honourable member. A policy of moderation is appropriate, and that is the policy that I intend to carry out.

An honourable member compared the number of justices of the peace in Queensland with the number in other States. Of course, one must have regard to the size of

Queensland. I am sure that honourable members in this Chamber would not wish to deprive the people in remote areas of the ability to approach a justice of the peace readily. It is nonsense to compare the number of justices of the peace in a State the size of Queensland with the number of justices of the peace in Victoria. More appropriate was the comparison with New South Wales. Queensland has fewer justices of the peace per head of population than New South Wales.

Some reference was made to the Peace and Good Behaviour Act. The honourable member for Wolston referred to people abusing the legislation by going to court with legal representation. It is open to any person appearing in Queensland courts, with the exception of special tribunals such as the Small Claims Tribunal, to be legally represented. Persons who are unable to afford to pay for legal representation may obtain legal aid so that no person should be disadvantaged.

Later in my comments I will refer to other suggestions made by various members about legal representation through legal aid. Every solicitor in this State should be able to advise a client on the availability of legal aid.

Reverting now to the Small Claims Tribunal and other special tribunals—when the Small Claims Tribunal Act was before the House it was indicated that its operation would be closely monitored. That is being done. When sufficient time has elapsed to adequately assess its operation and effectiveness, consideration will be given to appropriate amendments.

The honourable member further referred to the payment of licence fees under the Liquor Act and the payment of licence fees on a sliding scale. It would seem that considerable difficulties are involved in assessing a fee in that manner. On the surface, it certainly appears appropriate that licensees whose premises have a small turnover should be encouraged by the payment of a lower licence fee. A licence fee based on the amount of purchases is not favoured as it has been found that some hotels with a small turnover are, nevertheless, quite profitable because of reasonable rentals, lease prices and the like. I think that members would readily understand that.

The member for Cooroora drew attention to the member for Wolston in referring to a recent Senate committee headed by the Australian Labor Party senator for Tasmania, Senator Michael Tate, with whom I have had a great deal of contact at ministerial level. If I heard the honourable member for Wolston correctly, he referred to the recent Senate inquiry as a Star Chamber exercise. That surprised me, because it was chaired by the Labor Party Senator Tate from Tasmania.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: I am very broad-minded on those things. Party politics cuts across it. I am quite happy to reiterate what I said today. It was a Star Chamber set-up.

Mr HARPER: I thank the honourable member for the reiteration of his earlier interjection. There are those on his side of the Chamber who have suggested to me that it would be inappropriate for a politician to allow a legal decision to weigh upon his mind when he is coming to a conclusion.

I give credit to Senator Tate from Tasmania for his being prepared, and for having the moral courage, to buck his own party political machine in this matter—if that was the case.

The member for Cooroora referred to the identification of a deceased person by a relative. I have the utmost sympathy for that person. It must have been a traumatic experience. I do not know how the problem can be overcome other than, as the honourable member suggested, by gaining a better understanding of the people involved.

The member for Cooroora referred also to possible risk to the public from the promoters of novel rural schemes seeking to raise money. The current upsurge in organisations raising money from the public has included a number promoting rural schemes such as jojoba and babaco plantations. The protection of the Companies Act is available for rural-based schemes just as it is for any other scheme. As members will

recall from the Land Bank Estate incident not so long ago, it is possible to prevent such schemes gathering momentum. The effect upon the public of illegal schemes can be limited if the offence is brought to my attention or to the attention of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs.

The member for Rockhampton expressed the view that the attitude of the media needs to be examined carefully. More responsibility is warranted in some aspects of journalism. It was interesting that the former Leader of the Opposition brought that need to the Government's attention. He considered it of sufficient importance to devote a considerable amount of time in his final speech to the need for responsibility by the media. The honourable member addressed his call to me. I note his views, which I assume reflect the views of the Opposition generally. I take the opportunity to wish the honourable member well, whatever the sphere to which he eventually moves.

The member for Sherwood argued strongly in favour of establishing a permanent court of appeal in this State. Experience with the New South Wales Court of Appeal has been that relationships within the judiciary have been soured for many years because of judges receiving what is argued to be favoured appointment. The recent appointments of Mr Justice Michael Kirby as President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal and of the well-known Labor silk and husband of a Labor member of Federal Parliament, Mr Michael McHugh, QC, has guaranteed that the fissures that previously existed will remain, if not widen. That experience should be a warning to those who argue in favour of the creation of a permanent court of appeal for Queensland.

I have discussed the matter with the Chief Justice of Queensland and I will keep it in mind. I have a reasonably open mind about it. As the honourable member for Sherwood would appreciate, a great deal of appellate court experience has been gained by some judges of the Supreme Court. Those with that expertise are often prevailed upon to exercise their judgment.

