

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 1984

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

THURSDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 1984

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

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

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

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL**Judge for 1985**

Mr SPEAKER announced the receipt of a letter from the Honourable the Chief Justice intimating that the Honourable Mr Justice Thomas would be the judge to preside at the sittings of the Elections Tribunal for 1985.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council under the Explosives Act 1952-1981

Rules under the Coal Mining Act 1925-1981.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Sugar Industry Delegation**

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.2 a.m.), by leave: I took the opportunity this morning to meet the special train bringing cane-growers to Brisbane for a meeting with the Prime Minister later today.

Mr Casey: Yes, I saw you there.

Mr TURNER: I must congratulate the honourable member for having the courage to go along.

I did that because I met some of them during my visits to cane-growing areas earlier this year, and I wished to reassure them of my concern for their plight. I emphasise that this will be my only personal involvement today. I have decided to respect a request by the Queensland Cane Growers Council not to become involved in the deputation to Mr Hawke, but I assure the House that I will be eagerly awaiting the outcome.

I think I am right in saying that I see this massive influx of cane-growers as a direct result of my repeated appeals to them to exert maximum pressure on the Federal Government to step up its assistance to the industry in its time of crisis.

The message that I have stated on so many occasions is that the industry is a national industry, a national asset, and a huge export income-earner, not to mention the enormous amounts of excise that is paid to the Federal Government on alcohol and other products derived from sugar. Last year it amounted to \$76m, to be precise.

Despite all the criticism from the Opposition, I reiterate that Queensland has done everything possible within its financial constraints to help the sugar industry. It is clearly up to the Commonwealth to do much more.

Wheat Marketing Legislation

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.4 a.m.), by leave: I am particularly perturbed over the conflict that has arisen because of the refusal of the Australian Wheat Board to pay money owing to Queensland wheat-growers. Rumours are rife that the problem has arisen because of inadequacies in legislation. This is absolute nonsense.

The power exists for the Australian Wheat Board to pay moneys due to Queensland wheat-growers under these circumstances. This has been done in the past, and the present circumstances are no different. I am particularly dismayed that some irresponsible elements are implying that the problem has arisen because the Queensland Parliament has not passed new wheat-marketing legislation. I reiterate that this is nonsense.

I acknowledge that the setting in train of the new wheat-marketing legislation will require proper complementary legislation between the Commonwealth and the State. However, the draft legislation of the Commonwealth is inadequate to meet Queensland requirements. If the Queensland Parliament were to pass that legislation in the form provided by the Commonwealth, it would mean the demise of the State Wheat Board and would act against the interests of Queensland wheat-growers, who produce high quality wheat.

The draft Bill supplied by the Commonwealth may have been adequate to meet the needs of most other States, where premium wheats are not produced in any significant quantity, but I emphasise that the Commonwealth proposals are not to the advantage of Queensland wheat producers.

In September, I wrote to the Federal Minister (Mr Kerin) expressing concern over the Australian Wheat Board's attitude, and the day before yesterday I telexed Mr Kerin asking him to invoke the powers that he possesses under the Commonwealth wheat-marketing legislation to direct the Australian Wheat Board to pay immediately money owing to Queensland wheat-growers.

The text of that telex was as follows—

“To: The Honourable J C Kerin, Minister for Primary Industry, Canberra.

I have been advised that the Australian Wheat Board has not yet paid Queensland growers for wheat delivered from current harvest.

I also understand that AWB may not be prepared to make such payments until the new Queensland Wheat Marketing Act is in place.

In this regard I refer you to a telex dated 19 November from the General Manager AWB, a copy of which was sent to Mr N Honan, DPI, Canberra.

Because of heavy legislative programme it has not yet been possible to introduce the Queensland legislation.

However, when the Queensland legislation is passed it will apply retrospectively to 1 October 1984.

Payments made between now and the passage of the Queensland legislation will thus be retrospectively validated.

This has happened before and has never caused any serious problems.

As agreed at Agricultural Council in Townsville, Queensland has already passed legislation to cover the interim period pending the passage of the new Queensland Wheat Marketing Act.

At no time during discussions between Queensland and the Commonwealth has there been any suggestion that growers would not be paid on time and in accordance with the Queensland wheat premium system.

I find the AWB's position totally unacceptable.

I request that you advise the AWB to discharge its responsibility to pay Queensland wheat growers.

I draw your attention to Section 11 of the Commonwealth Wheat Marketing Act which empowers the Commonwealth Minister to issue directions to the AWB concerning 'the performance of its functions and the exercise of its powers'.

AWB is required to comply with such directions.

I consider that Section 26 of Commonwealth Wheat Marketing Act provides AWB with adequate power to pay Queensland growers until such time as the Queensland legislation is enacted.

In regard to AWB's concern over premium provisions (refer last para of Mr Sandow's telex), Queensland's position on premiums has been made abundantly clear from the outset during discussions at AAC.

The Queensland legislation will enable the AWB to pay to the State Wheat Board the premium component of any grower payments as has been done in the past.

I look forward to your early action on the failure of the AWB to properly discharge its obligations to Queensland growers.

From: The Honourable N J Turner, Minister for Primary Industries, Brisbane, Queensland.

20 November 1984."

Mr Kerin merely replied asking for details of the proposed Queensland wheat-marketing legislation. My director-general had already supplied them to Mr Kerin's department in September this year.

As a result, I yesterday telexed Mr Kerin, again advising him that Queensland legislation will contain exactly what he and I agreed upon at the last meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council held in Townsville last July. I do not propose to go back on that agreement, nor, I hope, would Mr Kerin.

I inform honourable members that the text of my telex was as follows—

"To: The Honourable J C Kerin, Minister for Primary Industry, Canberra.

Reference your telex of 21 November 1984 concerning payments to wheat growers in Queensland and in response to your concerns over Queensland's possible modifications of Clauses 20 and 15 (B) of the model State Bill, I would advise as follows:

(1) The Queensland Bill will empower the AWB to pay GMP and subsequent payments to growers but in the case of premium wheats there will be a requirement for such payments to be in accordance with the State's premium wheat classification system.

(2) The Queensland Bill will specify various deductions to be made from grower payments rather than rely on the general provision in the Commonwealth Act re 'other necessary adjustments'.

My director-general has previously advised Commonwealth DPI of Queensland's intentions in regard to deductions (refer letter dated 5 September 1984).

This advice was in conformity with the agreement that you and I agreed at Agricultural Council in Townsville.

I expect that the payments to Queensland growers can now be expedited.

I also advise that Queensland legislation will be introduced as soon as possible and will be backdated to 1 October 1984.

From: The Honourable N J Turner, Minister for Primary Industries, Queensland.

21 November 1984."

At the present time, the Queensland wheat-marketing legislation is in the final phase of drafting. The Government is endeavouring to accommodate the reasonable requests of the Commonwealth and of the Australian Wheat Board but will not be bulldozed

into giving away the long-standing and valid rights of Queensland wheat-growers or of the State Wheat Board.

The House has my undertaking that the new Queensland wheat-marketing legislation will be introduced as soon as possible, and I call upon the Federal Minister to exercise his discretionary power in ensuring that the current ridiculous disputation is terminated immediately.

I further call upon the uninformed rumour mongers to desist from their destructive activities in the wheat industry. I hope that politics are not influencing the Australian Wheat Board's attitude in this regard, but one must consider that as a possibility.

I further call on all parties involved to stop this ridiculous state of affairs and get on with the business of marketing wheat.

Cape Tribulation—Bloomfield Road

Hon. M. J. TENNI (Barron River—Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services) (11.10 a.m.), by leave: I wish to draw the attention of the House to the offer made by the Hope Vale and Wujal Wujal communities to the Douglas Shire Council for the communities to undertake routine maintenance of the Cape Tribulation—Bloomfield Road.

As honourable members would be aware, this road, which provides a direct link between these communities and Cairns, was completed only recently, despite intense opposition from radical conservation groups supported by the Canberra Government and the State members for Cook and Cairns and the Federal member for Leichhardt (Mr Gayler), who were prepared to deny the people of far-north Queensland their basic rights of access.

The support shown by the communities for this road is a matter of public record, but their latest initiative should be applauded by all Queenslanders as an attempt by Aboriginal communities to become involved in worthwhile community projects. I hope that honourable members opposite join me in congratulating the communities and offering their support also.

It is reported that the project could attract funding under the Community Employment Program. I hope that it does, and I call on the member for Cook (Mr Scott), the member for Cairns (Mr De Lacy), and the Federal member for Leichhardt (Mr Gayler) to publicly support the project. The silence of these gentlemen to date has been deafening—a fact which has not escaped the people of far-north Queensland. Unless these members now speak out in support of this initiative, I will be only too willing to explain to the Aboriginal communities of far-north Queensland that the ALP is quite prepared to discriminate against them in favour of radical greenie groups accountable to no-one, and supported by funds from Canberra.

AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer): I move—

“That the resolution of this House adopted on 29 February 1984, concerning the Australian Constitutional Convention be altered by deleting from clause 1 (b) the words ‘Mr K. W. Wright, BA, AEd, MACE, MLA’ and inserting therein after the words ‘Mr G. Alison, ACA., MLA’ the words ‘Mr T. J. Burns, MLA.’”

Motion agreed to.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr MACKENROTH (Chatsworth): I seek leave to move without notice—

“That this Parliament has lost confidence in the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services (Mr John Goleby).”

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

AYES, 27		NOES, 47	
Burns		Ahern	Lee
Campbell		Alison	Lester
Casey		Austin	Lickiss
Comben		Bailey	Lingard
D'Arcy		Booth	Littleproud
De Lacy		Borbidge	McKechnie
Eaton		Cahill	McPhie
Fouras		Chapman	Menzel
Gibbs, R. J.		Cooper	Miller
Goss		Elliott	Newton
Hamill		FitzGerald	Powell
Kruger		Gibbs, I. J.	Randell
Mackenroth		Glasson	Row
McElligott		Goleby	Simpson
McLean		Gunn	Stephan
Milliner		Gygar	Stoneman
Palaszczuk		Harper	Tenni
Price		Harvey	Turner
Scott		Henderson	Wharton
Smith		Hinze	White
Underwood		Innes	
Vaughan		Jennings	
Veivers	<i>Tellers</i>	Katter	<i>Tellers</i>
Warburton	Davis	Knox	Kaus
Warner, A. M.	Prest	Lane	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice were answered as follows—

1. Underage Drinking

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

With reference to the “State Affair” program on 18 July on which the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General stated that he was going to change the Liquor Act and increase penalties, for example, to \$1,000 for licensees or people who served alcohol to underage people—

(1) How many licencees have been charged and fined within the last five years for serving underage drinkers?

(2) How many persons have been fined for serving or supplying alcohol to underage persons on (a) licensed premises and (b) any other place?

(3) What has been the total of fines imposed?

(4) What has been the maximum and minimum variation of fines?

(5) How many licensees or persons have been charged with supplying liquor to under-age persons but have had the charge dismissed or withdrawn when it was proven that the person was of age?

Answer—

(1 to 5) Statistics on liquor offences are not collated into these categories. To extract information on the matters requested, which would be on a State-wide basis, would involve lengthy and extensive research.

Data on liquor offences dealt with for the five years ended 30 June 1983 is shown in the Police Commissioner’s annual reports to Parliament. I table a copy of that data.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the document on the table.

Federal Taxation

2.

Mr NEAL asked the Premier and Treasurer—

Does the legislative power already exist in Canberra by which Mr Hawke can reintroduce death and gift duties, if re-elected, or other taxes such as a capital gains and wealth tax?

Answer—

Yes. The Commonwealth's taxing powers are unlimited, and the legislative power exists already for the Federal Government to introduce taxation measures in respect of capital gains. The Prime Minister has never denied that it is the intention of the Labor Party that a capital gains tax would apply as soon as practicable.

I inform honourable members that highly placed sources have indicated to me that, if re-elected, the Hawke Government will reintroduce estate duties. The basic legislation to provide for the assessment and payment of estate duties remains on the Commonwealth statute-book and requires only a small amendment to render it operative again. In the first year of operation, the Commonwealth Government will earn hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue from this iniquitous tax, a tax that the Queensland Government abolished some years ago.

Furthermore, my information is that the wealth tax under consideration involves a 1 to 1.5 per cent tax on an individual's assets each year. What a vicious proposal!

I am confident that these issues, together with the wicked assets tax on pensioners and the scandalous superannuation tax which has been implemented, will ensure the defeat of the Hawke Government on 1 December.

3.

Overseas Loan Raisings

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

With reference to the co-ordination of overseas loan raisings for all Government departments, semi-government authorities and defined other bodies by the State Treasury—

(1) What was the total foreign currency exposure of all Queensland State Government, semi-government and any other body whose overseas loan raisings are managed by Treasury, on both an aggregated and disaggregated basis, for the years ended 30 June 1983 and 30 June 1984, including the total amount borrowed in each currency, the proportion of each currency to the total borrowings and Australian dollar equivalents?

(2) Were any foreign currency financings made outside the approval of loan council and, if so, what were they and for how much?

(3) What were the net foreign exchange gains or losses for the State Government, semi-government authorities and other bodies as at 30 June 1983 and 30 June 1984?

(4) What were the net gains or losses on redemption payments as at 30 June 1983 and 30 June 1984?

(5) As of 30 June 1984 what was the proportion of fixed and floating rate debt?

(6) Since the floating of the Australian dollar in December 1983, has the Treasury revised its approach to the management of foreign currency exposure and, if so, what have been the changes?

Answer—

(1 & 2) The Australian dollar equivalent of all foreign currency loans raised by Queensland authorities and managed by the Treasury is clearly set out in the various Auditor-General's reports, and I refer the honourable member to them. All necessary Loan Council approvals in respect of overseas borrowings have been obtained.

The honourable member will be aware that the original currency in which loans are initially denominated is not relevant, as prudent currency managers use the multicurrency provisions of the various loan agreements as well as the forward foreign currency market to vary the currency of exposure in the light of the prevailing market conditions.

Queensland Treasury uses a portfolio basket strategy to the management of foreign currency exposure and varies the basket strategy to the management of foreign currency exposure and varies the basket as and when necessary. The basket at a point of time is therefore only relevant to the circumstances at that time.

Over the last two years, the basket has varied considerably in response to changing market conditions.

At present, the basket is 60 per cent US dollars, 10 per cent yen, 15 per cent sterling and 15 per cent European currencies. It is, however, under active review given current market sentiment that the US dollar will strengthen, despite lack of economic fundamentals to support this.

(3 & 4) Again the honourable member should be aware that foreign currency gains and losses are not really gains and losses in the usual sense. If funds are borrowed in low-interest currencies, there is a normal expectation that foreign currency losses will be incurred, with the reverse being the case with high-interest rate currencies. Accordingly, the so-called foreign currency gains and losses really only form part of the expected interest rate. A 3 per cent interest rate with a 5 per cent currency loss is still cheaper than a 13 per cent interest rate and a 1 per cent currency gain. Consideration of currency gains or losses is therefore not particularly relevant.

(5) Given the generally high level of interest rates world-wide and the expectation that rates will fall in the future, the bulk of the borrowings of authorities are at floating interest rates, with the authorities having the right to convert the loans to fixed interest rates at some time, at their option. Furthermore, the majority of those borrowings, which were initially fixed rate, have been converted to floating interest rate via the interest rate swap market.

(6) The Treasury keeps its approach to foreign currency markets under continuous review, that is, daily, changing it as necessary in the light of market developments. The floating of the dollar has been only one of the market developments that the Treasury has had to take into account in this regard.

4. Road Accident, Yarraman

Mr FITZGERALD asked the Minister for Transport—

With reference to a road accident that occurred at Yarraman on the D'Aguilar Highway south of the town when a fuel tanker overturned on 8 November—

(1) Did the driver of a prime mover registration number QWQ-148 and semi-trailer registration number 410-OFX have a permit to transport fuel on that section of the highway for that day?

(2) Are permits for the transport by road of fuel being issued for movement between Brisbane and Yarraman and points beyond?

Answer—

(1) No. I am informed by the Commissioner for Transport that when the driver passed through the weighbridge checking station at Gales, he informed the checking officer that the fuel was being carried from Brisbane to Lowood, a journey for which a permit is required, and such a permit is held by the owner of the vehicles, Metro Fuel Supplies.

(2) Permits are not issued for the transport of bulk fuel by road between Brisbane and Yarraman or points beyond. This matter is currently under investigation by the Commercial Vehicle Squad attached to the Department of Transport.

I would mention that I recently appointed an independent committee of review comprising Mr A. E. Greenwood, retired senior stipendiary magistrate, as chairman; Mr R. B. Hayes, retired assistant commissioner of police, as a member; and Mr G. K. Fraser, chairman of Luya Julius Ltd and president of the Queensland Road Transport Association Ltd, as a member, to inquire into the transport of petroleum products.

This incident and the results of the investigation will be brought to the attention of the committee.

5. Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis

Mr FITZGERALD asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

With reference to the disease in goats known as CAE or “big knees”—

- (1) Is this disease prevalent in goat herds in Queensland?
- (2) Is it necessary for an exporter of live goats to have a permit certifying that the animals are free from this disease?
- (3) Is testing for this disease done in Queensland by his department?
- (4) What action can a buyer of goats take to ensure that he or she is not purchasing an infected animal?

Answer—

(1) Examinations indicate that there is a high prevalence of CAE (caprine arthritis encephalitis) in dairy goat herds but a lesser prevalence in fibre goat herds.

(2) Conditions for export are imposed by the importing country. Some overseas countries at least require testing of goats for this disease. In addition, importing countries require general certification by the owner and a Government veterinary officer that animals are healthy, have not been in contact with diseased animals for a specified time and show no evidence of infectious or contagious disease. For export interstate, similar certification is required.

(3 & 4) To meet requirements of importing countries, my department's Yeerongpilly laboratory tests animals for export. In addition, in herds where symptoms suggest the presence of the disease, tests are done to help confirm the diagnosis.

The department is not satisfied with the efficacy of the test in detecting all infected animals in a herd. Investigations are under way to check and improve the test.