The member for Sherwood has properly criticised the actions of the Federal Attorney-General, Senator Gareth Evans, in limiting the right of appeal to the High Court of Australia. I add that that occurred despite the strenuous objections of the Queensland Government and significant sections of the Australian legal profession. It is another example of the impetuous nature of my Federal counterpart, and it ensures that the High Court of Australia will become an even more elitist body.

The action of the Commonwealth Government has caused the Queensland Government to reassess its position in relation to the exercise agreed to between the Commonwealth and all States for the severing of the residual constitutional links between the United Kingdom Parliament and the Australian States. Part of that agreement related to the abolition of the right of appeal from State courts to the Privy Council. No final decision has yet been made. However, the actions of Senator Evans and the Commonwealth Government have certainly changed the basis upon which the original agreement was made.

Of necessity the matter will be kept under the closest review to ensure that the rights of citizens of this State are not adversely affected. I have had lengthy discussions with my leader in this regard and he is fully aware of the position.

The honourable member has also quite properly criticised the introduction by Senator Evans and some of his Labor colleagues in other States of the ridiculous legislation requiring courts to have regard to parliamentary debates and other extrinsic material in interpreting legislation. As the honourable member said: What utter nonsense! That is an attempt to subvert the role of the judiciary in protecting the rights and liberties of citizens and will not be supported by the Queensland Government.

Obviously, the Australian Labor Party has so little regard for the ability of parliamentary counsel to draft legislation reflecting the policy aims of the Government and for the ability of the judiciary to interpret that legislation in accordance with the standards devised over hundreds of years that it has attempted to introduce politics directly into

the judicial process. A greater attempt to do just that has been brought to light by the Senate inquiry to which I referred a few moments ago. The Queensland Government rejects completely legislation of the type introduced by Senator Evans. The Government has the utmost faith in the ability of the Queensland judiciary to interpret legislation passed by this Parliament and to ensure that justice is done to all citizens.

Mention was made of the political motivation of appointees to the higher courts. The honourable member for Sherwood was expressing sentiments rather similar to those expressed earlier in the debate by the honourable member for Cooroora. I agree that perhaps the High Court has never been in a greater crisis than it is today. Judges of the High Court should certainly be beyond reproach.

The honourable member for Burdekin referred to the work-load of the portfolio of Justice and Attorney-General. That amused me a little and made me recall a comment that a former Attorney-General made to me not very long ago. He warned that there is not much time for a Minister for Justice and Attorney-General to watch his back. That very well may have been the case at one time, but it is fortunate that there is no need to do that in a National Party Government.

The honourable member for Burdekin referred to the need for amendment to the Liquor Act and he and other members, including the member for Southport, referred to the very successful symposium that was held in the Parliamentary Annexe earlier in the year.

The member for Lockyer and the member for Burdekin referred to the voluntary electoral identification cards that I hope will become available before very long at a cost of about \$5. It will be a security-type card. By keeping the cost down to \$5, it will be readily accessible to young people. It is intended to have it made available on a purely voluntary basis to people enrolling for the first time.

I can understand the honourable member for Windsor's being antagonistic to the call by the member for Sherwood for a court of appeal in Queensland. The philosophy of the party to which the honourable member for Windsor belongs is one of totalitarianism. Apparently, that totalitarianism even extends into the court system as well as into the field of politics.

I was interested to hear that the Opposition is opposed to the appointment of justices of peace. No doubt Opposition members have their own motivation. The member for Windsor joined his colleagues in putting that argument. Perhaps the motivation is that they want to deny the community easy access to justice. I am sure that the people of Queensland will be pleased to learn of their further disregard for those who live in the less populous areas or, in this case, a disregard for the entire community.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I rise to a point of order. We on this side have at no time in the debate——

Mr FitzGerald: You weren't even in the Chamber.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I was in the Chamber when it was said, and I made the point myself. I have called for a more responsible attitude to the appointment of justices of the peace. I asked that they be limited——

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! I have to intervene. There is no point of order.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I rise to a further point of order. I find the remarks that the Opposition is irresponsible, and that Opposition members believe in the elimination of justices of the peace to be offensive. I ask that those remarks be withdrawn.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Is the Minister prepared to withdraw the remarks?

Mr HARPER: I am not prepared to withdraw the remarks as such, but I accept the words of the honourable member for Wolston. But other members of the Opposition clearly indicated their disregard for decentralisation by way of their remarks concerning the appointment of justices of the peace.

The honourable member for Windsor also referred to justices of the peace, and in particular to the Queensland Justices Association and its registrar, Mr Peter MacDonald. Members would be aware that the association is not a statutory body, and is not associated in any way with my department.

The honourable member for Lockyer referred to the need for transcripts from tapes of proceedings in the Magistrates Courts. I noted his concern at the delay in such transcripts being made available, but I assure the Committee that if such transcripts are urgently required that priority can be given to their preparation. I will certainly issue instructions to ensure that procedure is followed.

The department is providing tape-recording facilities in Magistrates Courts throughout Queensland as expeditiously as funding permits.

The honourable member also referred to the delay in the hearing of cases in the Magistrates Courts. That issue was taken up by other members. I strongly believe that the appointment of a director of prosecutions in the very near future will have a spin-off effect on the Magistrates Courts and that an improvement will be effected in the length of time taken for matters to come before the Magistrates Courts. The honourable member for Lockyer also referred to the need for hearings in the coroner's court to be heard on the one day in the one centre. There is some difficulty about that practice, but occasionally special consideration is given to implementing it. However, it must be remembered that it is often easier and cheaper for people and the court to move to other centres in the State than it is to endeavour to bring witnesses from remote areas. Because witnesses to an incident are often scattered throughout the State, that approach is taken. But the court is flexible, and I think that flexibility is acknowledged by those who are aware of the system.

The honourable member for Lockyer suggested that justices should be divided into two groups, namely administrative and judiciary. Of course, the need for justices to sit on the bench is rare, and occurs only in the extremities of the State. Members may be assured that I will continue to monitor the position and endeavour to provide for Queensland the most satisfactory service available through the system of justices of the peace.

I might refer to the question of the tape-recording of proceedings in the Magistrates Court and point out that priority is being given in this area to those courts that presently do not have tape-recording facilities. Priority is also being given to committal hearings and appeal cases. Other measures are being adopted to provide transcripts as early as possible.

The honourable member for Lockyer referred to the Liquor Act and to the permissible blood alcohol level. It seems to me to be appropriate to encourage the consumption of low-alcohol liquor, which I intend to explore. In fact, I intend to move in that direction.

The Leader of the Opposition took the unusual step of placing himself on the speakers' list. He referred to the Costigan report. I, by way of interjection, advised the Committee that I intended to table the Costigan report. I believe that I should outline the circumstances and make some comments on them.

I also bring to the attention of the Committee the contribution made by the honourable member for Southport. He referred to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned material from volumes 9 and 10 of the Costigan report, which certainly are not available to this Government or to this Parliament but which apparently have been made available to him.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: No, that is incorrect, He referred to them but he did not mention any material in them. He has not seen them and has no copy of them.

Mr HARPER: I am not suggesting that the Leader of the Opposition has seen those volumes, but he did refer to them, and, in the light of the Prime Minister's comments, that seems strange.

In view of the interjection by the honourable member for Wolston, I take the opportunity to say that perhaps in some small way I may have misled the Committee, by way of interjection, when the Leader of the Opposition was speaking. I understood that a copy of the report was made available to him at the request of the Prime Minister out of a set of documents sent to the Premier. In fact, during the dinner recess, I learnt that what actually happened was that the driver delivered the copy of the report to the Premier, and that his instructions were to take another copy of the report to the Leader of the Opposition. It would seem that the Prime Minister directed that a copy of the Costigan report be delivered to the Leader of the Opposition. I do not think that it would be very unfair to suggest that with those five volumes of the Costigan report was the prepared statement that the Leader of the Opposition read. It would have been impossible for him to have perused the documents in the time available and to have prepared the speech that he made to this Chamber.

To place it on record, I indicate just how the Costigan report came to be made available to the people of Queensland today. It all started yesterday afternoon when some members of the media drew attention to the fact that they were concerned about their privilege if the documents were not tabled in this Parliament. I took the matter up with my Commonwealth counterpart, Senator Gareth Evans, and asked him whether he would be prepared to make available to me a copy of the Costigan report that was being tabled in the Victorian Parliament. I indicated that it would be my wish to table the document in the Queensland Parliament for the benefit of the people of Queensland and to ensure that the media in this State had the ability to publish with impunity. Later in the evening, Senator Evans contacted me and indicated that he was able to comply with my request and that the report would be sent to me by special courier this morning. That is how the report came to Queensland. It was not as a result of a gratuitous offer by the Commonwealth Government, but I do express my appreciation of the co-operation afforded by the Commonwealth Attorney-General (Senator Evans) and, undoubtedly, the Prime Minister.

This afternoon, the Premier and Treasurer held a full press conference at which he outlined the Government's attitude to the Costigan report and the course that will be taken. I understand that the Premier assured the public that the Government will examine every recommendation and suggestion contained in the Costigan report to determine whether any should be adopted in Queensland law to strengthen the powers of this Government in its fight against drugs.

It is my intention to take to Cabinet on Monday a recommendation for the establishment of an interdepartmental committee to study the Costigan report documents as they are received by the Government. I propose that the committee will include representatives from the Police Department and Crown law. The committee will have the responsibility of identifying action that may need to be taken by Queensland authorities as a result of the report. If further investigation or action is required in Queensland, it will be undertaken in full co-operation with other appropriate authorities. The Committee can be assured that Queensland police will continue their efforts to bring drug-dealers to justice.