Trials are to commence in a herd on ways to control the disease. Thus, until the department has more confidence in the test and results of the trials are available, it cannot guarantee that testing and culling will ensure that an animal from an infected herd is free of the disease.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Sugar Industry

Mr WARBURTON: In directing a question to the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer, I refer to the official statement issued yesterday by the Queensland Cane Growers Council, which made three significant points: Firstly, that the cane-growers are losing patience with the State Government over excessive charges and lack of communication by various State instrumentalities; secondly, there are a number of proposals put forward by cane-growers to the State Government which remain unanswered; and thirdly, the results to date have been totally unsatisfactory and that they do not intend to let the matter rest.

I now ask: Will the Minister advise what immediate and urgent steps the Government is taking to put its own house in order?

Mr GUNN: I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that over the past several weeks the cane industry has expressed its gratitude to the State Government.

I refer to a segment on “Good Morning Australia” to the effect that the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, will not be attending a rally of cane-growers in Brisbane today. He is a “chicken Hawke”! He is not game to face the cane-growers. He wants a delegation of five.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr GUNN: Even the honourable member would have more intestinal fortitude than Mr Hawke. The cane-growers have travelled 1 000 km to Brisbane, but the Prime Minister will not meet with them.

The Queensland Government is prepared to help cane-growers to the absolute limit.

Mr Warburton: What are you doing to put you own house in order?

Mr GUNN: The Queensland Government is doing its utmost for the cane-growers, and it always has. The cane-growers, through their representatives, have expressed their gratitude, and they continue to vote for National Party members. Mr Hawke is running scared. I repeat: he is a "chicken Hawke". He wants a delegation of five.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr GUNN: Make no mistake about it; the Labor Party is running scared.

The Queensland Government is very proud of its record in assisting the sugar industry, and it will continue to help that industry.

Order of Priorities in Government Expenditure

Mr WARBURTON: In directing a further question to the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer——

Mr Davis interjected.

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

Mr WARBURTON: I remind the Minister that fact 9 of his Government's already discredited sugar brochure implies that the Queensland Government can do no more for the State's sugar industry because of Budget restraints; in other words, no funds are available.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will put his question.

Mr WARBURTON: How does the Minister reconcile that claim with the fact that excess TAB profits to the extent of \$1.68m will be siphoned off to boost the Racing Development Fund, which has already received a \$4m a year windfall from the same source? As \$5.68m has become available from excess TAB profits, is the Minister prepared to immediately arrange for a reassessment of his Government's spending priorities so that money that is destined to go to dog racing and horse racing can be used to assist Queensland's depressed industries, in particular the sugar industry, and alleviate Queensland's massive unemployment?

Mr Gunn interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask all members to listen.

Mr GUNN: All we are asking the Federal Government to do is match the contribution made by the Queensland Government. It has failed to do that.

As to the Racing Development Fund—as I said in my speech last night, I congratulate my colleague the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing for what he has done for the great racing industry. It employs many people. The spin-off is substantial. The Government does not apologise for anything it has done for the industry. It makes no apologies for the redevelopment of Deagon racecourse, which is in the honourable member's electorate. At no time do I remember his protesting against the work on the Deagon track, which has been a great asset to the racing industry.

I understand the concern of honourable members opposite. They are running scared. As time goes on, support for the Hawke Government is falling. People are having second

thoughts. As I was travelling to Brisbane this morning, I heard on the car radio a statement by the Democrats to the effect that the Labor Party is trying to jump into bed with the Nuclear Disarmament Party. Whatever happens, it will not make any difference to the result on 1 December. Before that date, the people will think long and hard and cast their votes against a Government that has done so much against Australia's best interests.

State Tax on Lump Sum Superannuation

Mr NEAL: I ask the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer: Is he aware of claims made by a Labor Party spokesman on a talk-back session on Radio 4AY this morning to the effect that people would be surprised to know that the Queensland Government imposed a 2½ per cent tax on lump sum superannuation? Could he advise the House whether there is any truth in that claim, or is it another example of how desperate the Labor Party, because of its dwindling support in Queensland, is to win votes?

Mr GUNN: That emphasises my statement that the Labor Party is running scared and is absolutely desperate. There is no State tax on superannuation. Labor Party supporters are confused about the 30 per cent Federal Government tax on superannuation. The Government has no intention of applying any tax on superannuation in this State.

Interest Rate on Loans to Cane-growers

Mr KRUGER: In directing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to his answer on 19 September to a question upon notice, in which he said—

“... that the \$10m withdrawn from the resources of the Rural Reconstruction Board was used to provide Treasury Loans in the 1982-83 year to certain co-operative sugar-mills which were experiencing financial difficulties.”

As most of that money initially came from the Commonwealth at an interest rate of 8 per cent, will the State Government restructure the loans at 8 per cent, as happens with other loans made directly through the Rural Reconstruction Board?

Mr TURNER: Did the member say that answer was given on 19 September?

Mr Kruger: Yes.

Mr TURNER: In that answer, I said that my understanding was that the money had come from a particular source. I received that information from the Rural Reconstruction Board. It would be my understanding that the board did not have at its disposal the information that has come through from Treasury about how funds were passed from one source to another before being advanced to the sugar industry. The matter was answered adequately in the Chamber in a ministerial statement by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer.

Mr Casey: Now you're covering up, too.

Mr TURNER: I am not attempting to cover up anything. When I answered the question, I said that I understood that the money was derived from that source. I answered on information provided to me by the Rural Reconstruction Board, which did not have on hand information possessed by Treasury. The matter was answered, as I said, in a ministerial statement yesterday. I do not accept that I am covering up anything.

It is apparent that in regard to the sugar industry the shoes of the Labor Party, both federally and in this State, are starting to pinch them. Members of the Opposition are making a tremendous amount of noise. The previous question asked by the Leader of the Opposition implied that funds derived from the racing industry should be used to help the sugar industry. What the Leader of the Opposition does not seem to realise is that funds derived from the racing industry are put back into that industry. If the State Government should adopt a philosophy of transferring money, why has not the Opposition, like Wally Lewis, picked up the ball and run with it, by taking up the issue of the amount of excise with the Federal Government? Last year, that was in excess of \$76m.

Mr Campbell: What about pay-roll tax?

Mr TURNER: I would not have thought that the honourable member for Bundaberg would interject, because the Bundaberg distillery has paid in excess of \$50m in excise levies.

Mr CASEY: I rise to a point of order. The Minister has deliberately misled the House. In the report of the Auditor-General presented to this Parliament, it is clearly stated that the transfer of funds to consolidated revenue approved by the Executive Council will enable special assistance to be made available to co-operatives and the mills. I will table a copy of the statement.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Mackay will resume his seat. The document can be tabled when I ask the honourable member to do so. There is no point of order. Does he wish to table that document?

Mr CASEY: I will table a copy of the statement from the Auditor-General's report, which states the truth.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

Mr TURNER: I rise to a point of order. I find the remark that I deliberately misled the House offensive, and I ask that the honourable member for Mackay withdraw it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister finds the remark offensive and asks the honourable member for Mackay to withdraw it.

Mr CASEY: There is nothing unparliamentary about the term "misleading the House" I repeat that the Minister is joining the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer, who misled the House yesterday.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has asked that the honourable member for Mackay withdraw the remark. I ask the honourable member to withdraw it.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet.

Mr CASEY: Mr Speaker, if the Minister finds the word "misleading" offensive, I withdraw it. But how else can one say that he is telling lies?

Mr TURNER: As I said before, it would appear that the sugar industry issue is troubling members of the Labor Party. One only has to observe the actions taken by the Labor Party in recent weeks.

The brochure that was published by the State Government is absolutely factual, and it has hurt members of the Labor Party so much that, in an endeavour to regain lost ground, Opposition members are responding in any way they can. Naturally, I would expect some sort of comment from old "Rivers" He is slightly narrow at the head and wide at the mouth, and he would have to interrupt a discussion about the sugar industry.

When the honourable member did that, I was making the point that the honourable member for Bundaberg should not be criticising the State Government for the assistance that has been provided to cane-growers in his electorate and to the sugar industry in general. I emphasise that the excise levy issue is something that the Opposition should have been up and running with. The matter should have been taken up by the Opposition with the Prime Minister in an endeavour to obtain justice from the Federal Government for cane-growers.

As to the point of order taken by the honourable member for Mackay—I say that I did not deliberately mislead the House. I answered the question on my understanding of the information that had been provided to me by the Rural Reconstruction Board.

The Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn) answered the question by way of a ministerial statement yesterday.

Mr KRUGER: There has been an admission by the Minister that he has misled the House. In addition to that, he did not answer my question.

Mr TURNER: I rise to a point of order.

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

Mr KRUGER: I am trying to do that, thank you, Mr Speaker. I withdraw it.

Rural Reconstruction Board Funds

Mr KRUGER: In asking a question of the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer, I refer to the Auditor-General's report for the year ended 30 June 1983, which, at page 171, shows that \$10m was transferred from the Rural Reconstruction Board "to enable Special Treasury Loans to be made available to co-operative sugar mills." Yesterday in his ministerial statement the Deputy Premier said that that assistance did not come from the Rural Reconstruction Board. I ask: As those two statements are in direct conflict, did the Auditor-General's report contain false information or did the Deputy Premier mislead the Parliament yesterday?

Mr GUNN: I thought I made it quite clear to everybody that that is Queensland money. I can appreciate that the honourable member is slow to pick things up. Perhaps the greatest skill that he has shown in this place is in the dining-room with a knife and fork. Even though I have told him so time and time again, he does not seem to understand that it is Queensland Government money. A certain amount of money builds up in the fund and, at the appropriate time, the Government has the right to take it out. It was taken out and lent to the sugar-mills. I cannot make the point any clearer than that unless I spell out every word for the honourable member.

Hiring Charges, Performing Arts Complex

Mr LITTLEPROUD: In asking a question of the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts, I refer to an article in "The Courier-Mail" of Wednesday, 21 November, which claims that the rent to be charged for the use of the new Performing Arts Complex will be so high that it will prevent concert organisations using the facilities. I ask: Is there any substance to that claim?

Mr McKECHNIE: I thought that an Opposition member might ask me a question on that subject yesterday so I am prepared to answer it. I have with me a document showing the hall hiring charges for the Performing Arts Complex and, when I have finished answering the question, I will table it for the information of honourable members.

Tony Gould, the arts complex director, says—

"We have not sought to recoup, from the rentals area, sufficient revenue to cover the running costs of the Complex as such action on our part would be unrealistic. However, as the costs of maintaining an establishment of this complexity are high we have determined hiring charges which are fair, bearing in mind that we are offering facilities which are second to none."

I did discuss the article in "The Courier-Mail" with Mr Gould two days ago, and he assured me that the hiring costs at the Performing Arts Complex will compare with those of the other major performing arts centres in Australia. The article states in part—

"Casual hirers presenting a production that would fill the hall would find prices better than at the Sydney Opera House but more expensive than at the Victorian Arts Centre."

I want to make it clear that that was the reporter's comment, not what Mr Gould said.

In fact, the Government will impose a basic hiring charge and take a percentage of the return from ticket sales. Quite obviously, if an organisation charges the world for

tickets, it will not help it much whether it gets all of the profits or whether the Government siphons some off for the centre. By siphoning a little off the top, the Government will be in a better position to help Queensland companies when they want to perform at the centre. I have already said in this place that some performances at the centre will be free, which is great. This document states that quite a few facilities and services available to those who hire the complex, or sections of it, will be provided free. That has to be taken into account when the charges are compared with those at performing arts centres in other States. I am told that, when that factor is taken into account, Queensland charges will compare very favourably with those in the other States.

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

Proposed Summit Meeting on Farm Costs

Mr LITTLEPROUD: In directing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I assume that he would be aware of a statement by the Prime Minister that, immediately after the Federal election—presuming he wins—he will call a summit meeting to discuss farm costs. I therefore ask: As the Prime Minister, without considering the vegetable-growers, has previously advised cane-growers to grow vegetables, does the Minister believe that the call for a summit is anything more than another empty political gimmick or a slur on the Government, because primary producers have been making strong representations on farm costs for the past 20 months?

Mr TURNER: As an acknowledged antirural party, the Australian Labor Party has little knowledge or comprehension of the problems associated with primary industry at any level. The illogical, irrational statement attributed to Mr Hawke about growing vegetables in the cane-growing areas was received with the degree of concern that it should have attracted. It will not be forgotten for some considerable time. The Federal Government seems to believe that the answer to all of the problems in this nation today is to call a conference, to have talks and more talks, and to have consensus followed by another summit.

Everybody has seen photographs of the Prime Minister with his hand over his heart and tears streaming down his face saying, "Trust me." Much has been said about Mr Fraser and his statement, "Life was not meant to be easy." I think Mr Hawke will be remembered for all time as the cry baby or the Johnny Ray of Federal Parliament. It would be better if the ALP Government in Canberra took some positive action. The old adage "Actions speak louder than words" is very appropriate in these times. I advise the Commonwealth Government to do something positive rather than concentrate on talks, summits, conferences, consensus and airy-fairy, plastic words.

Mr F. P. Luton

Mr MACKENROTH: In asking a question of the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services, I refer to the statutory declaration tabled by him yesterday by Councillor Clem Maughan, in which he stated that the Minister did not participate in discussions with Mr Luton, Mr Hinze, Mr Maughan and Mr Muhl. I ask him: Is he aware that Councillor Maughan is on record today as saying that, although he had stated that the Minister did not participate in the discussions, he cannot remember whether the Minister was present at the beginning of the meeting? Would the Minister agree now that the notes of the meeting kept by Mr Muhl, a senior public servant, would be a more correct record than Councillor Maughan's memory?

Mr GOLEBY: In answer to the member for Chatsworth, or perhaps I should say "Blue Hills"—I certainly believe the record in the statutory declaration submitted by me to the House yesterday to be true and correct. I have no reason to believe otherwise.

Mr F. P. Luton

Mr MACKENROTH: I ask the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services: In view of his statement to Parliament yesterday, and his apparent change of mind relative to talking about this matter in Parliament, can he recall writing a letter to

Francis Patrick Luton in 1982? What was the purpose of the letter? Will the Minister table a copy of it?

Mr GOLEBY: This subject has been thoroughly canvassed in the House over a period of weeks. I have no intention of making further comment at this time.

Mr Mackenroth: You never answer.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Chatsworth that when he asks a Minister a question he will listen to the answer in silence.

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise to a point of order. The Minister has to answer the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Stud Cattle Register

Mr COOPER: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: Has the Department of Primary Industries endorsed the publication of a stud cattle register in which stud breeders are charged \$55 a line or \$700 a page for advertising? Has the Minister any knowledge of a John Cooper who poses as a Department of Primary Industries advertising salesman and uses a post office box at Boondall as a business address?

Mr TURNER: The answer to the two parts of the honourable member's question is "No". The department has no knowledge whatever of the activity referred to by him. I should explain that the Department of Primary Industries has published a Queensland Beef Cattle Stud Breeders Register, which lists details of 25 cattle breeds and 2 300 stud breeders. That publication is available from my department for a cost of \$3 plus \$1.20 postage. I issue a warning to country people about accepting unsolicited advertising requests over the telephone and paying bills for such advertising not ordered or confirmed in writing.

Places Available in Queensland Tertiary Institutions

Mr NEWTON: In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer to a statement made by the Commonwealth Minister for Education (Senator Ryan) in "The Courier-Mail" of 20 November that it was far too early to predict how many applicants would miss out on admission to tertiary institutions in Queensland and that many applicants did not yet know their eligibility. I ask: Can he inform the House of the position regarding the number of students who will miss out on tertiary education next year?

Mr POWELL: In the current Federal election campaign it seems that ALP spokesmen believe that if they say something often enough, people will believe it. The number of places available in tertiary institutions falls into this category. Senator Ryan has said correctly that in the next triennium 15 000 additional places will become available at tertiary institutions in Australia. What the Minister did not explain is that those 15 000 places will be divided among all tertiary institutions in Australia over three years. If that figure is divided by three, it can be seen that 5 000 new places per year will be created Australia-wide. If that figure is divided by six, one can work out what Queensland's share of the additional places next year will be.

My department confidently expects that 30 000 people will apply for places in Queensland tertiary institutions in 1985. The department also confidently predicts that only 10 000 will be satisfied. That means that a deplorable and disgusting total of about 20 000 people will be denied places in tertiary institutions in Queensland because the Federal Government, which takes the credit for funding tertiary institutions, refuses to give enough money to Queensland to cater for the total number of people who seek tertiary education.

I hope that every honourable member will support the proposition, as I do, that every student who has the intellectual capability and desire to attend a tertiary institution should be given that opportunity. Because the Federal Government refuses to face reality, too many students in Queensland are being denied tertiary education. That is the simple answer to the question.

Mr Comben: Why don't you give some money?

Mr POWELL: The honourable member for Windsor has a tremendous capacity in this place for opening his mouth and placing his foot straight in it.

In 1973, the Federal Government took from the States, against their wishes, the right to fund tertiary institutions. The Federal Government also changed the Commonwealth/State funding arrangements. The States did not want the Federal Government to take over the funding of tertiary institutions. Queensland wanted the funds to continue to flow to the State so that it could distribute the money and state the priorities as it saw fit. The States have been denied that role.

An Honourable Member: Was that a Labor Government?

Mr POWELL: That was at the time of the great white hope of the Labor Party—Whitlam. With feathers flying, “chicken Hawke” and his friends are refusing now to provide enough money, and the students who have the intellectual capability to take places at universities and CAEs are being denied that opportunity. Those facts cannot be denied.

Combined Petrol and Retail Outlets

Mr FOURAS: I ask the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology: Is it correct that, in a joint statement with the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing issued on 27 April 1984, he stated that the State Government has moved to reaffirm and strengthen its opposition to service stations in Brisbane and in other areas of Queensland trading as shops and convenience stores and that it will legislate to outlaw the practice in specified areas?

The Minister further stated that the Government had an obligation to protect the rights of small-businessmen and retail shopping outlets and that legislation would be prepared to amend the Local Government Act and the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act.

Is it also correct that on 10 September 1984 the Minister stated that further legislation would be prepared for presentation to Parliament in the near future to ensure that there will be no way in which local government approvals may be granted for combined petrol and convenience retail outlets in other than quite remote locations?

How does the Minister justify his about-face, as he stated in “The Sunday Mail” on 18 November 1984, in an article entitled “Petrol Stations Store Ban Off”, that the Government's general philosophy was that free enterprise should not be over-regulated? How can the Minister justify such a monumental sell-out of small business and the breaking of firm undertakings given over a period?