The honourable member for Mulgrave took a constructive approach to the accountability of solicitors, and I have already referred to it when addressing comments raised by the member for Wolston.

The member for Mulgrave made mention also of his belief that legal aid should be better advertised. I must say that every solicitor should be in a position to advise on the availability of legal aid.

The honourable member also referred to me, as Minister for Justice, the scandal that he says recently took place in Cairns. I am sure that the incident did take place because the member for Mulgrave would not make such an accusation against the Prime Minister of Australia unless it had been verified and was completely accurate. If this wild escapade of the Prime Minister at a grog party at 2 o'clock in the morning is to be investigated, I am sure that it will be brought to the attention of the Minister for Police.

The honourable member for Mulgrave also referred to electoral rolls, and I took note of his comments.

I now turn to the contribution of the member for Salisbury. It was a typical contribution by the would-be Opposition spokesman for Justice and Attorney-General, Police and everything else. It is noticeable that, unlike the Opposition spokesman for Justice and Attorney-General, the member for Salisbury is absent from the Chamber. At great length he advocated the need for a task force. Obviously, in shadowing the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, he has not become conversant with the responsibilities of the National Crime Authority as, I am sure, the member for Wolston has.

The responsible attitude taken by this Government has been denied deliberately by the Opposition Police spokesman. As Attorney-General, I have a responsibility, as does the Government, to co-operate with established investigatory forces, and that occurs at all levels. The Government and I also co-operate with the Attorneys-General of the other States and the Commonwealth.

I remind the honourable member for Salisbury that, as Attorney-General for the State of Queensland, I am this State's representative on the Intergovernmental Committee of the National Crimes Authority. In all sections of my portfolio I intend to continue to take my responsibilities seriously, as I do now. I do not intend to make misleading statements or accusations which cannot be supported. As the honourable member matures and accepts his responsibility as a spokesman, perhaps he will gain an appreciation of the need to be more responsible in his attitudes.

I take strong exception to the remarks that he made about my department giving convenient advice in connection with the Charters Towers cattle cases, if I might describe them that way. Advice that was given by me has been endorsed in the report of the Police Complaints Tribunal as being correct, and advice given by me with the assistance of my departmental officers—notably, the acting Solicitor-General—was certainly correct and proper. I regard the allegation made by the honourable member as disgraceful. As it is completely unjustified, he should have the courage to withdraw it.

The reason that the report of the Police Complaints Tribunal has not yet been tabled by my colleague the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police is that the Commissioner of Police is still considering what charges, if any, will be laid. However, I can assure honourable members that the Minister for Police takes the matters contained in that report of the tribunal very seriously. He and I have had completely frank and extensive discussions about the matter.

The honourable member for Salisbury referred to the use of what has been described as the Westpac money. I can assure honourable members and particularly the honourable member for Kurilpa, who referred to this subject, that the purposes to which that money will be applied will include legal aid. The funds are certainly earning interest. I have reached a very firm understanding with the Queensland Law Society executives, and that understanding is being honoured in regard to those funds. However, it will be necessary to introduce legislation, and this will be done at the appropriate time. In the meantime, money that has been paid—the Westpac money in this State—is certainly not lying idle; it is earning interest.

The honourable member for Salisbury refused to answer the question that I put to him. Fortunately his comrade, as he would call her, the honourable member for Kurilpa,

was prepared to say that it is public money. Perhaps the honourable member for Salisbury, as a legal practitioner, has his own reasons for refusing to answer the questions. As a lawyer, he was probably trying to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. Although the Government does not own this money, it has been elected to represent the people of Queensland and it has a certain responsibility as custodian of public money. It is certainly no more lawyers' money than is interest earned on other trust funds. I hope that when the legislation is brought before the House the honourable member for Salisbury will see fit to answer my question about the money.

I mention that I have had discussions with the chairman of the Legal Aid Commission in Queensland about funding, and I have a very firm understanding of the need for additional funding. When the funding is needed, appropriate action will be recommended by me.

The honourable members for Sandgate and Salisbury asked what action my Government will take to investigate the matters raised in the Costigan report, which was tabled in this Chamber this afternoon by my leader, the Honourable the Premier and Treasurer. In fact, in Queensland, matters previously raised by Mr Costigan have been investigated by the appropriate State authorities.

I refer particularly to matters relating to Hamidan Pty Ltd, which was a multimillion-dollar scheme to defraud the public and the taxation office and included an international currency fraud. The directors and others involved have been committed for trial in May 1985 on charges of conspiracy to defraud the public. That committal was the result of most complicated investigations carried out by my officers of the Corporate Affairs Commissioner's Office and by the Fraud Squad. Those investigations included the collection of evidence in South East Asia and interstate. That action illustrates that the Fraud Squad and the Corporate Affairs Commissioner's Office are quite capable of investigating complicated matters on reference from the Costigan royal commission or, for that matter, from any other source.

The honourable member for Warwick referred to proposals associated with justices of the peace. Quite properly, he pointed out that in the far-flung areas of this State access to a justice of the peace is not as simple as it is in the urban areas. He pointed out quite properly that, despite the large number of justices of the peace, their level of involvement in criminal charges is very low.

As I indicated earlier, when a comparison is made of the population of Queensland and the population of New South Wales and the vast areas of those States, it becomes obvious that Queensland does not have a relatively high number of justices of the peace. It is inappropriate to compare Queensland with the small States of Victoria and Tasmania.

The honourable member for Warwick referred to the difficulties that would occur if the number of liquor licences available was drastically reduced. It is always necessary that an appropriate balance be maintained.

The member argued strongly in favour of increasing the penalty for non-voting at elections. It was increased in August 1983 from \$4 to \$10. Whilst fully supporting the principle of compulsory voting, it seems that at present a substantial increase in penalty would not be warranted.

The member referred to certain problems experienced in the Warwick area with the abuse of solicitors' trust accounts. Whilst not commenting upon the court action currently under way, I point out to the Committee that I have indicated on a number of occasions to the law society my concern that solicitors' trust accounts should be strictly monitored. I am aware that the law society shares my view and that it has indicated that fact to its members. If it can be demonstrated that legislative action is required to tighten it up even more, I will certainly be prepared to give consideration to it.

The member for Warwick referred to the guide-lines applicable to the granting of legal aid. Those guide-lines, which are laid down by the Legal Aid Commission, are the subject of continual review and have been upgraded three times over the last five years.

Should a person who has sought legal aid be refused and be dissatisfied with the refusal, appeal mechanisms do exist. I encourage their use. I have always encouraged appeal against any decision if there is doubt or if there is dissatisfaction with the refusal. Those mechanisms include an appearance by the persons themselves before a committee of review, at which time they can properly state their case in person. The provision of legal aid is a heavy expense on the community. The limited resources must be fairly distributed, and this is done not in an arbitrary or capricious manner but by paying due regard to maximising the rights of the individual applicant.

The member for Ipswich referred to young people enrolling for a Commonwealth election not knowing that they must complete a State enrolment card to be enrolled on the State electoral roll. An administrative agreement exists between the State Electoral Office and the Australian Electoral Office under which all applicants for enrolment are handed, or should be, both State and Commonwealth enrolment cards when they apply at those offices. Of course, difficulties do arise in other places, such as post offices.

The recent State-wide roll canvass has to date obtained 202 000 enrolment cards. Surely that must ensure a much more accurate State electoral roll. The possibility of having a joint Federal and State enrolment card is presently under discussion by the Special Minister of State (Mick Young) and myself. As a result of discussions with him a couple of weeks ago in Sydney, I have submitted a written proposal. In the very near future, I hope to be in a position to introduce amendments to Queensland's Electoral Act to provide for a single enrolment card, which will overcome the difficulties.

The member for Ipswich spoke also about electoral justice—a subject that is very difficult for him to understand. In the latter part of his contribution to the debate, he admitted that it was his own party which introduced the zonal system. Now, of course, the zonal system does not suit the Labor Party, so it is retreating from statements made in this Chamber by the former ALP Premier, Ned Hanlon, Electoral weightage simply maintains equality of representation. Undoubtedly, it is the corner-stone of the Westminster system.

The member for Southport made his usual very useful contribution to the debate.

The members for Kurilpa and Salisbury referred to the contribution of the Queensland Government to legal aid. Basically, legal aid in Queensland is provided by the Legal Aid Office and the Public Defender's Office. The majority of persons who use the services of those offices are, by agreement between the Commonwealth and the States, the responsibility of the Commonwealth. Quite obviously, the honourable members did not do their homework and ascertain the position in other States. The Commonwealth Government makes no contribution whatsoever to the running of the Public Defender's Office in this State. When legal aid is considered as a whole, no other State in Australia—perhaps apart from New South Wales—makes a greater contribution to legal aid per capita than does Queensland.

The member for Kurilpa mentioned the need to train stipendiary magistrates in children's court matters. As the honourable member would realise, the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs has already tabled a Family and Community Development Bill, which provides for a Family Matters Court and the appointment of a president of that court. Under the Bill, the president of the court has special duties to perform, one of which is to take such administrative action as is considered necessary for the more effective provision of services. It will be a matter for the president to consider what qualifications are necessary for appointees to such courts.

The member for Kurilpa referred also to the proposed Australian Bill of Rights based on the United Nations Charter and asked why the Queensland Government opposes it. I am sorry that the honourable member for Kurilpa is not presently in the Chamber. Obviously she has not read the Australian Bill—she admitted that—and I believe that it would be in her interests to read the document before she comments on it—before she commits herself to supporting it. The United States of America refused to ratify the United Nations convention because it would destroy its own Bill of Rights.