Mr AHERN: The honourable member rightly quotes the first statement, which was certainly made. The second one was only half recited to the Chamber. The outcome is that the matters are still under investigation by the Government.

I point out that the concept of combining convenience stores with petrol-retailing was initiated in the Labor States of New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr WARBURTON: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I know that you understand the importance of question-time in the House. A Government member asked a question of the Deputy Premier, who was absent from the Chamber. It is understandable that he left the Chamber with the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services

(Mr Goleby) after the question by the member for Chatsworth (Mr Mackenroth). I ask you, Mr Speaker, to do something about ensuring that Ministers are in the Chamber during question-time.

Mr HINZE: Mr Speaker, the Deputy Premier has asked me to advise the House that, on behalf of the Premier, he was called away to a special meeting with the Governor.

Railway Level Crossing, Cavendish Road, Coorparoo

Mrs HARVEY: As the Minister for Transport accompanied me and the principals and presidents of the p. and c. associations of the Coorparoo State High School and the Church of England Grammar School on an inspection of the railway level crossing at Coorparoo, I ask him to advise the House what action is being taken to make the railway crossing near the Coorparoo Railway Station safer for the students of those two schools. When does the Minister expect that the necessary improvements will be carried out?

Mr LANE: I well remember my visit to the level crossing with the honourable member and her pointing out to me the danger that exists at that level crossing.

Honourable members would be aware that the Government has a priority list for the elimination of level crossings. In the case of this level crossing, that matter is in the hands of the Main Roads Department, which intends to build a major road overpass over the railway line at Coorparoo, thus eliminating that crossing.

However, for the time being, as the honourable member for Greenslopes pointed out to me, at that level crossing a conflict exists between the pedestrians using the footpath of Cavendish Road and the road traffic crossing the railway line at that point. What is required is some method of separation of pedestrians from road traffic, which would supplement the boom gates that give pedestrians and drivers warning of the approach of railway rolling-stock. That separation will be achieved by engineers of the Railway Department and the Brisbane City Council, which share responsibility for that crossing. Of course, the council is responsible for the roadway and the Commissioner for Railways is responsible for the railway land. I am confident that the task is not beyond the ability of the engineers of those authorities. The Railway Department will realign the fences to the true property alignment, relocate signs as necessary to the new fence alignment and relocate any drainage, manholes, guard-rails, etc., required by any new alignment.

The task will then fall to the council to achieve some separation between the footpath and the road. I have issued directions to the Railway Department to carry out the work as soon as possible. I hope it will be done during the school holidays. I hope that the council will fall into line with the department's activity.

Rail Industry Council

Mrs HARVEY: I ask the Minister for Transport: Can he inform the House whether, in the event of a Federal Labor victory on 1 December, he expects the ACTU to once again try to implement its plan to establish a railway industry council, against the wishes of the Queensland Government and the other States?

Mr LANE: The honourable member raises the matter of a rail industry council that was proposed by the Federal Minister for Transport (Mr Peter Morris) at the last Australian Transport Advisory Council meeting. A massive council is proposed. The proposal is set out in the Labor Party's policy documents for the forthcoming election. Mr Morris said—

“I am actively supporting the Rail Industry Council (RIC), proposed by the ACTU and rail unions, during consultations held at my request, which will consist of Federal and State rail unions, rail management, appropriate State governments—”

I wonder whether Queensland would be “appropriate”—

“and the Federal government.”

He goes on to say—

“It will be a forum in which discussions on the future of our rail industry can take place.”

The proposed rail industry council, on which the Queensland Government reserves its position and to which it is philosophically opposed, of course, is another example of placing political power in the hands of people who have not been elected.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr LANE: The Opposition is being replaced. It is being phased out by the industrial wing of its movement, which would share government with the ACTU. The Opposition has become quite irrelevant in its organisation. I know that that will be a blow to the honourable member's massive ego and that in due course he will come to resent it, as do some of the Labor Ministers in other States, who in due course will destroy the council before it cuts across their power base in this country.

Queensland is opposed to the council on a number of grounds. Firstly, it is not representative of the people; it is representative of the trade union movement and therefore has no direct accountability to the people. “Accountability” is a word that is often bandied round this Chamber. I do not hear——

Mr Warburton: What party are you representing today?

Mr LANE: I am representing the National Party, the party that is getting on with good, stable, progressive government in this State. The honourable member has not been able to do anything about that for many years.

Mr Warburton: Are you enjoying it?

Mr LANE: Every day this House sits, the new Trades Hall tactics used in this Chamber by the little bunch of old guard people are becoming more noticeable. The Labor Party has fallen back into the hands of the Trades Hall gang under the leadership of the honourable member for Sandgate. In due course it will become apparent to the people outside. Of course, at the next election he will be rejected once again, so he should not worry about the matter.

Apart from the rail industry council, to which I have referred, the Labor Party's policy will provide a fourth organisation in this country to co-ordinate rail activity at the Federal level. There is already a rail group established under the Australian Transport Advisory Council, on which all railway systems in Australia are represented. The Australian Railway Research and Development Organisation is a research organisation and it also provides policy advice. The Railways of Australia Commissioners Conference manages interstate matters between railway systems. Now there will be a rail council in which the ACTU will have a big say.

Instead of Cliff Dolan and Hughie Hamilton giving the Leader of the Opposition his riding instructions in this place, he will have to go along to them and give them their riding instructions. That will be a new trend for members of the Opposition.

That council will be established in addition to the interstate commission which has been proclaimed and which now exists in this country to co-ordinate interstate transport matters. That is an interstate commission and it is a fourth level of government in this State. It was set up six months ago with a staff of seven people, at a cost to tax-payers of an additional \$230,768. Its staff has now grown to 31 persons. That is another burden imposed by the Hawke Government. It will cost the tax-payers \$1,260,000. Honourable members might be interested to learn that one of the members of that staff is paid a salary of more than \$80,000, three employees are paid salaries of over \$50,000 and nine employees are paid salaries of over \$30,000. That is what the Hawke Government is doing for unemployment in this State. It is putting its academic friends and their trade union representatives on national organisations, national bodies, caught up in the

nonsense of consensus that it goes on with rather than getting on with government, which is what happens in this State.

Federal National Party Leader's Comments on AIDS

Mr CASEY: I am very pleased that the Minister for Health is back in the Chamber again from the meeting that all Cabinet Ministers had with the Governor. It was not to sack the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services, was it?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mackay will put his question immediately.

Mr CASEY: My question is a very serious one. I do refer to the Minister for Health—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mackay will put his question.

Mr CASEY: I refer to the scurrilous and despicable attempt last week, and again in yesterday's "Courier-Mail", by the National Party Leader, Mr Ian Sinclair, to blame Labor policies and actions for the AIDS disease and the tragic deaths of three babies in Queensland. He made the comment that homosexuality is an unnatural practice and ought not to be encouraged. Is the Minister for Health aware that on 18 October 1973, in the House of Representatives, when the former Federal Liberal leader John Gorton moved a resolution to decriminalise homosexual acts between consenting adults, Mr Sinclair voted in favour of it? All members of this Parliament echo the Minister's concern about the tragic AIDS dilemma. Will the Minister either dissociate himself from Mr Sinclair's current stand or condemn him for his 1973 vote, or both?

Mr AUSTIN: I have always been of the opinion that this is a free country. Members of Parliament, whether inside or outside the Parliament, are entitled to voice their opinions on any matter. If members of Parliament want to voice a personal opinion, that is their business. I know that my opinion on homosexuality is contrary to that of some members opposite.

I will refer to the platform on which members on that side of the House stand. Clause 9.6 (vi) of the Labor Party's State policy states—

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cook will withdraw that remark immediately.

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Cook under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr Scott: The words I used were "robustly heterosexual"

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cook knows very well what he said.

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Cook does not withdraw the remark that he made, I will warn him under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr Goss interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn also the member for Salisbury under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr FOURAS: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, will you allow the Minister to cast aspersions on members on this side of the Chamber, then call us to order when we respond to those aspersions? Why can you not be even-handed?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. If I personally hear something said in the House with which I do not agree, I will call the member concerned to order.

That is exactly what I did to the member for Cook. I will not repeat what the member for Cook said. However, I will not stand for it any longer. If I hear any more of that nonsense from the member for Cook, I will warn him under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr AUSTIN: I will return to the Australian Labor Party's policy—

Mr Fouras interjected.

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

Mr AUSTIN: I quote from clause 9.6 of the ALP's State policy document—

“(vii) Give equal rights to homosexual couples in terms of State taxation probate benefits, ownership and transfer of property, pensions, superannuation and other fiscal benefits.”

The document continues—

“(viii) Immediately release from detention all held under anti-homosexual laws, and ensure that all fines be refunded to them and others previously prosecuted under such laws.”

Mr SCOTT: I rise to a point of order. I ask, Mr Speaker, for your ruling on the use of words. The Minister is accusing us of—

Mr Austin: I am not accusing you of anything.

Mr SCOTT: The Minister is accusing members of the Opposition of supporting homosexuality. I used the word “heterosexual” I doubt that members on the other side know the meaning of very many words. Is that an improper—

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SCOTT: May I make my point of order?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order on that particular subject.

Mr SCOTT: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: I earlier warned the member for Cook under Standing Order No. 123A. He will now leave the House.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with Standing Order No. 123A, the member for Cook will leave the House.

Mr WARBURTON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition may make his point of order after the member for Cook has left the House.

Mr Warburton: Be reasonable.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Whereupon the honourable member for Cook withdrew from the Chamber.

Mr WARBURTON: Mr Speaker, I ask you seriously to reconsider your position. The member for Cook (Bob Scott, MLA) was seriously endeavouring to put a point of order to you and you have sent him out under Standing Order No. 123A. Sir, I put it

to you that that is unreasonable, that it is unfair, and that you should reconsider your position.

Opposition Members: Hear, Hear!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have taken the point of order of the Leader of the Opposition. I will not reconsider my position on this matter.

Mr WARBURTON: Mr Speaker, I have no—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. Does the Leader of the Opposition wish to raise another point of order?

Mr WARBURTON: I wish to move disagreement with your ruling.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WARBURTON: I give notice that I will move that Mr Speaker's ruling be disagreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: In writing.

Mr WARBURTON: Yes, I will give it in writing.

Mr AUSTIN: It is obvious that members of the Opposition are trying to gag me. I made no accusation—

Mr CASEY: I rise to a point of order. I take strong objection to the remark of the Minister that the Opposition is trying to gag him. All I am seeking is an answer to the question that I asked him about Mr Sinclair's attitude. That is what I want him to answer.

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

Mr AUSTIN: It is interesting that this document is binding on members of the Opposition. It was passed at their conference. The document continues—

“Legislate to remove criminal sanctions against homosexual acts between consenting adults in private in line with A.L.P. philosophy that it is improper for the State to intrude into the privacy of the individual.”

The document contains this under the heading “Sexual Harassment”—

“Anti-discrimination legislation and equal opportunity legislation will be introduced to cover sexual harassment in all areas covered by that legislation.”

I took the opportunity to research laws passed in New South Wales. They are very interesting.

Mr Casey interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Mackay under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr AUSTIN: I refer to the Anti-Discrimination Act of 1977, amendments to which were passed in July 1983. It contained the following under the Part headed “Discrimination on the Ground of Homosexuality”—

“A reference in this Part to a person's homosexuality includes a reference to the person's being thought to be a homosexual person, whether he is in fact a homosexual person or not.”

Section 49ZG, "Discrimination on the ground of homosexuality", says—

"A person discriminates against another person on the ground of his homosexuality if, on the ground of—

- (a) his homosexuality;
- (b) a characteristic that appertains generally to homosexual persons; or
- (c) a characteristic that is generally imputed to homosexual persons, he treats him less favourably—"

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I rise to a point of order. I merely point out to you, Mr Speaker, and to all members on the Government side, that every person on this side of the House is quite happy to make a blood donation, which is more than could be said for at least two back-bench members on the other side.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is a very frivolous and uncalled for point of order.

Mr HINZE: I rise to a point of order.

Mr Casey: If the cap fits, wear it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have already warned the honourable member for Mackay under Standing Order No. 123A. This is the final warning.

Mr HINZE: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Wolston passed a remark in this Chamber that is an imputation against me. I ask the honourable member to withdraw the remark and to apologise because he has cast an imputation. By so doing, he has incriminated every member on this side of the House. I take exception to his conduct. I want that remark withdrawn, and an apology.

Mr SPEAKER: The Minister, in his point of order, has called for an apology. I cannot allow it in this particular case because there was no point of order made out. The honourable member for Wolston did not actually indicate a particular member on the Government side of the House. I believe that the point of order will have to be ruled out of order.

Mr AUSTIN: If I may continue—imagine a member on the opposite side of the House asking a question of that nature, bearing in mind the remark, and the way it was made, by the honourable member for Wolston.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Keep mixing it up.

Mr AUSTIN: Yes, I will keep mixing it up. The honourable member and his homosexual mates in New South Wales—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Wolston under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr AUSTIN: If honourable members on the opposite side of the House wish to name names in this particular issue, I will start to name people, too.

The Act provides that a person discriminates against another person on the grounds of his homosexuality—

Mr Comben: Go on.

Mr AUSTIN: Does the honourable member for Windsor want me to name people?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Windsor under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr AUSTIN: It appears that this issue has hit a very sensitive nerve in members of the Opposition.

As I was saying, the provisions that relate to homosexuality require that a person discriminated against ought to comply with the requirement of the condition with which a substantially higher proportion of persons who are not homosexual persons comply or are able to comply, which is not reasonable, or, having regard to the circumstances of the case, who is discriminated against by not being able to comply.

The document covers areas such as discrimination against work, discrimination against commission agents and discrimination against other contract workers, partnerships, trade unions, and qualifying bodies. It is interesting that this piece of legislation comes from New South Wales because, if honourable members had the opportunity to view the Willesee program a few nights ago on television, they would have seen male prostitutes in Oxford Street in Sydney encouraging this sort of legislation and this sort of behaviour in Australia. I stress that that kind of legislation and that kind of encouragement will not be tolerated in Queensland.

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

FIRE BRIGADES ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 13 November (see p. 2325) on Mr Tenni's motion—

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

Mr MILLINER (Everton) (12.24 p.m.): I rise to address remarks to the provisions contained in this Bill. I wonder whether the Minister has taken the advice of Mr Fast Bucks. The Opposition is concerned at the proposals advanced by the Minister. They relate to superannuation trustees and the fire services levy.

I wish to deal briefly with the matter of superannuation trustees. Recent amendments made to the Fire Brigades Act allowed a trustee from the United Firefighters Union to be appointed to the superannuation trustee body, because that union has coverage of the largest number of firemen in Queensland.

The Bill provides for an increase in the number of trustees from six to seven. A previous amendment to the Act resulted in the appointment of three employee representatives and three employer representatives to the board of trustees. I endeavoured to discover the make-up of the boards of trustees of other superannuation funds throughout the nation, and it varies from State to State. Why could not the number have been left at six? In his second-reading speech, the Minister said that he believed that some problems could have arisen had the number remained the same. Everybody knows that, under the rules of debate, if the vote on a motion is tied the motion is defeated.

I cannot see any real problem in having six trustees. I am at a loss to understand why the seventh trustee who is to be appointed is to be a representative of the employer organisations. I hope that the Minister can explain that in his reply. If the reason for the increase is, as the Minister indicated, that a problem could arise, I do not see any reason why the Government could not have appointed an independent person to act as the chairman of the board. In that way, if any conflict arose, at least there would have been an independent person to make the final decision. That is far more desirable than having what will be a lop-sided board with three employee and four employer representatives.

After the Bill was introduced, I endeavoured to find out as much as I could about the fire brigade superannuation fund. In his report to the Parliament, the Auditor-General lumped that fund together with a number of other funds that he does not audit. I discussed the matter with some serving firemen who said that they would like to have some information about the investments made by the superannuation fund and the return it receives from them. Perhaps the Minister could consider supplying more information about the scheme to its participants.

The Bill also deals with the fire levy and discounts that are applied to it. A long time ago, when consideration was being given to the introduction of the fire levy, we on this side indicated that there would be a continuing escalation in the cost to property-owners. The 15 per cent discount referred to in the Bill clearly demonstrates that we were right.

Mr Tenni: You already have that there.

Mr MILLINER: I know that, but I am raising a number of queries about the discount that is to be applied.

First of all, the Minister indicated that the levy would be about \$48. If the 15 per cent discount is taken into account, the amount then becomes about \$55. If the property-owner does not pay the levy within the prescribed period, who in fact receives the 15 per cent? Does it go to the local authority—

Mr Tenni: The local authority.

Mr MILLINER: It is unfortunate that 15 per cent can be added to the fire levy, because I—

Mr Tenni: No-one pays it at all if he pays his account on time.

Mr MILLINER: That is right. However, I believe that the Government's action will discriminate against lower income-earners, who, in many instances, are forced to pay bills of that sort by instalments. Because it is not a great financial imposition, people like the Minister and me pay the fire levy on time, but many people, particularly lone parents, find it very difficult to meet their commitments. I have discovered that a number of people pay their annual rates by means of monthly instalments. The provision in the Bill will mean that people who are least able to afford it will have to pay an increase of 15 per cent on their fire levy. I sincerely hope that the Minister will do something to encourage local authorities not to add the full 15 per cent to the fire levy.

The Minister was in touch with a resident in my electorate about a discount from local authorities, which are no longer collecting precepts. I hope that the Minister will encourage local authorities to give property-holders a discount on their rates, because the local authorities are no longer paying the fire brigade precept. I also hope that the 15 per cent will not be imposed across the board. If it is, it will discriminate against those who are least able to pay.

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (12.31 p.m.): In March this year, legislation was introduced relative to fire services, and today honourable members are already discussing amendments to it. Last week, when we dealt with the Estimates covering fire services in Queensland, honourable members had a great deal to say. Facts and figures were presented to the Minister proving that fire service levies in Queensland can be described only as a rip-off, highway robbery and blatant discrimination between the poor and the rich.

I am very concerned about the amount of money being channelled into fire services and how the money is being used. Last week, when speaking to the Minister's Estimates, I put various questions to the Minister that he failed to answer in any way. I am sure that he did not have an answer to the questions. I asked about the amount to be spent on fire services in Queensland in 1984-85, and how the contributions would be made up. On 3 October this year, Parliament was told that \$48.9m would be paid into the urban fire budget by way of the fire levy contributed by urban property-owners for single home units or ordinary houses. That amount represents only 7/16ths of the total contribution. A similar contribution should be made by the insurance companies and 12½ per cent should come from the State Government. I understand that a certain amount is to come from the Federal Government.