If the Labor Party is so proud of its proposal, let Senator Evans make his latest draft public now, not in a month's time. Let Senator Evans and Bob Hawke make it public now. Do not let the Prime Minister run away from the fact that it is just as much his Bill of Rights as it is that of his Attorney-General. The Premier of Queensland accepts equal responsibility for my legislation; let Bob Hawke accept equal responsibility for the legislation of Senator Gareth Evans. Let them both bring out and put on the table the proposed Bill of Rights—this Australian Bill of Rights of which the Labor Party is so proud that it is determined to keep it locked up in the cupboard until after 1 December. Let them make their draft publicly available and let the people see what is proposed for them.

The honourable member for Kurilpa referred to my refusal to give the South Brisbane Community Legal Service Incorporated permission to raise funds from the general public by means of art unions. The decision to refuse that permit was taken by me as part of my responsibilities because the objects of the service could not be regarded as purposes for which a permit may be granted. In my opinion it would not be appropriate to allow an organisation such as the South Brisbane Community Legal Service to compete with charity for the scarce charity dollar. The Commonwealth Government, the State Government and the legal profession, through the Legal Aid Office, the Public Defender's Office and the duty solicitor service, provide free legal aid to persons in need.

The member for Mount Isa cast aspersions on the honesty and the integrity of the Magistrates Courts in Queensland, particularly in the more isolated areas of the State. I reject those aspersions completely. This is yet another case in which an Opposition member should be ashamed of his suggestions. The Magistrates Courts in Queensland are not subject to the pressures to which they are subject in Labor States such as New South Wales, where Chief Magistrate Briese has been threatened by the Premier of New South Wales for giving honest evidence.

In addition, the Supreme Court of Queensland exercises general supervision over all activities of the Magistrates Courts. Is the member for Mount Isa suggesting that the Supreme Court is also subject to pressure? If he is, he stands condemned by his own words.

I was interested to hear the member for Mount Isa advocate the introduction of solicitors from outside the public service to the Magistrates Courts bench. I am sure that the magistrates and clerks of the court throughout Queensland will be very interested to hear that the Labor Party member for Mount Isa advocates the bringing in of outside solicitors to fulfil this role.

The honourable member for Surfers Paradise took exception to the continuing unsubstantiated attacks being made by the member for Salisbury, and adequately dealt with them.

Mr FitzGerald: And how!

Mr HARPER: Yes, and how!

The honourable member for Nudgee raised the matter of training for presiding officers and poll clerks. He also raised the question of the single enrolment card, on which I commented a few moments ago. Presiding officers and poll clerks are issued with written instructions, and many returning officers do hold instruction seminars. Many months ago I gave instructions that a full training program for returning officers and other electoral officers be implemented before the next general election. I share the honourable member's concern that those officers should have a better understanding of their responsibilities.

I noted the honourable member's comments on the Liquor Act. I do not know whether he is a member of a bowls club——

Mr Vaughan: I certainly am.

Mr HARPER: Then perhaps I should point out to him that the rules of the Royal Queensland Bowls Association state that consumable articles should not be given as trophies. I assume that a bottle of whisky could be classed as a consumable article, so perhaps the bowls clubs should look at those rules. But, seriously, I thank the honourable member for his comments in regard to the Liquor Act. I have certainly noted them.

The honourable member for Woodridge spoke of the need to expedite trials. I agree with his sentiments that there is such a need, and, over the last 12 months, or possibly even longer, I have indicated my concern in that area. I am certainly moving in that direction. The appointment in the very near future of a director of prosecutions will lead to the expediting of trials before the courts.

I also took note of the honourable member's comment on the need for the Public Defender, in certain circumstances, to retain separate counsel when there is more than one accused.

Again I thank honourable members for their contributions to this debate. I assure them that, if I have not made particular comment or suggestions I have taken note of them and, where appropriate, I will continue to have regard to them.

At 9.43 p.m.,

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! By agreement, under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 2 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Justice and Attorney-General.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

Justice and Attorney-General—

	\$
Chief Office, Department of Justice	5,646,000
Balance of Vote, Consolidated Revenue and Trust and Special Funds	128,603,142

Progress reported.

LAND TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

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

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Land Tax Act 1915-1984 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House) (9.46 p.m.): I move—

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

This Bill relates principally to administrative aspects of the collection of land tax. The Land Tax Act is also to be modernised in certain regards and some new concessions are to be provided for absentees. Most land tax collections are in respect of city and town land.

Over the years, there has been an increasing liberalisation in the area of concessions in land used for rural purposes. Such land owned by a natural person who is not an absentee and worked by him or by some person other than an absentee or a company

or an agent or nominee for an absentee or company is fully deductible from the taxable value of land owned by the owner. There is also an exemption in the area to assist the small family company.