In the Estimates debate I said that the figures that had been presented to the House did not represent the total amount and that a considerable sum would be left over. I

pointed out further that on 3 October, in answer to a question concerning fire services and the number of property-owners who contribute, the Minister said that 644 800 property-owners would be subscribing. I also pointed out that the Bureau of Statistics figures totalled 879 688, which meant a much larger contribution to the State fire services or the Treasury. The Minister took a point of order and said that the number of houses in the board area and the number of houses in the State were totally different. He said that that was the basis of calculating funds in the board area. The Minister then asked me to withdraw my comments, and I did so.

The difference between the figure of 879 688 that I produced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and 644 800, which was produced by the Minister, is 234 888. If 234 888 home-owners or home-unit-owners in Queensland are not paying the fire services levy, fire services in this State are inadequately financed. In excess of 30 to 35 per cent of all home-owners and home-unit-owners in Queensland do not have fire protection because they do not make a contribution to the cost of fire services in this State. I believe that the number is far fewer than that. I wonder how much longer the Government will rip off the ordinary people in this State.

It has been stated before that the greatest burden of the fire services levy would fall on those who could ill afford it. Under the old system, \$1.10 was paid for each \$1,000 of insurance. Because of the type of housing in which many pensioners and low-income-earners live, under the old system they would not have had to pay \$48 for fire protection, which is the new fire services levy. People who live in homes worth \$200,000, \$150,000 or even \$60,000 are now getting fire protection more cheaply than under the old system. Those who can ill-afford it will pay most for fire protection.

Mr Miller interjected.

Mr PREST: The honourable member for Ithaca should keep his mouth shut. He can have a go later.

Because of the 2 or 3 per cent commission that local authorities are paid to collect the levy on behalf of the State Government, they will make a considerable sum. This will be a windfall for local authorities because they do not have to pay a precept to the State Fire Services Council. Rates should come down by at least \$10 a year but, of course, that has not been the case.

Mr Tenni: Ask Roy Harvey about that.

Mr PREST: I will get to the Minister.

Rate-payers have no come-back against the decision of their local authorities to let rates stand. The Government is introducing a scheme under which local authorities can charge 15 per cent of the fire services levy. As a result, those in the community who are wealthy enough or fortunate enough to be able to pay their rates and levy within 28 days will receive \$7 back. However, the unemployed or those who cannot pay their rates within that time will suffer. I live in a very modest area in the city of Gladstone. I now pay \$1,067 a year in rates. If people living in my area want to get some of their money back, they must pay their rates of \$1,067, plus the fire services levy, plus the 15 per cent, within 28 days. However, many people in society today cannot do that.

Mr Stephan: How much fire levy are you paying now?

Mr PREST: I am paying \$48, the same as everybody else in the State. My house was fully insured.

Mr Tenni: When you were fully insured, how much did you pay?

Mr PREST: I live in a modest home. I was paying only about \$45, but now I will pay more.

I am not talking about myself; I am talking about the thousands of unemployed and the thousands of others who do not get paid the amounts of money that honourable

members do. I am talking about those who are not fat cats, which is the term used for members of Parliament. What the Government is doing under this legislation is taking another \$7 a year from people and giving it to local authorities, as the Minister stated in the House this morning. I will examine the reasons. During the second-reading debate on this legislation on 28 March this year, the member for Toowong (Mr Earle Bailey) said that local authorities would be able to invest on the short-term money market for three months the moneys they collected from the fire services levy, and receive \$1.50 in interest on each \$48.

The honourable member said that that would be a windfall for local authorities. The honourable member argued that the local authorities could invest on the short term money market at 15 per cent the money that was paid by rate-payers within 28 days and in three months receive in interest \$1.50 per rate-payer. That means that, in addition to the 2 per cent or 3 per cent that local authorities are receiving for collecting the levy, they are now to be allowed to charge 15 per cent interest to those people who cannot afford to pay within 28 days, those who may take 12 months to pay off their rates. That figure is equal to, or a little more than, the interest that the local authority would get on the short-term money market if the rates had been paid within 28 days. Fifteen per cent of \$48 is approximately \$7. Four times the three-monthly interest return on \$1.50 is \$6. So the local authority is not missing out. The whole of this system is a rip-off of those who can ill afford to pay.

Mr Bailey: That should be given as a discount on rates by the council.

Mr PREST: The honourable member has mentioned discounts on rates. Who gets that discount—the person who can afford to pay!

The honourable member for Toowong may not know that when local authorities draw up their budgets they allow for the amount of money that will be refunded in discounts. Therefore, that figure is added on. The ones who can afford to pay get a discount, but the ones who cannot afford to pay are helping to pay for the discount given to the rich. That is what is provided for in this legislation. The one who can afford to pay will get his money back; the one who cannot afford to pay will be paying for the interest that the local authority would have got had the money been paid within 28 days and invested on the short-term money market. This is a rip-off. How much longer will the Government allow this to continue?

The Government should not be allowing this interest to be charged. Local authorities should send out two rate notices, one for rates and services as charged by the local authority and a separate notice sent out on behalf of the State Government for the fire services levy. It should be paid separately.

Mr Vaughan: As the Brisbane City Council does.

Mr PREST: That is right.

The little people, the ones about whom I am really concerned, may be able to pay the \$48 within the 28 days and thus benefit from the \$7 discount. But if they have to pay \$1,068 for rates and services as well as an additional \$55—\$48 plus \$7—for their fire service levy, they might not be able to pay the full sum within 28 days. Therefore, they will lose their discount. That money will go into the coffers of the local authority. The only people who will be assisted with their rates and charges will be the rich. That part of the Bill is cruel, and some people can ill afford the charges. I assure the Minister that whilst I am a member of this Assembly I will continue to fight for the person who is being ripped off by the Queensland Government. The suggestion that Queensland is a low-tax State is a fallacy. Although honourable members have heard Government members say that the Queensland Government does not believe in iniquitous taxes, it can be seen that under the Bill people who can ill afford increased charges are being burdened by a \$7 tax added to their fire services levy, which will benefit only the local authority. In some areas, it may even benefit the rich. However, I repeat that it will not benefit the small person.

Hon. M. J. TENNI (Barron River—Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services) (12.47 p.m.), in reply: I would like to comment first on some of the remarks made by the honourable member for Everton. He referred to Mr Fast Bucks. He said that he thought Mr Fast Bucks was my adviser. All honourable members know that Mr Fast Bucks is a financial member of the Labor Party.

Mr Vaughan: How do you know that?

Mr TENNI: I know it. He has been talking about it all over Queensland and in northern New South Wales.

Honourable members would also be aware that Mr Fast Bucks has been charged with possessing 60 marijuana plants and that he will come before the courts in northern New South Wales on 10 December 1984. If the honourable member for Nudgee is proud to associate that man with anyone in this Parliament, he is not the type of person I thought he was. I respected the member for Nudgee as an honourable member of this Assembly. Remarks of that nature do not become him at all. It is time that he completely ignored comments made by the honourable member for Port Curtis and other honourable members and maintained the dignity that he has displayed over many years. I suggest that the honourable member for Nudgee should steer clear of members of that element, because they are not worth dealing with or talking about. As a matter of fact, they are incapable of telling the truth.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr TENNI: If the honourable member for Brisbane Central wants to associate himself with that man, that is up to him.

Mr Davis: I do not believe half of what is in this.

Mr TENNI: I do not believe any of it. If the honourable member for Brisbane Central believes half of it, he is half silly; he is not completely silly.

I only hope that the honourable member for Nudgee realises what he said. I am sure that he will withdraw those comments personally at a later date.

The chairman of the board of trustees is the chairman of the State Fire Services Council, and he is appointed by the Minister. In any case, there is an independent chairman. Such a board is needed to operate that organisation successfully.

The honourable member for Everton said that the firemen wanted more information on their investments. That is a matter that is overviewed by the Auditor-General at all times. I am sure that the honourable member respects, as I do, the ability of the Auditor-General to do that.

Unfortunately, I will have to refer to the fire levy briefly in reply to matters raised by the honourable member for Port Curtis. I know that that will be a waste of time. However, I am sure that the honourable member for Everton will be able to understand what I have to say.

The present legislation already has that 15 per cent included in it. The honourable member for Port Curtis should find a calculator because I will explain it to him shortly. He will need it to work out what I have to say. The 15 per cent is already included. The fact is that if 15 per cent is added to \$48 and if 15 per cent is then taken off, it is no longer \$48, so something must be done about that. That is exactly what this legislation does.

It is well-known that a few local authorities give a discount on rates paid on time. Usually, that discount is 15 per cent. Those local authorities are not giving that 15 per cent away. A percentage is added to enable them to give 15 per cent of rates back if they are paid on time. The legislation will enable local authorities that offer a discount on rates to do the same with the fire services levy.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr TENNI: The Government is not increasing the cost of fire services at all. I will go so far as to say that because of the way that this State is developing thanks to this Government, the cost of fire services probably will not be increased next year either.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr TENNI: The member for Port Curtis can wait a minute. It will be his turn to get shot down shortly.

The legislation is designed to enable local authorities in this State to include the fire services levy with rates and offer a 15 per cent discount on all rates and charges. I hope I have clarified that point.

I thank the honourable member for his initial comments, which I am sure he now regrets making. However, he did make some good points.

I will move on to the member for Port Curtis. I feel sorry for him. The honourable member admitted that he is a fat cat. I do not think it is necessary for him to tell everyone that he is a fat cat. Anyone can tell that by looking at him. He said also that fat cats——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I fear that the uncomplimentary remarks that are being passed in the Chamber will develop into some unparliamentary language very shortly and I will be forced to deal with it. I do not want that to happen, so I ask that members on both sides of the Chamber be careful with the language that they use.

Mr TENNI: Mr Deputy Speaker, I point out that the member for Port Curtis did say to a member who interjected, "Keep your mouth shut" I consider that to be very unparliamentary, and it is unfortunate that he said it when students were in the gallery.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I point out to honourable members that the words "mouth" and "shut" are not unparliamentary words. Perhaps, because of the context in which they are used or the manner in which they are spoken, they could be regarded as being somewhat rude. However, I cannot rule that those words are unparliamentary.

Mr TENNI: I do not ask for that ruling. However, I repeat that I believe that the remark made by the honourable member was uncalled for. Members should bear in mind that students are in the gallery. The remark made by the member for Port Curtis is not the type of comment members like to hear in the Chamber, but it is typical of him.

He continually questions the funding of the fire services. Really, I think I am wasting my time trying to explain it to him. He does not realise that the number of houses that are liable for levy is provided by the local authorities of this State. The member for Port Curtis should listen to what I am saying instead of talking to his colleague. The number of houses is provided by all the local authorities throughout Queensland, and charges are made in accordance with that number. The member for Port Curtis is saying that each and every local authority, or at least many of them, are telling untruths to me as Minister and to my departmental advisers. I do not agree with that. I believe that local authorities in this State are very responsible.

Mr PREST: I rise to a point of order. The figures of the Australian Bureau of Statistics show the number of houses and units for every local authority in the State. That is where I got my figure from. I am certain that if the Minister and his departmental advisers check their figures against the figures of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, they will find that my figures are correct.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no valid point of order. However, if the Minister were to accept the explanation of the member for Port Curtis, the argument might be settled.

Mr TENNI: I accept the explanation.

The member for Port Curtis constantly says in the Parliament—he has done it again today—that this is a great rip-off. If the member claims that, he has to say that the numbers given to us by the local authorities are incorrect. I will have great pleasure in writing to each of the local authorities in his electorate pointing out that he claims that they are ripping their rate-payers off. I will have that done immediately. The letters will leave today. I am sure that neither the local authorities nor their rate-payers will appreciate his comments. I will be aware of their feelings when I receive replies to the letter. It is not worth discussing the matter with him.

He stated that the amendments are adding 15 per cent to the charges.

Mr Prest: They are, too.

Mr TENNI: That is in the Act. It has been there all the time.

He said that he is earning a considerable amount of money. He called himself and the rest of us fat cats. He said that we could afford to pay those fees. However, he admitted that he insured his property for a value that resulted in his paying \$45 in premium. That just goes to prove that even fat cats do not insure their properties for the full value.

Mr PREST: Surely a person does not insure his property according to his income. That is a silly statement to make.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Did the honourable member for Port Curtis rise on a point of order?

Mr PREST: I did.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I cannot accept that as a point of order.

Mr PREST: I find that statement——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I cannot accept that point of order. If the member wants to prosecute a quarrel with the Minister on the matter, he can do so by way of interjection.

Mr Prest: The statement that the Minister has made shows that he is an utter dill. How could a person insure his property according to his income?

Mr TENNI: I would enjoy explaining it to the member.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! In the context in which it was used, I consider the word “dill” to be unparliamentary. The member for Port Curtis will withdraw it.

Mr PREST: Very well. He is not a dill.

Mr TENNI: I do not take much notice of the honourable member. That is his normal conduct.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will proceed with his reply.

Mr TENNI: The member admitted that he paid an insurance premium of only \$45. He said that he could afford more. It is a pity that he did not pay more. I have nothing to add to my reply, except to say that the amendments are necessary and will fulfil the requirements of the State.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time (Mr Tenni's motion)—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 43		NOES, 18	
Ahern	Lee	Comben	
Alison	Lester	D'Arcy	
Austin	Lickiss	Fouras	
Bailey	Lingard	Gibbs, R. J.	
Booth	Littleproud	Goss	
Borbidge	McKechnie	McLean	
Cahill	McPhie	Milliner	
Chapman	Menzel	Palaszczyk	
Cooper	Miller	Prest	
Elliott	Newton	Shaw	
FitzGerald	Powell	Smith	
Gibbs, I. J.	Randell	Underwood	
Glasson	Simpson	Vaughan	
Goleby	Stephan	Veivers	
Gunn	Stoneman	Warburton	
Gygar	Tenni	Warner A. M.	
Harper	Turner		
Harvey	Wharton		
Henderson			
Innes			
Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>	<i>Tellers:</i>	
Katter	Kaus	Davis	
Lane	Neal	Hamill	

Resolved in the affirmative.

Sitting suspended from 1.5 to 2.15 p.m.

Committee

Mr Booth (Warwick) in the chair; Hon. M. J. Tenni (Barron River—Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of s. 34C; Local Authorities to collect annual contributions by owners of prescribed properties—

Mr PREST (2.16 p.m.): Clause 4 provides for local authorities to collect annual contributions by owners of prescribed properties, and, as an elected representative, I am concerned at it. On more than one occasion, the Minister has said that the reason for the introduction of the fire services levy was to make sure that everyone who is insured contributes towards the cost of providing fire services in Queensland. The Opposition agrees totally with that contention, because the law must be upheld at all times.

However, the Bill states that the local authority will have the power to decide who will be paying the levy as at 1 July each year. The scope of that power has to be defined. Will the fire services levy apply when a dwelling is completed and occupied, will it relate to a house that is under construction, or will the levy apply when building approval has been obtained prior to 1 July, or at 1 July?

In 100 per cent of instances in which construction of a building is undertaken, material that is used in construction is insured. That is so, whether the material is lying on the ground or actually forms part of the building. A fire could break out at any stage of construction.

It is a matter of concern that even now, as the Minister has said, local authorities inform the State Government of the number of property-owners and household units that are located in the local authority area. That is not good enough. All property is rateable, whether it is vacant land or land on which a home unit or dwelling-house is erected. A better accounting system should be implemented if the figures that form the basis for the levy are to correspond in any shape or form—one would hope closely—with the figures provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

I have previously pointed out to the House, not only today but also on 12 and 13 November, that there is a discrepancy of 234 888 between the figure provided by the Minister of the number of home units in each class-area A, B, C and D and the figure stated in a publication issued by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

I am also concerned about the answer given by the Minister to a question asked by the honourable member for Mount Gravatt (Mr Henderson) in relation to the role of auxiliary firemen. In some ways, the work of the professional fire-fighters cannot be compared with that of an auxiliary fireman. A fire brigade that provides a service, which is available on call at all times and is manned 24 hours a day, cannot be compared with a service that is manned by auxiliary firemen. I say that because once the alarm is raised, auxiliary firemen have to leave work, or leave the hotel or some other recreation that they are participating in—that is, if they are available—and attend at the substation.

Yesterday, in answer to a question, the Minister compared the city of Lismore with the city of Gladstone. He said—

“An example of the New South Wales use of auxiliaries can be illustrated by comparing the city of Lismore with the Queensland city of Gladstone. Lismore is manned by two permanent station officers, one of whom is on shift at any one time, who are supported by 15 volunteer firemen. Gladstone, which is a city of comparable size, enjoys the protection of 25 permanent staff and 24 auxiliaries. That is not bad, is it?”

Because of the fire risk associated with the massive industries in Gladstone, it would be terrible if only two permanent station officers were available. With 25 men, the station is not overmanned. The Minister's statement that Gladstone also has 25 auxiliary firemen is completely untrue. Gladstone has no auxiliary firemen—I emphasise that. The Gladstone district takes in Calliope, Boyne Island, and Miriam Vale, which is approximately 46 miles south of Gladstone. The Gladstone Fire Brigades Board controls those centres in which substations are manned, when necessary, by auxiliary firemen.

Mr Tenni: And they don't do a good job, in your opinion?

Mr PREST: The Minister said that Gladstone is protected by 25 permanent men and 24 auxiliaries, which is misleading the House. It is untrue. In fact, I give great credit to the professional fire-fighters in Gladstone—

Mr Tenni: What about the auxiliary blokes?

Mr PREST: There are no auxiliaries in Gladstone.

Mr Tenni: In the Gladstone Fire Brigades Board area.

Mr PREST: They look after Calliope, Boyne Island—

Mr Littleproud: Don't they do a good job, too?

Mr PREST: I have never heard of them attending any fires in those areas. In fact, the Boyne Island smelters were taken out of the board area. The company had to provide its own fire units and men. So it could not have thought much of the services that would be provided by the Boyne Island auxiliaries.

I do not believe that the cut-off point should be 1 July. If everyone is to be asked to contribute equally to the provision of fire services in Queensland, then it has to be everyone. Local authorities should not be able to say who will and who will not pay. Once a building approval is given, material is delivered to a site and work starts, the owner should become liable to pay a fire levy.

As I said, in answering a question the Minister gave misleading information to the Assembly. I repeat that the answers given by the Minister to questions I have put to him over the past few months just do not add up. On one occasion, the Minister even had to seek leave to make a ministerial statement in which he said that information he

had given was incorrect, but that it was the fault of a typist. Imagine that! On 13 November he failed to answer a question I put to him. Today, the Minister again failed to answer those questions. I do not think he has the ability to answer them. The people of Queensland are being hoodwinked, robbed and ripped off by the fire levy.

Unfortunately the Minister has had little experience in this field and he has two officers who, on their record, should not hold their jobs. The poor tax-payers of Queensland are paying for this sorry situation. A competent Minister, with two competent advisers, would ensure that Queensland was far better off. When honourable members object to what is going on, the Minister indulges in filth and unparliamentary comments, which do him and the position he holds no credit.

Mr TENNI: I will try to answer the honourable member for Port Curtis. I disagree completely with what he said. The Bureau of Statistics gives total statistics. I have tried to explain that to the honourable member, but he is so thick in the head that it is impossible for him to absorb it.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: We do not have to put up with these personal attacks.

Mr TENNI: If the honourable member gives it, he has to learn to take it. If it is too hot in the kitchen, he should get out.

The local authority attends to the figures. The cut-off time is the end of June. If the honourable member will listen, I will try to explain to him what is done, and why, but apparently he is not interested. Local authority figures cover only the areas that can be protected properly by the fire brigade board, which means that the area must have reticulated water or be close to reticulated water. The figures have nothing to do with the Bureau of Statistics. I do not know how I can explain that to the honourable member. It seems to be impossible to do so. I repeat that the cut-off date is at 1 July.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr TENNI: I ask the honourable member to listen to me. I listened to him.

All blocks of land are subject to the fire levy. That has not altered. The levy is not altered until a home is built on the block of land. The alteration takes effect as from 1 July following the year in which the house is built. If the house is completed by the end of July, the change takes effect on 1 July. If the house is finished by the end of January, the change does not come into effect until 1 July. There is no other feasible, sensible way of doing it. On a management basis, that is hard to explain to the honourable member.

Queensland has about 180 fire stations manned on a totally auxiliary basis. The honourable member was only playing with figures or words when he had a shot at me about the auxiliary firemen in the Gladstone area. They do an excellent job in conjunction with the permanent firemen. I am quite happy with clause 4. It will remain as it is.

Mr PREST: I am not playing with words. I quoted figures that the Minister supplied yesterday in reply to a question. They showed that Gladstone had 25 permanents and 24 auxiliaries, but Gladstone city has 25 permanents and no auxiliaries. If he cannot get that into his numskull he should resign.

The Minister said that if a house is completed on 1 July the owner would not pay the fire levy until the following year.

Mr Tenni: He pays if he owns a block of land.

Mr PREST: Not if the house is not finished by 30 June. Who would complete a house on 29 June and pay the levy if he could delay the completion date and not pay the levy for 12 months? I believe that the levy should apply from when the approval to build is given. I do not mean that a man should pay a pro-rata levy; he should pay as from 1 July. If a house is finished on 2 July he should pay a full year's levy.

Mr TENNI: I take on board the comments of the honourable member. Because he is hard to understand, I ask him to correct me if I am wrong in saying that his point was that, when a certificate of occupancy is given by a local authority, the person receiving that certificate should pay the full levy. That is what I understand the honourable member to be saying.

I will take his point up with the local authorities for their comments and to determine whether his plan is feasible. It may be that it would cost rate-payers a fortune in paperwork to charge on a pro rata basis. At present a person with a vacant block of land pays \$16 for fire services. The honourable member suggests that, if a person receives a certificate of occupancy on 1 January, he should pay half the \$48 levy instead of only \$16, which is a difference of only \$8. I do not think that the financial aspects of such a system would be feasible because the cost would be too high.

Mr PREST: That is not what I said. I do not believe that a pro rata payment should apply. If approval is given prior to 1 July—

Mr Tenni: Approval for what?

Mr PREST: Approval to build. Once that approval has been given, the builder will put material on the land. That material should be insured because it is vulnerable to damage by fire. Once approval is given, the levy should be paid. Many people today build their own homes, and an owner/builder may take two years to complete his house.

Mr Miller: He is the little battler.

Mr PREST: Yes, he is a little battler, but he should have the protection of the fire brigade service for the material placed on the land, even though it is usually insured. I am sure that, if a fire occurs on such a site and the owner cannot prove that he pays the fire levy, he will be charged for the service rendered by the fire brigade.

Mr TENNI: I will clarify a couple of points for the honourable member. The local authorities wanted the levy to apply from 1 July, and the Government abided by their wishes. However, I will bring this matter forward when I am next speaking with the local authority executive.

A person who has commenced to construct his home may take out insurance cover at that time. If the half-built house burns down, the insurance company pays up. That has nothing to do with the fire services levy. For the cost of \$48, which is the amount of the levy, the fire brigade can be called. If the \$48 has not been paid, there is no building on the land. The land-owner pays \$16 if the land is vacant and he is entitled to call the fire brigade. Any materials on the land are covered by insurance.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr TENNI: Until that happens, yes.

If the honourable member wants to convince the local authorities that the situation should be different, he can do so. I assure him that I will discuss the matter with the local authority executive next time I meet with it. I can do no more than that.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 8, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

RURAL FIRES ACT AMENDMENT BILL**Second Reading—Resumption of Debate**

Debate resumed from 13 November (see p. 2326) on Mr Tenni's motion—

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

Mr MILLINER (Everton) (2.35 p.m.): In speaking to the Bill on behalf of the Opposition, may I extend to those who are involved in volunteer fire services a deep appreciation for the work they do. Involvement in a bush fire brigade can prove to be very dangerous. One only has to remember the tragic Ash Wednesday fires in Victoria and South Australia to realise how dangerous working in a bush fire brigade can be. Fortunately, Queensland has not had horrific fires like that one, but I envisage that, in the not too distant future, Queensland could face serious bush fires in similar areas. In the Samford Valley, Dayboro and Petrie areas, many houses are being built on acreage blocks of land. A fire causing a great deal of property loss is a distinct possibility in those areas. The time of year is fast approaching when extreme heat could result in serious bush fires. I appeal to those who live in semi-rural areas to take every precaution possible to protect their properties so that those involved in bush fire brigades do not have to risk their lives unnecessarily.

The Opposition agrees with the Bill in principle. However, I am concerned about a couple of things. In his second-reading speech, the Minister said that the vehicles to be used by the bush fire brigade will be covered by third-party insurance. The Minister also said—

“In addition, the Rural Fires Board is to ensure that there is in force a contract of third-party insurance providing an indemnity in respect of injury caused by through or in connection with the vehicle.”

I sincerely hope that that will be very strictly enforced because I would hate to see people not covered by third-party insurance performing their duties in a bush fire brigade involved in an accident.

A number of the vehicles that will be used will be farm vehicles, and I am concerned about their mechanical condition. As the Minister well knows, many vehicles used on properties are not in what could be classified as a safe condition. Many of them have bald tyres and are not in a suitable mechanical condition to be driven on the road. Because they are for farm use, that is quite understandable. I am simply concerned about the road safety aspect of these vehicles and whether, because of the condition they are in, they could be a danger. The Opposition supports the principle in the Bill, which permits bush fire brigades to use unregistered vehicles on the roads to convey people and equipment to the scene of a fire.

In conclusion, I simply say that I hope that those involved with bush fire brigades shoulder their responsibility, as I know they will, and ensure that vehicles are covered by third-party insurance and are in a safe mechanical condition.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine) (2.40 p.m.): I welcome the opportunity to speak about rural fire brigades. In his second-reading speech the Minister said that about 36 000 people are involved in a voluntary capacity in 1 550 different brigades through the State. That indicates the great network of voluntary help throughout the State. Very often brigades exist only because of the co-operative use of private equipment. In some cases, the equipment belongs to the fire brigade. However, as I have said, most of the equipment is owned by persons in the brigade.

The key person in a fire brigade is the fire warden. He has a responsible position. Throughout the year he must be continually alert to the changing conditions of the

countryside and make decisions on whether he should issue permits to light fires. He must devote considerable time to persons who telephone him requesting permits. He must be aware of his powers. The persons who generally hold such positions are reputable men in the community, and an excellent service is provided by them.

In his speech the Minister said that the nature of fire-fighting carried out by persons in fire brigades is very difficult. Very often little water is available. As no water hydrants are available, water is generally carried by tankers or on trailers. Fires are fought by either ploughing breaks with farming equipment or by burning back a break. It is when farmers' equipment is used to plough breaks that the matters raised by the honourable member for Everton must be considered. I took note of his comments about the observation of road safety in the use of that equipment. I am sure that most farmers keep in good condition the equipment that is likely to be used on roads.

The Traffic Act has recently been amended to provide for vehicle inspections and other matters. However, there are occasions on which it would be more important for a fire brigade to be at a scene quickly. I think that most men would be aware of their responsibilities to their fellow-man. The type of equipment that would be used in fire-fighting would not usually be registered. Such equipment includes ploughs, slashers, scarifiers and perhaps the old farm truck that is lined up with the water tank on the back of it so that a few thousand gallons of water can be taken to the scene of a fire.

In the main, fire-fighters travel in an area that is close to where they live, so it is not necessary for them to travel on many public roads. Although they travel mainly on private roads, it is necessary also for them to travel on public roads because they form the frontage to many rural properties.

Because it appreciates the role played by those fire brigades, the Queensland Graingrowers Association, which represents the grain-growers, has asked its members and the people in the grain-growing industry in general to co-operate with the rural fire brigades. One might think that the grain-growing industry is one of ploughed ground or green crops. There are times close to harvest-time when a man's income for the year can be at risk, and a fire racing through a crop of grain can devastate a property in a matter of minutes.

The Wieambilla Fire Brigade was formed in an area in which there are hobby farms. Usually, a rural fire brigade comprises graziers who have extensive land-holdings and a great deal of equipment, or farmers who have agricultural areas and many tractors and a great deal of other equipment. People in the Wieambilla area are buying hobby farms of 40 or 100 acres. Many of them are former city-dwellers. They realise the risk during dry weather. They realise that, in the bush, it is usual to help themselves and their neighbours. To their credit, a fund-raising event was organised in what can only be described as wild country. They wanted to raise money to buy some of the equipment necessary to protect themselves. They should be commended for that.

Other brigades in my electorate are only too willing to use their private equipment. In fact, some farmers have purchased equipment for their own use and are only too willing to make it available to the fire brigade. It is to the credit of the Minister that the department has fire-fighting equipment available at reduced cost. Farmers can purchase that equipment on the understanding that it becomes part of the fire brigade equipment.

Mr Tenni: There is a good deal of that.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: As the Minister said, there is a great deal of that.

Some brigades impose a voluntary levy. Each person in the area pays a sum of money each year to purchase equipment. The concession in the Bill is that the people who take their machinery and vehicles onto the road should be exempt from the payment of registration. That great concession should be made, because it would result in a saving to those persons.

It was mentioned somewhere along the line that \$500,000 of this year's Estimates will go towards funding rural fire brigades. It must be remembered that 36 000 people throughout the State serve as volunteer fire-fighters. A large number of people depend on the service and a vast area of Queensland is involved. Probably almost 90 per cent of Queensland is served by this service. I should imagine that the number of people involved would be over one million. It is the assets of those people that the Government is trying to protect.

It was interesting to note that the honourable member for Port Curtis refrained from giving any credit to voluntary firemen. Country people realise that they cannot have the type of service that is available in the city. However, those people are prepared to do as much as possible for themselves. The voluntary firemen are most efficient. They receive only \$500,000 to cover almost half the people in Queensland. They are prepared to put their hands into their pockets and maintain their own equipment.

I ask that next year the Minister give consideration to making more funds available for the purchase of equipment.

I certainly commend this Bill, and I fully support the great work done by rural fire brigades.

Mr NEAL (Balonne) (2.47 p.m.): I have pleasure in supporting the Minister in the introduction of this Bill, which will exempt bush fire brigade vehicles from motor vehicle registration fees. The title of the Bill states what it is all about. Those vehicles will also be covered by third-party insurance.

I will not take up too much time of the House. I am pleased that the Bill is being introduced, because, by and large, bush fire brigades do a tremendous job. It must not be forgotten that all the firemen are volunteers. As the honourable member for Condamine said, regardless of the types of roads, the volunteer firemen have to take vehicles with equipment out to areas either to stop outbreaks of fire or to prevent fire from spreading.

I am very pleased that vehicles that are taken out in the course of fire-fighting duties will be covered by third-party insurance. In my area fire is a necessary part of the management of many properties. For example, there has to be burning-off to clear regrowth. Fires do get out of control. Lightning strikes create fires. Vandals and people who are careless with camp-fires cause fires. It is not unusual for heatwave conditions to be experienced soon after the end of winter. Kangaroo-shooters have a habit of burning stretches of growth along the sides of roads so that they get some green pick, in the hope that kangaroos will be attracted to that area and they can shoot them.

My area has a volunteer fire brigade. Everyone rallies to the cause. There is never any trouble getting people to help with the necessary equipment, such as bulldozers and tractors, to control fires. It must be realised that bush fire brigades are protecting valuable assets. I know of very high losses that are sustained because of fires that have got out of control.

I also want to raise a matter that the honourable member for Condamine referred to—he and I share a common boundary—that is, hobby farms. Hobby farmers come from all walks of life and many different parts of Australia, quite often from cities. They have no idea of the dangers of fire in the timbered country where they have taken up residence on the small hobby farms of 40-odd acres. Two wet seasons have just been experienced. The recent good rains have promoted the growth of grass. With early heatwave conditions, it can be expected that a tremendous amount of combustible material will be on the ground in country areas. I am most concerned about that. The Wieambilla Fire Brigade is not far from the area to which I refer. The Rural Fires Board has been out to the district and has given instructions.

Mr Tenni: In two months' time, we are to give them a new four-wheel-drive fire-fighting vehicle.

Mr NEAL: I am very pleased about that. I have been most concerned about it. People who have spent their lives in those areas are aware of the danger, but newcomers to the district are not. The country can become very dry in a short space of time. When it gets extremely hot, we have the right conditions for the outbreak of fire and for fire to be out of control. The subdivisions are small areas of 40 acres or so, with narrow tracks leading to them. A bush fire could sweep through, cutting off people who know nothing about fighting the fire or escaping from it. It is that aspect that worries me.

I am very pleased about the co-operation the Rural Fires Board has extended to the area. I have expressed my concern to the board. I take this opportunity to express my concern in the House about what I see as a potentially dangerous set of circumstances.

Hon. M. J. TENNI (Barron River—Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services) (2.52 p.m.), in reply: I commend the member for Everton for the way in which he approached the amendments, and particularly for his appeal to people to aid in protection. He made a wonderful contribution. Protection is most important. It is too late when a fire breaks out. Every effort should be made to protect property.

He asked about the third party policy. We have a bulk policy with the SGIO, which has been operating for approximately 15 years, covering all vehicles used by farmers or other volunteers as well as loss of life or injuries.

He spoke about the mechanical soundness of farm vehicles, particularly when they are used on a road. Fire knows no boundaries, of course. If it crosses a road, it is necessary for the equipment to cross the road. I respect his views that at times farm vehicles may not be in first-class condition. I point out that all vehicles permanently attached to the Rural Fires Board have roadworthiness certificates and are fully covered. Much of the equipment used—bulldozers and tractors, for example—belongs to the farmers.

I have to rely on the good sense of the people themselves. Being a country fellow myself, I am aware that most farmers have a high sense of responsibility and would not use a vehicle that would be dangerous to others on the road—if for no other reason than that it might result in their own injury or death. No vehicle shall be used on the road unless a Rural Fires Board sticker is attached to it. I imagine that the officer in charge would ensure that all vehicles are in a reasonable condition.

The honourable member for Condamine outlined in an excellent fashion the number of volunteers with the service in Queensland. As he said, Queensland has 1 550 voluntary bush fire brigades and approximately 36 000 volunteer fire-fighters. “Volunteer”—isn’t that a marvellous word? I only wish I heard it more often. Certainly, the tax-payers in this State would be much better off. Men and women of this State perform those duties superbly, at tremendous cost to themselves.

I have had discussions with bush fire brigade personnel who even use their own equipment as well as contributing their own time, and they have offered to pay a sum of money each year to assist in the purchase of more equipment. The honourable member for Condamine (Mr Littleproud) was correct when he said that the more equipment that can be obtained, the better the service will be. I add my sentiments to his comments.

I am sure that all honourable members would be aware that only this morning, I presented a list of equipment, including four-wheel-drive vehicles, that had been purchased second-hand from the State Government, the air force and the army. I inform honourable members that the Government Motor Garage, which is under my portfolio, carries out the necessary repair and maintenance tasks, paints the vehicles and generally brings them up to standard. In addition to that, the vehicles are fitted out with tanks, pumps, hoses and nozzles before being handed over to the bush fire brigade boards. The vehicles are provided at half of the cost of the original purchase price. In most cases, a bush fire brigade is able to obtain a good quality four-wheel-drive fire-fighting vehicle for

approximately \$2,000. That is what happens to the funds that are allocated by the State Government for that purpose.

It should be pointed out that the bush fire brigade budget amounted to \$1.35m this year, and \$500,000 has been spent on the purchase of additional equipment. I suggest to honourable members that support can be obtained from the area served by bush fire brigades. In fact, I managed to obtain a \$2,000 donation from a developer in my area, and that money was used to purchase a former defence forces vehicle at Townsville. That four-wheel-drive vehicle is presently being fitted out and will be provided to the Julatten Bush Fire Brigade in north Queensland. The point I make is that it is possible to provide suitable equipment without expending large sums of money.

The honourable member for Balonne (Mr Neal) spoke clearly and sensibly about the provisions of the Bill. Because he has experienced the effects of many bush fires in his area, he manifests a commendable attitude in his approach to the rural fire brigades and, in particular, to the men and women who volunteer to fight fires. The honourable member realises the heavy responsibility that is placed on fire-fighters in rural areas.

I turn now to the point the honourable member made about kangaroo-shooters burning off grass. I can understand the reason behind that kind of action taken by kangaroo-shooters, but a warning should be issued to all licensed kangaroo-shooters in relation to the dangers and the risks that are associated with starting fires that have not been the subject of a permit issued by the local fire brigade board.