A general deduction of \$60,000 applies to all natural persons other than absentees. Companies owning land with a value of less than \$10,000 are exempt from land tax. There are no concessions provided for absentees and they are required to pay tax where their land tax liability is in excess of the minimum tax level.

In summary, the proposals will broadly retain these principles and are not designed to increase the incidence of tax. The Government has, however, had a look at a few matters of administration in which some review is warranted, and certain new concessions are proposed for absentees.

The Commissioner of Land Tax is presently experiencing difficulties with section 20 (5) of the Land Tax Act, which requires him to consider requests for amendments to assessments outside the time for appeal. The difficulty is that after issuing an assessment there is no certainty as to its finality. After the time for objection against assessment and the time for appeal have expired and up to three years after the relevant assessment became due and payable, a tax-payer may, under the provision, request an amendment in his favour and the commissioner is required to make a reassessment.

It is proposed to overcome these difficulties by allowing the commissioner to exercise discretion as to whether he will allow requests for amendments after the time for objection and appeal. The commissioner will continue to be required to amend the assessment in favour of the tax-payer if the request for amendment within the three-year period relates to duplicate taxation or an arithmetical error by the office in the calculation of the tax.

Regulation 20 in the Land Tax Act regulations requires persons to advise the commissioner in the form prescribed within one month of acquiring or parting with the ownership of land. The Land Tax Office is presently experiencing difficulties in relation to assessments when changes of ownership occur close to 30 June, the date for determination of the ownership of land for tax purposes, and persons do not advise the commissioner as required under regulation 20.

The result of this failure is that after assessing land tax on persons who failed to advise the commissioner that they had parted with the interest in the relevant land on or before 30 June, the commissioner must amend the assessments and assess the land to the new owner if he is liable for the tax. This results in much unnecessary administration for the Land Tax Office, which could be avoided by compliance with the regulations.

With a view to encouraging persons to comply in this regard, it is proposed that the old owner continue to be liable for land tax in respect of the land unless he advises the commissioner of the relevant change of ownership before a specified date. The commissioner will of course have discretion to assess to the new owner if he considers that it would be advisable to do so, and in these circumstances the old owner would not continue to be liable.

It is proposed to modernise the penalty provisions of the Land Tax Act. The penalty specified in the Act for late payment of assessments is only 10 per cent per annum of tax assessed. The commissioner is presently experiencing difficulties because this percentage penalty does not reflect the time value of money and some persons are therefore delaying in making payments in respect of assessments for as long as they possibly can. In order to encourage persons to pay their assessments promptly, it is proposed that the late payment penalty be increased to a more realistic rate of 20 per centum per annum.

Monetary penalties provided for under the Act have also been reviewed and it is proposed that these be modernised now. The maximum penalty for breach of the secrecy provisions is to be increased from \$200 to \$500.

The penalty specified for a company failing to appoint a public officer to represent it for land tax purposes is to be increased from a maximum of \$10 a day to a maximum

of \$25 a day for every day during which the company fails to do so. The maximum penalty that presently applies for non-compliance with the Act by a company or its public officer where a penalty is not otherwise specified under the Act is to be increased from \$10 per day to \$25 a day for every day during which the default occurs.

The penalty for obstructing an officer in the discharge of his duties under the Act is to be increased from a maximum of \$100 to a maximum of \$500.

General offences under the Act—for example, the making of false returns, fraud, evasion, failing to make returns or provide information to the commissioner—presently attract a maximum penalty of \$200 plus double tax. This penalty is to be increased to \$1,000 plus double tax.

In lieu of proceeding against persons in court for general offences, the Act provides for the commissioner to impose fines. The maximum fine that the commissioner can impose on a person who is not liable for tax is presently \$10 and it is proposed that this be increased to \$25.

For persons who are liable for tax, the maximum fine that the commissioner can impose is \$10 or 10 per cent of tax assessable, whichever is the greater. It is proposed that this fine be increased to \$25 or 20 per cent of tax, whichever is greater. This increase to 20 per cent of tax assessable corresponds with the new late-payment penalty. It will apply, amongst other things, to the late lodgement of returns, and in this regard will make the penalty provisions a more realistic reflection of the time value of money in respect of delays by persons in making returns.

The maximum monetary penalty for breach of the regulations is to be increased to \$200.

To correspond with the exemption from land tax now afforded to companies and to improve office efficiency, it is proposed that absentees owning land with a total unimproved value of less than \$10,000 be exempt from land tax.

Presently an exemption from absentee status is provided for public servants absent from Australia in the course of the performance of their duty. It is proposed that the concession be extended so that private enterprise employees who are temporarily transferred abroad in the course of their employment will not assume absentee status.

The proposed criteria for the concession are to be—

That the commissioner be satisfied that the person is absent from Australia in the performance of his duties for an employer by whom he was employed in Australia for not less than 12 months immediately preceding his departure from Australia; and

That the commissioner is satisfied the duration of the absence will not exceed five years.

Where the commissioner is satisfied the person has not been an absentee in view of these matters and the person ceases employment with his employer, or where the person is absent for a period in excess of five years, he is to assume absentee status unless the commissioner is satisfied that he ordinarily resides in Australia. These concessions for absentees will be effective in respect of the 1984-85 year of land tax.

As a precaution, it is proposed that the Act be tightened to ensure that persons do not claim rural concessions when they are not genuinely carrying on the relevant activities as a business but in a hobby or non-business context only.

The Bill contains a technical amendment to correct a drafting error in the land tax home unit company residential concession.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Davis, adjourned.

PAY-ROLL TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

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

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Pay-roll Tax Act 1971-1984 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House) (9.54 p.m.): I move—

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

The objective of this Bill is to give effect to the increase in the level of the maximum exemption provided under the Pay-roll Tax Act that was announced in the 1984-85 State Budget.

The maximum exemption is to increase from \$252,000 to \$270,000 on and from 1 January 1985. As a result, employers whose annual pay-rolls do not exceed \$270,000, will be totally exempt from pay-roll tax liability. For those employers with annual pay-rolls in excess of \$270,000 but not greater than \$424,000, the maximum exemption is reduced by \$3 for every \$2 by which the pay-roll exceeds \$270,000 until it tapers to a minimum of \$39,000 for pay-rolls in excess of \$424,000.

It is the Government's policy that to the extent that relief can be provided in the pay-roll tax area it should be provided to the person in greatest need, and the small employer has been identified as the person needing maximum assistance.

The Government has a very good record in providing for pay-roll tax relief, and the measure proposed in this Bill is further evidence of the Government's commitment to assist the small employer.

From 1 January 1985 the maximum exemption level of \$270,000 in Queensland will be higher than the maximum exemption in all of the other States. The maximum exemption levels in the other States, following the introduction of their respective Budgets are—

	\$
New South Wales	170,000
Western Australia	200,000
South Australia	200,000
Victoria	215,000
Tasmania	250,000

Whereas these exemption levels are designed to assist the smaller employer, the larger employer in Queensland also has a decided advantage over his counterpart in New South Wales and Victoria in his pay-roll tax obligations. In New South Wales and Victoria a surcharge of 1 per cent, bringing the tax rate payable to 6 per cent, is charged on annual pay-rolls of over \$1m per annum in New South Wales and \$1.1m per annum in Victoria. This surcharge is not payable by Queensland employers.

I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Debate, on motion of Mr Davis, adjourned.

RACING AND BETTING ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

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

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Racing and Betting Act 1980-1984 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House) (9.58 p.m.): I move—

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

This is a simple amendment designed to give effect to a Government initiative announced in the Budget to reduce book-makers' turnover tax for metropolitan fielding.

Honourable members who have had recent contact with the racing industry will realise that book-makers have experienced the same difficulties in maintaining profitability as those that have beset other sectors of the economy over the last 12 months or so.

The Paddock Bookmakers Association came to the Government over a period of some months and justified its request for relief from the present tax rates, by pointing to, among other factors—

A decline in viability leading to a high failure and resignation rate;

The wide gap between the tax rates here and in New South Wales and Victoria;
and

The value of book-makers to the continued well-being of the racing industry.

The Government accepted the merits of the arguments put forward and decided to reduce by 0.25 per cent the tax rate applicable to book-makers fielding in the Brisbane area and at Ipswich Saturday meetings. This will bring the present rate of 1.66 per cent down to 1.41 per cent. The tax on country fielding will remain at 1.33 per cent.

Not even the Government's critics on the Opposition benches would dispute the tremendous boost that this Government has given to the racing industry. Facilities for the public have been and are continuing to be substantially upgraded in both country and city racing venues. We on this side of the Chamber believe that this present measure of assistance to book-makers is another positive step in the program of support for the racing industry. It achieves basically what the book-makers' representatives have sought and brings these tax rates to a comparable position with those in New South Wales and Victoria.

To offset the loss to consolidated revenue of this tax reduction, it is proposed to reduce the return to the Totalisator Administration Board by 0.5 per cent. Part of this money will be directed to the Racing Development Fund, from which racecourse improvements are funded.

This will not greatly affect the TAB, as the loss of this revenue will be absorbed in the generally buoyant financial position brought about by the growth in TAB operations generally.

In summary—it is a Budget measure which is a further step in the Government's program of reducing wherever possible the burden of taxation, as well as providing the highest possible standard of service. It has been welcomed by the racing industry.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Davis, adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

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

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 13 November 1984.”

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10 p.m.