Mr Neal: I think there would be some trouble associated with getting them to co-operate.

Mr TENNI: Of course, but there are some very capable wardens in Queensland, particularly in the Balonne electorate. When smoke is seen, the wardens act quickly, and it is possible that kangaroo-shooters might be caught in the act of lighting a grass fire. I warn the kangaroo-shooters about lighting fires without a permit. I realise that kangaroo-shooters are necessary, because, indirectly, they make our roads safer. I point out that kangaroo-shooting is subject to the issue of licences, and it should be borne in mind that kangaroo-shooting licences are not issued as of right.

I thank all honourable members for their comments and opinions on the amendments that have been proposed. I believe that the amendments have merit, and that there is a genuine need for them.

Motion (Mr Tenni) agreed to.

Committee

Mr Booth (Warwick) in the chair; Hon. M. J. Tenni (Barron River—Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—New s. 39A; Use of brigade equipment on roads while unregistered—

Mr PREST (2.59 p.m.): In the Minister's glowing tribute to the speeches made by the honourable members for Condamine and Balonne, he asked the honourable member for Balonne to direct kangaroo-shooters to obtain a permit. That is all that one would expect from a Minister of his capabilities. Fancy saying that a permit would be granted to a kangaroo-shooter to enable him to burn off someone's property so that grass would shoot and attract kangaroos! I have never heard anything so ridiculous. If anyone is permitted to burn off, it should be the owner of the land.

Mr McPhie: This is not a Bill about kangaroo-shooting.

Mr PREST: The honourable member should own up that he was asleep. He was either asleep or is too dumb to understand what the Minister said. The Minister advised

Mr Neal to tell the kangaroo-shooters to apply for a permit if they want to burn off someone's property. Fancy that! Good heavens!

Mr TENNI: Just to clarify that point—it appears to me that the member has a very bad hearing defect. I did say that, but I added that it was not guaranteed that they would get a permit. Because it is not worth while talking to the honourable member, that is all I want to say.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

NOISE ABATEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 14 November (see p. 2470) on Mr Tenni's motion—

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

Mr MILLINER (Everton) (3.2 p.m.): The Opposition is somewhat at a loss to understand why the Government is proceeding in this manner. The composition of the authority is quite clearly set out in the Noise Abatement Act. The relevant provision states that the authority shall consist of the following members—

“(a) a representative of each of the following departments of government:—

- (i) Local Government;
- (ii) Commercial and Industrial Development;
- (iii) Co-ordinator General;
- (iv) Police;
- (v) Health;
- (vi) Railways;
- (b) two representatives of the Queensland Confederation of Industry Ltd.;
- (c) one representative of the Queensland Branch of the Metal Trades Industry Association of Australia;
- (d) one representative of the Local Government Association of Queensland (Incorporated);
- (e) one representative of Brisbane City Council;
- (f) one representative of the Council of Agriculture constituted under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926-1976;
- (g) one representative of the Australian Sugar Producers Association;
- (h) one representative of the public;
- (i) the Director who shall be, *ex officio*, chairman.”

The Government obviously feels that the director should no longer be a member of the authority, and we have no argument against that. However, the Minister indicated in his second-reading speech that the Bill will allow the Government greater flexibility when appointing members to the authority. One wonders why it would need such flexibility.

There is no doubt that noise is one of the major problems confronting society; people's daily lives are being interfered with by excessive noise. For a number of years the member for Ithaca has been very vocal about trail bikes. They are certainly one source of very annoying noise.

Mr Tenni: That comes under the police.

Mr MILLINER: I know that it does. A representative of the police has been on the authority. He could give advice on the problem. I am only illustrating that trail bike riders are associated with a serious noise problem. The member of the police force on the authority obviously could give advice to the authority on how best to handle the noise created by trail bike riders.

Mr Tenni: We are talking about industrial noise, and industrial noise is not noise created by trail bike riders. Noise created by trail bike riders comes under the Minister for Police and his Act. The policeman should be on his committee.

Mr MILLINER: On industrial noise, the Act provides for representation of the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development. The Government is cutting down on the number of people on the authority, but it has not stipulated who the new members will be. The Minister said that will give flexibility in the appointment of people. It maybe that some of the present members of the authority will be re-appointed, when the number on the authority is reduced from about 12 to six or seven. Opposition members want to know why the Government is embarking on this procedure. The Minister told us that the changes will facilitate flexibility, but Opposition members do not believe that flexibility is needed. Opposition members believe that the present membership of the authority covers all noise situations. Noise, particularly industrial noise, is a major environmental problem confronting society.

I am concerned that a representative of the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development may not be included on the authority. The authority could comprise six industry representatives. It would be unwise to appoint to the authority representatives of industries that create noise.

Mr Lee: Some of those people are very responsible.

Mr MILLINER: I am not saying that they are not responsible. Many of them are responsible.

I am concerned that someone who may be contributing to the noise problem could be on the authority listening to complaints.

Mr Lee interjected.

Mr MILLINER: I am not questioning their responsibility. I am merely pointing out the dangers.

The Act stipulates who the people on the authority will be and where they will come from. That is far more desirable than a nebulous provision whereby six persons shall be appointed by the Governor in Council. We do not know who they will be or where they will come from.

Opposition members are very concerned because noise is a major problem. The authority should be able to deal adequately with problems as they arise. I cited trail bike riders as a classic example of noise contributors. A member of the police force on the authority could give the authority advice about the problem. If the authority is dealing with industrial noise, a representative of the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development is on the authority and he can advise the authority on noise problems as they relate to industry.

I hope that the Minister will enlighten us on the reasons why the Government thinks it is necessary to dismantle the authority and reconstitute it so that the members shall be appointed by the Governor in Council, without stipulating who they will be.

Mr MILLER (Ithaca) (3.9 p.m.): The honourable member for Everton raised a valid point. The Minister said that the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police controls noise

made by trail bikes. I agree with him, but I do not see how the Government can say to the Minister in charge of police, "You are responsible for noise levels."

I am concerned about the noise caused by trail bikes. The problem could be easily solved if the Minister responsible for noise pollution told his Cabinet colleagues that, because the level of noise emanating from trail bikes is a lot higher than that from ordinary motor cycles, he would ensure that, at the point of sale, trail bikes emit no more noise than ordinary motor cycles.

Mr Lee: After the trail bikes are sold, don't they rip out the inside of the muffler?

Mr MILLER: Yes, some people do.

One or two trail bike manufacturers adopt a responsible attitude to noise emission. However, the trail bikes made by other manufacturers emit such a loud noise that it is impossible for people who live in areas adjacent to bushland to stay in their homes; they have to go out to get peace and quiet. My electorate takes in such areas. I receive complaints continually from people who live near the Mount Coot-tha bushland about the noise of trail bikes.

I can think of no reason why the manufacturers cannot be told that, unless the noise level of their trail bikes meets the standards set by the Queensland Government, they may not be sold. Instead of passing the problem off onto one another, the Minister responsible for police and the Minister responsible for noise pollution should get together and try to overcome it, because it has been going on for a long time.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: They should be banned.

Mr MILLER: It is all right if the trail bikes are ridden in specified areas. I know that the Government was considering an area that was a long way from any houses.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Not for small kids.

Mr MILLER: I agree with the honourable member. Trail bikes should not be ridden by small children; they are too dangerous. That is the responsibility of the Minister for Police, and I am referring to noise pollution.

The Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services should take a close look at this problem because, quite frankly, I do not think that the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police or any other Minister is interested in the noise pollution caused by motor bikes. Because of Australia's open spaces—it has more than any other country in the world—trail bikes are very popular. In fact, Australia has a very big market for trail bikes. If trail bike manufacturers were told that the Government would not permit their sale because of their noise level, they would adopt a new attitude.

Mr Kruger: Have we got double standards?

Mr MILLER: What does the honourable member mean by that?

Mr Kruger: When Mr Milliner mentioned bikes, the Minister said that that was industrial noise and was a matter for the police.

Mr MILLER: I am supporting the honourable member for Everton. His point was extremely valid. Perhaps the honourable member for Murrumba has not been in the Chamber for the whole debate.

Unless the Minister responsible for noise pollution gets together with the Minister for Police, this problem will not be solved. I have received complaints for five years about the noise from trail bikes in my area.

Mr Lee: Those trail bike riders are very hard to catch. When the police arrive they just disappear in the bush.

Mr MILLER: That is right, and they are very good riders.

I wish also to refer to the Milton Tenpin Bowling Centre. For three years I have received complaints about the noise emanating from that centre. I do not refer only to the noise of the bowling balls knocking down the pins. The Brisbane City Council permitted the building of that centre close to houses. Only one wall of the Milton Tenpin Bowling Centre faces houses and that is the wall on which the huge air-conditioning unit was installed.

With due respect, I point out year after year complaints have been made to the department about the Milton Tenpin Bowling Centre. I want something done. Three sides of that building back onto the Milton tennis courts. Noise from the air-conditioning unit will not upset anybody at the Milton tennis courts at 11 p.m. but, because the air-conditioning has to be operating at 2 a.m. when the cleaners are working in the bowling alley, nearby residents cannot sleep. The cleaners are just as entitled to air-conditioning as those who play tenpin bowls, but noise is emitted from that building until the last person leaves, which could well be 3 o'clock in the morning. On behalf of the people who live in Haig Road, Rosalie, I ask the Minister to do something about the noise from that building by ensuring that the air-conditioning unit is shifted to a side of the building where it will not affect nearby residents.

Mr COMBEN (Windsor) (3.16 p.m.): I rise for a few moments, surprisingly to support the comments of the member for Ithaca and also those of my colleague the member for Everton. I call on the Minister to do something under this legislation to help overcome the problems associated with trail bikes, which are frequently used in my electorate. I live within 200 metres of Kedron Brook. On a Sunday afternoon, because trail bikes are constantly using the area, I cannot have a sleep to recover from the sittings of the House.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Are you at home on Sundays?

Mr COMBEN: On Sunday afternoons, after church and after being at the bowls club, I like to be at home.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: I thought you might have had electorate commitments.

Mr COMBEN: Every second Sunday. I thank the honourable member for Wolston. I presume the honourable member is on my side of the House.

Responsibility for jurisdiction in noise matters overlaps between local government and police and, if the noise is coming from licensed premises, the Licensing Commission is involved. The Brisbane City Council has problems with trail bikes all across the city and, because of a lack of funding from the State Government, does not have enough money to employ sufficient people to police the legislation. Once again because of a lack of funding from the State Government, the Police Department has insufficient staff and can dispatch police to those areas only at certain times of the day. As a result, very little can be done.

My electorate consists of fairly old, established suburbs, so the trail bikes are constantly disturbing older people, even in the late evening. On one occasion when I went out to try to stop some of the trail bike riders by quietly asking them whether they could find somewhere else to ride, I found myself having to pick up my dog and put it under one arm while the trial bike was ridden round and round me. That is the stage that has been reached in Windsor.

The Minister needs to amend the legislation so that it does not relate only to industrial noise. Noise comes from many sources and it is about time that the Government did something about the problem instead of having a fairly hollow, restrictive piece of legislation. Every time that a complaint is made, the Government points to this piece of legislation, which is the best example of a toothless tiger. Nobody is ever prosecuted under the provisions of this legislation and certainly its jurisdiction is so limited as to be almost irrelevant. I hope that, in the near future, decent legislation will be introduced

by either the Minister or the Labor Party, when it succeeds in gaining Government, so that the State will have a proper control of noise.

Hon. M. J. TENNI (Barron River—Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services) (3.19 p.m.), in reply: The honourable member for Everton could not understand the reasons for the proposal in the Bill. My second-reading speech made it quite clear that the internal audit report very strongly recommended an independent chairman and a reduction in the size of the board. That reduction is being brought about by the removal of most—not all—of the public servants. They are not needed on the board. As the honourable member said during the debate, if a problem arises, discussion can take place at ministerial level so that it can be solved. Public servants are very, very busy people and they should not be spending time unnecessarily in these meetings.

From time to time things change. A few years ago, the fibreglass industry was small; it is now very large. The grinding and sanding-back of fibreglass creates a tremendous noise, and it is a problem today. Industry representatives should be able to sort out the problems. The cement industry is another industry that causes many problems. The board can suggest that its representative in that industry should solve the problems without getting involved in writs and other silly things that happen from time to time.

I am in my tenth year as a member of this Assembly. During that time the Labor Party has repeatedly said that quangos should be reduced in number or abolished. That is exactly what I am doing. That is what I did with the Rural Fires Board. That is what I am doing with the Division of Noise Abatement and the Division of Air Pollution Control. It is sensible to reduce the number of persons on boards. At present the Noise Abatement Authority has 15 members. I think that seven could handle its responsibilities. I hope that the honourable member understands the matters to which I have referred.

The member for Ithaca referred to trail bikes. My portfolio is responsible for control of industrial noise. Motor bikes come under the Police portfolio.

The member for Windsor referred to trail bikes and motor bikes. I have the greatest and highest respect for the Queensland Police Force. No-one will convince me otherwise. There is a bad apple in every barrel, and one appears from time to time. The majority of police officers are fantastic people. They do a wonderful job. When problems are experienced with trail bikes in my electorate, a person need only telephone the local police. Most honourable members said that problems occurred mainly on Sundays. Noise pollution officers are not available on Sundays. If they were, it would cost the tax-payers of this State a fortune. Police work 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That is the most sensible authority to handle noise pollution matters because police officers are available at all times.

When I experience a problem with trail bikes in my electorate, I contact the local sergeant, who is in charge. He immediately goes to the trouble spot and disperses the trail bikes. It is almost impossible to catch them. At present the police in Cairns have a couple of trail bikes. If they use them, sometimes they catch the offenders. However, they are very hard to catch. For the benefit and comfort of the people concerned, the police officers endeavour to curtail the noise.

I have a high regard for the police force in Queensland. I suggest to those members who are having trouble that they telephone their local police station. I am sure that the police officers will do everything possible to make life more comfortable for them.

Mr Comben: It really is difficult in Brisbane. Most suburban police stations are closed on Sundays.

Mr TENNI: Of course it is difficult.

Mr Miller: It is no good ringing the local police station to say that the noise made by trail bikes is too loud. If manufacturers were told, "You can't bring a bike out unless it has a sensible noise level", they would overcome the problem.

Mr TENNI: The honourable member probably rode a motor bike in his younger days, as I did. Mufflers on those motor bikes had baffles. I used to do trail bike riding on old BSAs. I used to take out the baffle plates. Anybody could buy a motor bike with all the baffle plates in the world in the muffler, take the bike home and take out the plates overnight. It might reduce the problem to some extent, but it is not the way to solve the problem. If baffle plates are used, power is reduced. Of course, trail bikes are built around power, and that is why they emit noise.

I could make a recommendation to the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police, who has responsibility for that. I could ask him to talk to the manufacturers. Most motor bikes are not manufactured in this country. The Minister could talk to the importers to see what they could do about it. However, it is a troublesome matter.

The member for Windsor said that the Brisbane City Council does not receive enough money from the State Government to do much about the huge area that it must cover. I assure the honourable member that last year the Brisbane City Council injected \$2.8m into fire services in this State. This year the figure is in excess of \$3m. The member for Windsor should suggest to the Lord Mayor and the Labor council that they spend that \$2.8m or \$3m on trail bikes to be donated to the local police stations in Brisbane. That will not cost them \$2.8m; it will cost perhaps a quarter of a million dollars. That would supply all the police stations with the trail bikes that are needed and still leave the council with a great deal of money. I do not know what the council has done with the money that it has not spent in the past.

The Brisbane City Council has illegally taken \$3m from rate-payers. That money should be spent to help the people who are represented in this Chamber by the honourable member for Windsor. That is a very good suggestion. The honourable member should make that suggestion to the Lord Mayor. The money should be spent on buying the trail bikes that I mentioned instead of an overseas trip by the Lord Mayor.

I shall now deal with what the member for Ithaca said about the Milton Tenpin Bowling Centre. The honourable member and I discussed the matter last night, and we agreed that he would forward a letter to me and my officers would investigate the matter that has now been raised in the Chamber. I give an assurance that I will have the matter investigated. I will have to talk to officers in the Brisbane City Council, because I think that the fault lies there. The permit should not have been issued under the circumstances that prevailed at the time. The Milton tennis courts are situated alongside the bowling centre. If the air-conditioning units had been placed on the side facing the tennis courts, the noise from them would not have affected the people in the area. The council did not consider the welfare of the people when it granted the permit.

Mr Miller: You will have to write to the council.

Mr TENNI: I shall do that on the member's behalf. I will send inspectors out there to see whether the problem can be rectified. I will also ask the council to play its part, since it seems that the mistake originated with it.

I thank honourable members for their comments on the Bill.

Motion (Mr Tenni) agreed to.

Committee

Mr Booth (Warwick) in the chair; Hon. M. J. Tenni (Barron River—Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—Repeal of s. 43; Membership of Authority—

Mr MILLINER (3.28 p.m.): The Opposition does not accept the explanation advanced by the Minister in his second-reading speech when introducing the Clean Air

Act Amendment Bill. He indicated that the internal operational audit service had recommended the reduction in the size of the authority. I would like to see its report.

The Opposition does not accept the reasons put forward by the Minister for reducing the number of members on the authority. The Minister did indicate that he was endeavouring to tidy up the quangos. It has been part of Opposition policy for a long time that quangos should be tidied up, but I do not think that what the Minister proposes will achieve it. The Act sets out quite clearly who the members of the authority will be, and I think that the authority as presently constituted is far better than that proposed by the Minister.

The Minister said that public servants are very busy and that they do not like attending meetings. I do not accept that. We could all be busy if we wanted to be, but those people would have accepted their responsibilities when they were placed on the authority.

I mentioned trail bikes only as an example, but my comments certainly generated debate on trail bikes. Quite clearly, that demonstrates the need to have on the authority a representative of the police who can advise on the appropriate measures to be taken in relation to trail bikes. Recommendations could be made by the Police Department on how it views the policing of trail bikes and how the regulations could be improved. One such recommendation to come from the police may be that manufacturers should be required to construct trail bikes with mufflers that reduce the noise. Obviously, the police would be able to advise the authority about the difficulty of policing trail bikes.

The Opposition does not accept the Minister's explanation as to why the membership of the authority is not clearly stipulated in the Bill.

Mr TENNI: I am sorry that the member for Everton does not accept that. The reason is quite simple. He claimed that I said public servants did not like attending the meetings. If I said that, I withdraw it. That is not what I meant. I intended to say that there is no need for them to waste their time there. They have important jobs to do. The matter could be handled from Minister to Minister.

The honourable member for Everton suggested having a police officer present to advise the authority on how to regulate noise from motor bikes. I would not know why he should be there. That would be a waste of his valuable time. As it is, more police officers are needed.

The authority does not handle that problem. It is one that is handled by the Police Department, which I imagine would have a board composed principally of policemen. I would not venture to recommend to the Minister for Police how the problem of trail bikes ought to be handled. I see no sense in having a person making a recommendation to the authority when he has no responsibility for the matter. The Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police and I work very closely together on the problem of trail bikes. Throughout Queensland, we do whatever is possible, particularly at week-ends and during holiday periods.

Mr Lee: You really wouldn't have sufficient inspectors to cover trail bikes throughout Queensland, would you?

Mr TENNI: No. There would be no chance.

The member for Everton suggested naming the people in the legislation. That would be simple; but every time there was a change in emphasis in industry, the legislation would have to be brought before the House for amendment.

The world is changing very quickly. I ask honourable members to consider what is happening to the timber industry. Slowly but surely, metal and fibreglass are taking over. Fibreglass has become the predominant material in boat-building and in playground equipment. The proposal before the Committee allows flexibility in changing the representation on the authority to obtain information about industries that may be creating

problems at the time. It ought not to be necessary to come back to the House and waste its time, at a cost to the tax-payers.

Mr PREST: I cannot believe that I heard the Minister say that public servants have more important things to do than attend meetings. I thought that the Noise Abatement Authority was considered by the Government to be very important. From the Opposition's observation over the years, it appears that the authority has very much been a paper tiger. Opposition members still encounter difficulties. If they approach the police, they are told, "It is not us. The Noise Abatement Authority takes care of that." If they approach the local authority, the response is, "That is the responsibility of the police." The ball seems to be thrown from centre to half-back and then back to the wing. It goes across the field continually, but makes very little progress. When an authority is established, it should comprise the most capable and experienced people available to give advice and to make recommendations for improvements to the Act.

The Minister spoke about making a suggestion to the Minister responsible for police about trail bike noise. The authority should set the standard of noise acceptable from trail bikes. Manufacturers of trail bikes should be issued with a standard with which production vehicles should comply.

It is fully realised by honourable members that the officers who carry out duties associated with this Act are very busy. There are important things to be done, because many problems are associated with duties carried out in the public arena. However, the authorities' responsibilities are also very important, and to ensure that the legislation works efficiently and effectively, the best possible representatives should be appointed to carry out the work of the authority.

Mr TENNI: It is probably the first time honourable members will hear me say this: I fully agree with the comments made by the honourable member for Port Curtis, because they outline exactly what the Government has done.

Representatives on the board of the authority have been drawn from industry. The representatives are engaged in the production of the vehicles that cause the problems and therefore, because the problem concerns private industry specifically, public service representation is not necessary on the board of the authority.

The honourable member for Port Curtis said that the right people should be appointed, and I could not agree more. It is very difficult for people to understand that the legislation governing noise and air pollution does not regulate trail bike riding. However, the honourable member for Port Curtis should not try to tell me that anyone who is experiencing problems with the noise made by trail bikes would not have the brains to go to the police, or to the noise pollution authority officers who would then direct that person to the police. The average person does experience a problem when he tries to direct a complaint to the appropriate authority, but to mitigate the difficulties, my department has issued brochures and I have issued press releases. I hope that the provisions of the Bill will also assist.

Mr MILLINER: The Minister's comments focus upon the point I was trying to make. The Minister said that representatives on the board of the authority will be drawn from industry, and that is a case of Caesar judging Caesar. That is a matter of concern to the Opposition. Six members will be appointed as representatives, and the provisions of the Bill relate to the activities of affected industries. It is therefore conceivable that the six representatives appointed to the board will also be engaged in creating the noise that the legislation is designed to control.

On occasions when the authority will be exercising control, those representatives will be deciding what will happen to a person who has created a nuisance by making too much noise. Members of the Opposition have been very critical in the past of the Law Society, in which solicitors sit in judgment of the conduct of other solicitors. That is not a desirable state of affairs.

The Government should not create a situation in which a noise polluter will judge a noise polluter. The people who have to make a judgment about noise pollution should have nothing to do with the production of vehicles that create noise.

Mr TENNI: In answer to the honourable member for Everton, I point out that the Minister, by virtue of this legislation, has overriding powers. In the 16 months of the administration of my portfolio, it has been my experience that the easiest way to deal with problems that arise from time to time is to talk to representatives or leaders of the industry that is involved. Most industries are members of a representative organisation, such as the Chamber of Mines. It is therefore possible to contact industry representatives and state the problem. Courses of action can be outlined. It can then be put this way: "Fix it up, or the Government will fix it up for you—at your cost."

I am sure that all honourable members will agree that the best way to resolve problems is to find a solution that involves the lowest possible cost, without the necessity for court action, so that employment levels can be maintained and the business will not become insolvent.

During the past 16 months, that is the way I have administered the portfolio of Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services. Because that procedure has proved to be very successful, I am now endeavouring to have the principles of it incorporated in legislation.

Of course, the Bill provides for the appointment of other people, and if the present provisions prove to be inappropriate, the composition of the board can be altered by the appointment of public servants. However, I commend the proposal, and I urge honourable members to give it a go. The Bill provides the most economical way of solving the problem and at the same time of maintaining employment levels.

Mr LEE: I share the Minister's views. Where else can one obtain people with the ability to understand the problems if one does not go to industry itself? Many of them may even have faced the same problem——

Mr Comben interjected.

Mr LEE: The honourable member obviously believes that everybody else thinks the way he does, that everyone else is a crook. It is obvious that the people appointed to the authority will be people of character who will judge the issues on their merits. The idea of appointing people from industry is a very good one. As I said, they could have faced similar problems themselves and would know how to fix them in the most economical way. I congratulate the Minister on this move.

Mr TENNI: I thank the honourable member for Yeronga. He is talking from experience gained over many years. The extraction and earth-moving industries cause problems, and there would be no-one better to appoint to the authority to deal with such problems than someone involved in the industry. The honorable member is dead right; he has hit the nail on the head. I believe honourable members opposite would agree with him. If they did not, they would be agreeing that an industry should be forced to spend millions of dollars or perhaps go out of business. Not long ago a situation arose in which an organisation would have been put out of business if the Government had demanded that it meet certain requirements overnight. An agreement was made and the problem was eventually solved. The organisation did not go out of business, and all its employees are still employed. That is the sort of co-operation to which the honourable member for Yeronga referred, and that is how the Government will continue to operate.

Mr COMBEN: The Minister is saying that the ordinary member of society does not have a say, and that people who are potential noise polluters should have the right to judge themselves. My colleague put it very well: Caesar judging Caesar. What about the people in the community who will be affected? They, not the people who actually make the noise, are the ones who should be represented on the authority to make the decisions the Minister has obviously been making.

The Minister referred to a decision made about a company that would have gone out of business, and that is OK. But what about the people living next door? Did the Minister ask them? How much noise pollution have they had to put up with? How much consideration did the Minister give them? When the Minister appoints to the authority representatives of the people who will be affected, the legislation will be effective. Until that happens, the Minister is looking after only one group in society, and that is certainly not acceptable to the Opposition.

Mr TENNI: The people in the community are the ones who complain to me. The complaints come directly from people who are affected. I then send out an inspector, and he reports back to me. He visits not only the person who lodges the complaint—perhaps he lives next door—but all the people in the vicinity. He then submits an overall report so that I can make sure that the appropriate action is taken. That solves the problem affecting everyone in the vicinity and not just the one person who was game enough to lodge a complaint. The Government wants to solve the problem to the satisfaction of everyone concerned. That is how the system works, and that is how it will continue to work.

Mr COMBEN: Can the Minister tell me how the seven inspectors—I believe that was the number mentioned in the Estimates last year—operate throughout the State? It seems to me that there are too few inspectors. The Minister is trying to make fools of the people listening to him. We are not all as incompetent as the Minister. Perhaps there was some truth in Mr Fast Bucks's pamphlet.

Mr TENNI: Does the honourable member associate himself with Mr Fast Bucks?

Mr COMBEN: What about—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! The Minister is replying. The honourable member will resume his seat.

Mr TENNI: In answer to the first part of the honourable member's question, I think he was right when he said that there are seven inspectors. They are very busy. More inspectors are needed, but if more were appointed that would mean that the honourable member and the average person in the community would have to pay higher taxes. The inspectors manage to get round the State and solve the problems. It might be two or three weeks, or even two months, before they visit a site and send me a report, but in the end most people are satisfied. That is the extent of my reply to the honourable member.

Question—That clause 5, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 45

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

NOES 23

Campbell
Casey
D'Arcy
De Lacy
Fouras
Goss
Hamill
Kruger
Mackenroth
McElligott
McLean
Milliner
Prest
Price
Shaw
Smith
Underwood
Vaughan
Veivers
Warburton
Warner, A. M.
<i>Tellers:</i>
Comben
Palaszczuk

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 6 to 9, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

CLEAN AIR ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 14 November (see p. 2469) on Mr Tenni's motion—

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

Mr MILLINER (Everton) (3.54 p.m.): Many of the issues concerning this Bill have been canvassed fairly well in the debate on the Noise Abatement Act Amendment Bill. Therefore, it is not my intention to take up a great deal of the time of the House by covering the same ground.

I make the point that, once again, this is a Caesar judging Caesar situation. Unfortunately, air is polluted. Under this Bill, polluters judge polluters.

By its very nature, the mining industry, which plays a very valuable role in the economy of this State, contributes to the air pollution in mining areas. I believe that in the main the mining industry acts responsibly and that it is not a bad idea to get advice from that industry. However, I do not believe that a representative from that industry should be a member of an authority that monitors air pollution and enforces the provisions of the Act. If mining people are responsible for some air pollution, it is not desirable to have them on the authority.

For the very reasons that the Opposition canvassed in the debate on the Noise Abatement Act Amendment Bill, it cannot accept the undesirable feature contained in the Bill that leads to Caesar judging Caesar.

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (3.56 p.m.): As the member for Everton said, the Opposition is concerned about the composition of the authority. The authority should comprise the most capable people, people who will ensure that the Clean Air Act works very effectively.

Over a long period numerous complaints are made about air pollution, especially in industrial areas such as my own. Gladstone still suffers from pollution from the power station. That cannot be denied, because the engineer in charge of the area has said that Gladstone would be the most polluted part of Queensland. It is all very well for that engineer to say that, but what does he intend to do about it? He is not engaged simply to make a report, he has to get results for the people.

Only recently my wife engaged painters to paint our house. They discovered a hole in the guttering. The plumber who was called to repair that found that the roof was in a terrible state. Apparently, because recently insufficient rain has fallen to wash the roof to remove the pollution, which no doubt is the alumina powder that at times comes across the town—

Mr Tenni: It would not be the salt air?

Mr PREST: I am not the authority. It was the plumber who got up on the roof. He saw the patches of white powder.

He said that there was just sufficient moisture to help the caustic in that powder eat the roofing material. As a result of that, much work had to be done on the roof. Gladstone did not suffer from that sort of problem before the big industries came to the town, although I must admit that coal-dust coming from the wharf area has been a problem for a long period. The residents of Gladstone have always been told that the Government has no control over that, that it is the responsibility of the Gladstone Harbour Board. Residents have been told that the coal-dust is the price that has to be

paid for progress. I am very happy to be able to say that the relocation of the loading areas has helped alleviate the problem. However, on some occasions coal-dust from the wharves is deposited all over the town.

I am concerned that the authority does not have the teeth that it should have. A little while ago, Frost Enterprises of Taragooola won a large contract to supply limestone or crushed metal. That company was creating a serious problem in a rural residential area in the township of Calliope. The dust problem was cruel, especially to mothers of young children who were trying to dry nappies. The dust problem was present from daylight to dark and even during the night.

The local authority said that it did not have the money to seal the road, which would eliminate the problem. I was told to contact the Main Roads Department. When I contacted the department, I was told, "There is nothing that we can do to help." I said, "What about the trucks; can't they be covered?" The problem was not so much the dust coming off the trucks as the dryness of the road. The people who made the complaint were passed from one side of the field to the other. I contacted the manager of Frost Enterprises, who said, "The road is watered as often as possible"—maybe once a day—"and we are doing our best." The company said that it had no control over the matter. It said that its responsibility stopped at its boundary. I was told that the matter then became the responsibility of the local authority or the Main Roads Department. If one complains to the local authority one will be told to go somewhere else.

I spoke to Chris Wood, the area engineer, and asked, "What can you do about the problem?" He said, "I have no control over the Main Roads Department or the local authority." What problems can be solved if there are no controls over local authorities and the Main Roads Department? The people must put up with the problem. A dust problem in a residential area is a major problem about which all honourable members should be concerned, especially when mothers and young children reside in the area.

The Opposition expresses objection similar to that expressed against the Noise Abatement Act Amendment Bill. I drew those one or two instances to the notice of the Minister to let him know that all in the garden is not rosy when one deals with clean air.

Mr SHAW (Wynnum) (4.3 p.m.): I am concerned about the Bill. I have received information that many of the problems arise because on numerous occasions the Minister has been called upon to reduce the requirements or restrictions on people who will cause problems. Opposition members have referred to such matters as being licences to pollute. That applies mainly to water, but it can be applied justifiably to air. I ask the Minister to give some firm assurances in his reply. The air that we breathe, like the water that we drink, is vitally important to our health.

It is being widely rumoured that, in the past, the Minister has overridden the recommendations of people with expertise, training and qualifications to make decisions as to what is an acceptable standard. That is a matter of very grave concern. The Minister should inform honourable members of the basis on which his decisions are made. I have been informed that organisations in Brisbane are emitting into the air a quantity that is far greater than the quantity that is emitted by motor vehicles. That is only one specific instance in which the health of the people of Brisbane could be endangered. I am not certain who were guilty in that case. However, I could obtain that information for the Minister, if he desires it.

I have been informed that, on occasions, the Minister has interceded on behalf of people to increase greatly the limits by which they can exceed what would usually be regarded as an acceptable standard. The Minister may be able to assure the Opposition that that has not happened.

Mr Tenni: I did not quite hear what you said. Did you refer to lead limits?

Mr SHAW: I shall repeat it, because I think it is important. I have been informed that, because of the way in which it operates, a group of industries is releasing into the air a level of lead which, in effect, would be in excess of that released by motor vehicles.

The harmful aspects of lead air pollution, which is a cause for concern, are well documented. As has been said before, there is a good deal of concern about the reduction in the number of people who are represented on the Air Pollution Council, and the taking away of representation as of right.

Under other legislation, the State Government has the right to nominate a person to be a member of a committee, and the State Government reserves to itself the right to say that that person cannot be replaced without its approval. That is fair enough and I do not argue against it. However, in this instance virtually the opposite is being done. The State Government is saying that people do not have the right to have a representative. That is a very, very dangerous philosophy. It can be easily understood why people are concerned about the State Government saying, "We are going to appoint six people as representatives." If I can be forgiven for repeating a phrase that has been bandied about this morning, the Government is saying, "Please trust me."

Mr GOSS: Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I am informed by the Minister in charge of the Bill that he wishes to terminate this debate. However, I am open to any indication of an arrangement having been made.

Mr DAVIS: I will make the arrangement.

Mr GOSS (Salisbury) (4.8 p.m.): The matter about which I wish to speak briefly is important to my constituents and, no doubt, to all the people of Brisbane and of the State. It relates to the proposal by BHP to build a mini-steel-mill in Queensland. I understand that the site favoured by the company is the old GMH site at Acacia Ridge. It is in my electorate.

For some time, I have been concerned about the effectiveness of the Air Pollution Council. I do not believe that the measures proposed by the Minister will do anything to assist in guarding against the type of pollution that will come from the mill in this city and, indeed, in this State. On 14 November, the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology confirmed in this House that BHP is currently investigating the construction of a rolling-mill on part of the former GMH site at Acacia Ridge. That site is surrounded by long-established residential areas. It is a most unsuitable form of development. I would like an undertaking or assurance from the Minister and the Government that a comprehensive and serious environmental impact study will be undertaken before the project proceeds.

The first stage is not a matter of concern. I understand that it is a merchant mill, which will roll billet feed supplied from Newcastle. Stage 2, however, will include the construction of a steel-scrap-fed electric arc furnace and associated steel-making facilities, as well as a continuous casting plant. As I understand it, that will necessarily create considerable pollution. Although, according to the company, appropriate measures will be taken to control pollution, I am given to understand that one could doubt the full effectiveness of those measures. Inevitably, a substantial amount of pollution will be spread across the south side residential areas of Acacia Ridge, Salisbury, Coopers Plains, Sunnybank, Sunnybank Hills, Runcorn, Runcorn Heights, Algester and as far as Browns Plains. Tens of thousands of people will be affected—people who have established substantial homes and comfortable life-styles for their families in an area that was free of that sort of development. All of that will be affected by the pollution from the mill.

Undoubtedly, reassuring statements will be made to the effect that an environmental impact study will be undertaken or a statement prepared. However, that has become par for the course—part of the public relations outpourings of any major company seeking approval for such a proposal or the Government seeking to approve it. I am

concerned not with the appearance of controlling pollution but with the reality. The Government's track record to date in the control of pollution is not good. The Air Pollution Council has not been effective. I have my doubts that the proposed measures will do other than make it less effective.

The second stage of the mill which, as I say, involves the installation of an electric arc furnace and continuous casting facilities, will, I am assured, result in noxious fumes, including sulphur pollution, pouring out. Because of the prevailing winds in the area, tens of thousands of people will be affected. That area already experiences a pollution problem caused by noxious odours and fumes from the Willawong disposal plant when the winds blow from a certain direction.

The problem will be worsened if the plant is allowed to proceed. Action should be taken to have it located elsewhere. Similar activities are carried on at other industrial estates, and the Government has an obligation to make sure that the plant is located on one of them. The Opposition has no wish to deter employment or investment in Queensland, but surely plants such as this can be situated elsewhere than in the middle of a long-established residential area.

Hon. M. J. TENNI (Barron River—Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services) (4.13 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. The member for Everton referred to the mining industry. I intend recommending that a representative from the Chamber of Mines be on the authority. Honourable members opposite are concerned about industry representation on the authority. I restate that it is better for industry to be given the opportunity to police itself. The success or otherwise of that policy will be monitored through the frequency of public complaints made to my office. The Government retains the right to take further action if it becomes necessary. In my experience, that is highly unlikely.

The honourable member for Port Curtis spoke about pollution in his electorate. I am sure that he would appreciate my appointing a representative of the mining industry. The air pollution problems in his area are, generally speaking, not capable of easy solution. It is a matter of negotiation and of maintaining the viability of industries in the area.

The member for Wynnum contributed to the debate. Air pollution problems are generally not capable of easy solution. Usually it is a matter of discretion and conciliation. The Air Pollution Council has a number of highly skilled scientists who continually monitor emissions. If they reach levels of concern, particularly if levels of lead are of concern, the Government will be advised immediately and action will be taken immediately. That has not happened so far. The emissions seem to have been kept at reasonable levels.

The honourable member for Salisbury mentioned the BHP mill and the discussions that will be taking place between the authority and representatives from BHP with a view to minimising pollution problems as much as possible if the proposal goes ahead. It should be borne in mind that the industry concerned will create employment opportunities locally. Common sense must therefore prevail at all times.

I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate.

Motion (Mr Tenni) agreed to.

Committee

Mr Booth (Warwick) in the chair; Hon. M. J. Tenni (Barron River—Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of s. 8; Air Pollution Council—

Mr MILLINER (4.16 p.m.): The reasons why the Opposition does not support clause 5 of the Bill have already been canvassed. However, I point out that the Opposition

is not opposed to industry being represented on the council. On the previous council, two representatives were appointed as occupiers of scheduled premises nominated by the Queensland Confederation of Industry Limited. As the Queensland Confederation of Industry Limited is an appropriate representative body, the Opposition has no objection to representatives being drawn from that organisation and appointed to the council.

The Opposition's main concern is that if the council has six members and a chairman, six representatives on the council could come from industry. Areas of representational interest have not been specified in the clauses of the Bill. The Opposition is therefore concerned about the composition of the council—

Mr Shaw: It could be a tame-cat council.

Mr MILLINER: As the honourable member for Wynnum has pointed out, it could be a tame-cat council; as I have pointed out several times today, it is a situation in which Caesar is judging Caesar. That is an undersirable outcome. However, I stress that the Opposition is not opposed to representation of industry, but it does oppose control of the activities of the council being exercised predominantly by industry.

Mr TENNI: I thank the honourable member for Everton for his contribution to the debate. I inform the honourable member that the composition of the council will be monitored from time to time. If a change to the composition of the council becomes necessary, the provisions of the Act give the Minister adequate power to review appointments.

Question—That clause 5, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 41		NOES, 22	
Ahern	Lester	Burns	
Alison	Lickiss	Campbell	
Austin	Lingard	D'Arcy	
Bailey	Littleproud	Davis	
Borbidge	McKechnie	Fouras	
Chapman	McPhie	Goss	
Cooper	Menzel	Hamill	
Elliott	Miller	Kruger	
FitzGerald	Newton	Mackenroth	
Gibbs, I. J.	Powell	McElligott	
Glasson	Randell	McLean	
Goleby	Row	Milliner	
Gunn	Stephan	Prest	
Gygar	Stoneman	Price	
Harper	Tenni	Shaw	
Harvey	Turner	Underwood	
Henderson	Wharton	Vaughan	
Hinze		Veivers	
Innes		Warburton	
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>	Warner, A. M.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Knox	Kaus		Comben
Lee	Neal		Palaszczuk

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 6 to 11, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Mr SIMPSON: I rise to a point of order. Because that was the first division on the Bill, the division bells should have rung for four minutes, but they rang for only two minutes. I should like that to be recorded.

Third Reading

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

FILMS (CENSORSHIP AND REVIEW) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL**Second Reading—Resumption of Debate**

Debate resumed from 14 November (see p. 2468) on Mr McKechnie's motion—
“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Mr UNDERWOOD (Ipswich West) (4.26 p.m.): This legislation has finally come before the Parliament. The Government knew about it in July last year. On 13 July last year, a press statement headed “New uniform video censorship system” was released by the Federal Attorney-General following a meeting of the Commonwealth and State Ministers in charge of censorship. It is interesting to note that all Ministers, including the then Queensland Minister (Mr Elliott), were in favour of the system being adopted. The statement reads—

“A new uniform system of video tape censorship classification was today agreed to in Brisbane by a meeting of Commonwealth and State Ministers with censorship responsibilities.

It is designed to ensure maximum freedom for adults to view what they wish in the privacy of their homes and at the same time give guidance to consumers as to what they are buying or hiring and place some limits on what can be openly displayed or sold to children.

The main elements in the system, which were unanimously agreed to by the Ministers present for recommendation to their respective Governments are:

- (1) Imported video tapes for home use to be no longer subject to compulsory registration by the Film Censorship Board;
- (2) Video tapes for sale or hire to be classified at the request of the importer, distributor or retailer by the Film Censorship Board;
- (3) The classification standards to be applied to be the same as for cinemas—vis ‘G’, ‘NRC’, ‘M’ and ‘R’—but with a further category ‘X’, to be added for stronger material which would be refused cinema showing. Only child pornography and similar very extreme material would be refused classification altogether;
- (4) The States to pass laws imposing appropriate points of sale restrictions (in particular no sale to minors) and for ‘R’ and ‘X’ classified material.”

The names of the various Ministers representing the various States and the Commonwealth were then listed. One of the Ministers listed was the then Queensland National Party Minister (Mr Elliott).

I emphasise these words in the press statement under the hand of the Federal Attorney-General—

“The main elements were unanimously agreed to by the Ministers present.”

One of the elements is .3, classification standards to be applied include a further X category. On behalf of the Queensland Government, the then Minister in charge of the arts, agreed to the X category on 13 July 1983.

Mr McKECHNIE: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member said that the Government agreed with the recommendation. It was only a recommendation to the Government, and Mr Elliott can say whether he personally agreed to it. The Government did not agree to it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! Will the honourable member for Ipswich West accept the Minister's explanation now?

Mr UNDERWOOD: The Minister misheard what I said.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the honourable member to accept the Minister's explanation.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I did not say that.

Mr Burns: He doesn't have to accept the Minister's explanation.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Ipswich West to accept the Minister's explanation.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I will accept it.

Mr Burns: He doesn't have to accept it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member for Lytton continues to argue with the Chair, I will deal with him.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Ipswich West to accept the Minister's explanation.

Mr UNDERWOOD: What I said was that the then Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts agreed to the recommendation on behalf of his Government. I did not say that the Government had agreed to it, and I think that there is a difference.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister should accept the honourable member's explanation. I call the honourable member for Ipswich West.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The State Government knew more than 12 months ago that steps would be taken to introduce an X rating for video tapes.

On 20 December last year, the honourable member for Cooroora (Mr Simpson) asked a question of the present Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts in these terms—

“(1) Is he aware that pornographic video tapes are being offered for sale or resale in Queensland?”

“(2) Will the Government investigate the matter with a view to stopping the sale and advertising of pornographic video tapes?”

Mr McKechnie answered as follows—

“The problem of pornographic video tapes is one which continues to receive close consideration by Commonwealth and State Ministers responsible for censorship controls. At a meeting of those Ministers last July—”

meaning July 1983—

“certain broad principles were agreed to on censorship control of home-use video tapes.”

By making a statement by way of a point of order, the Minister has contradicted himself. “Hansard” shows that certain broad principles were agreed to and, for the benefit of honourable members, I have read out those four principles.

Mr McKECHNIE: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Ipswich West suggested that I misled the House because what I said a moment ago was different from what I said last December. I have always made it clear to the House that the Queensland Government does not condone the X rating, and I ask the honourable member to accept that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has made a valid point of order and I ask the honourable member for Ipswich West to accept his explanation.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I accept the comment of the Minister that the Queensland Government does not now condone the X rating.

However, I will continue reading further from "Hansard" The Minister had the opportunity to correct what appeared there. The Minister's answer reads—

"At a meeting of those Ministers last July, certain broad principles were agreed to on censorship control of home-use video tapes."

The point I am leading up to will become clear very shortly. The answer continued—

"The first steps to be taken in terms of implementing these proposals refer specifically to changes to Commonwealth Government legislation, and current indications are that such amendments might be in place by early 1984."

I remind honourable members that we are now in the latter stages of 1984.

Mr McKechnie interjected.

Mr UNDERWOOD: The Minister may laugh, but by the time I have finished reading some of his statements, he will be laughing on the other side of his face. The answer continued—

"Each State will have to legislate in its own right to impose appropriate point of sale restrictions. State Government policy in this particular area is yet to be determined, but I do want to state at this juncture that I am somewhat concerned at the unfair competition that any public showing of video tapes presents to the motion picture exhibiting industry. My advisers are closely examining all aspects of the matter and I would want to be able to look at the situation with a full appreciation of the rights of all concerned before moving further.

The honourable member may be aware that, at the present time, legislative control of the advertising and sale of pornographic video tapes is covered by the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Act 1931-1978, which is administered by my colleague the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police."

That statement by the Minister must be compared to the irrational, politically biased, politically motivated statements that he has made in recent months. Such a comparison quite clearly shows a demonstrable change in the attitude of the Queensland Government towards this whole issue. I point out very strongly that this demonstrable change has been brought about by the advent of the Federal election.

Mr McKECHNIE: I rise to a point of order. I find offensive the remark that I have had a change of attitude purely because a Federal election has been called. Whilst I have been a Minister, my attitude has been constant. I ask that the remark be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister finds the remarks offensive and asks that they be withdrawn. I take his point of order.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I withdraw.

What I am comparing are his statements of some time ago and his statements now. It is quite clear to anyone who can understand the Queen's English that the presentation of the Government's policy has definitely changed.

Mr McKECHNIE: I rise to a point of order. I said a moment ago that my attitude has not changed. The honourable member withdrew that statement and then repeated it. I ask for an unqualified withdrawal.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has asked for an unqualified withdrawal.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I give an unqualified withdrawal, but what I am pointing out—I will repeat it—is that, by comparing the Minister's answer in the House on 20 December 1983 to the press release of 13 July 1983, successive press releases, recent ministerial statements and answers to questions in the House, there has been a definite change in the presentation of the Government view. What is wrong with saying that? It is true!

Mr McKechnie: No, it is not true.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Either the Minister cannot understand English or I cannot. I suggest it must be the Minister.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have to inform the House that I do not intend to let this debate deteriorate into a series of points of order. I suggest that the member who is addressing the House moderate his terms to such an extent that the Minister is not provoked into taking points of order. I suggest that the Minister answer the member in his reply.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Mr Deputy Speaker, how am I not to provoke the members of the National Party in this House?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr UNDERWOOD: With respect to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, the only way not to provoke them is to agree with them 100 per cent. It seems that, in this debate, pointing out inconsistencies in the attitude of the Minister is causing points of order to be taken.

Mr Borbidge: Tell us your excuses.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I am telling the truth.

On 2 April 1984, the Minister issued the following press release—

“The Arts Minister, Peter McKechnie said today that he, the Attorney-General, Neville Harper and the Police Minister, Bill Glasson would study the recommendations of the Censorship Ministers Meeting in Sydney this Friday.

Mr McKechnie will represent the Queensland Government at the meeting.

He will then consult with Mr Harper and Mr Glasson before making urgent recommendations on video censorship to Cabinet.”

I see the Minister grinning like a Cheshire cat. I am exposing his role in this whole business.

The press statement continues—

“Mr McKechnie said that the Censorship Ministers Meeting was to have been held earlier this year.

‘Queensland was disappointed that the conference has been delayed’.

‘However, I want to work in consultation with the other State Ministers to seek a solution’, Mr McKechnie said.”

After a lapse from early December 1983 until April 1984, the Government finally formed a committee to consider urgent recommendations. On 6 April, a few days later, the Minister issued the following press statement—

“Compulsory classification of all video cassettes for sale and hire is proposed for Queensland.

Arts Minister, Peter McKechnie, told the Censorship Ministers’ Meeting in Sydney today, that Queensland favoured Commonwealth classification for the video industry.

He said it was gratifying that the majority of States agreed with Queensland’s stand.”

I suppose one expects the Minister to turn the argument round and say that everybody is agreeing with him. I suggest that at that stage Queensland was agreeing with everybody else.

The press release further states—

“ ‘Compulsory classification has many advantages and would solve a number of existing problems.’

‘First, it provides a comprehensive, understandable and consistent guide, similar to television and cinemas, for consumers and retailers.’

‘Compulsory classification also means law enforcement can proceed on an orderly basis.’

Mr McKechnie said he had already met with representatives of the video retailing industry and had agreed that compulsory classification was a top priority.

He said the classifications would be determined by the Commonwealth Film Censorship Board based on a set of standards agreed to by Ministers today.

‘I will discuss these standards with the Attorney-General, Neville Harper, and Police Minister, Bill Glasson, at Cabinet on Monday.’

‘It is a matter of urgency to introduce legislation for the video industry.’

However, he said, it was almost certain the Queensland Government would not tolerate X-rated videos and would reserve the right to decide on some R-rated material.

Mr McKechnie said ‘his stomach turned’ after he and other Ministers had viewed a sample of X-rated videos and those that had not received a classification.

‘It is up to the respective States to determine what they allow to show and hire, but Queensland will not allow this obscene and violent material to be obtainable and risk having it available for children to see’, Mr McKechnie said.”

Although the Minister puts out a great deal of repetitious rubbish, from time to time some pertinent matters are to be found in them. The Minister is always talking about the urgent need to do certain things. He uses relatively friendly language towards his interstate and Federal counterparts.

On 9 April, the following press release was issued—

“State Cabinet today agreed to ban ‘X’ rated and unclassified videos from sale and hire in Queensland.

This was decided following a report presented by Arts Minister, Peter McKechnie, on the Censorship Ministers Meeting in Sydney last Friday.

Mr McKechnie said the majority of States had agreed to adopt a compulsory classification system regarding the sale and hire of videos. They also agreed to a set of guidelines to determine these classifications.

Cabinet instructed Mr McKechnie to prepare legislation to be introduced in the next session of Parliament, outlining controls for the video industry.

‘In addition to banning “X” rated and unclassified videos, we will also reserve the right to ban some “R” rated videos if they do not meet the accepted guidelines in Queensland’, he said.”

Is it any wonder that the information contained in most ministerial statements is not printed in newspapers? It is just repetition.

The Minister wrote a letter to the editor of the “Whitsunday Times”. It is dated 15 May 1984. I am not sure what prompted the Minister to write the letter. It states—

“Dear Sir,

Your story on videos (Whitsunday Times May 9) contained a number of inaccuracies which need correcting.

It appears some people are under the impression that Queensland intends to go it alone in video classification.”

That is in stark contrast to what the Minister said recently. It continues—

“Nothing could be further from the truth.”

I repeat that that statement is in stark contrast to what the Minister said recently. Despite what the Minister tried to tell the House a few moments ago, he has changed his opinion.

The letter further states—

“At the recent meeting of Censorship Ministers in Sydney, I spoke in support of introducing a compulsory classification system for videos throughout Australia. Some States initially opposed it, but the concept was adopted by the meeting.

Ministers agreed that they would use this compulsory classification system determined by the Commonwealth Film Censorship Board, as the basis for their respective legislation.

I reported the decisions of the meeting to Cabinet, and was instructed to prepare video legislation for Queensland.

I issued a press statement saying it was unlikely Queensland would accept ‘X’ rated and unclassified videos and would probably reserve the right to ban some ‘R’ rated movies.

This view was endorsed by Cabinet and will be recommended in the proposed legislation which I hope—”

the emphasis is on the word “hope”—

“will go before Parliament in the August session of Parliament.”

The August session is nearly over. On 15 May the Minister told the readers of the “Whitsunday Times” that he hoped that the legislation would go before Parliament in the August session of Parliament.

Mr FitzGerald: It is.

Mr UNDERWOOD: It just made it. I am making a comparison, so the honourable member for Lockyer can hold on to his green frogs and I will show him how the Minister’s statements have changed and how his attitude has changed.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I have 74 minutes left. The Opposition has a very good argument that shows the hypocrisy and double standards of the National Party. The Minister’s attitude to this whole issue has changed since the notification of the forthcoming Federal election.

Mr Borbidge: Who controls the Customs Regulations?

Mr UNDERWOOD: The Federal Government. I am sorry that the honourable member did not know that.

Mr Borbidge: Tell us what they have been doing.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I will get to that. I will tell National Party members a few home truths. They should not get too noisy on that side of the Chamber; I will wipe the smile off the honourable member’s face.

It goes on—

“The Queensland Government is treating as a priority—”
and I emphasise the word “priority”—

“the need to give both the video retailers and police some direction for the industry.

The Queensland Government has co-operated with other States and the Federal Government. We have showed our hand (i.e. through opposing violent and extremely

explicit videos and proposing heavy fines for offenders) and the public response has been very encouraging.”

I point out that that is the attitude of all the Australian States and the Commonwealth.

It continues—

“Officers of my Department and personal staff would have been only too happy to have given you the above information before running your sensational and misleading story.

Signed,

The Hon. P. R. McKechnie, M.L.A., Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts.”

I will quote from another press release on 13 August. The August session was getting closer. It reads as follows—

“Queensland’s Arts Minister, Peter McKechnie, today called for tougher Federal controls on the entry of hard-core pornography into Australia.

Mr McKechnie accused the ALP and the Democrats of being too soft on pornography.

‘It’s sheer hypocrisy for the Democrats to talk about Federal legislation controlling pornography when it was their own leader, Senator Chipp who as Customs Minister, opened the floodgates’.

He said it was sheer nonsense to suggest that the new Federal legislation would control pornography.

‘It will merely ban child pornography, bestiality and incitement to terrorism.’

‘The only thing that has changed is that material that used to be classified “X” will now be given an “R” rating’, he said.

‘Hard-core pornography will still be freely available in States such as New South Wales and Victoria.’ ”

Mr Lingard: Those are Labor States.

Mr UNDERWOOD: They certainly are Labor States. I point out that they have recently been Liberal and National Party States as well, and the position has not changed since the election of the Labor Government in those States. In fact, it is the other State Labor Governments that caused the banning of X-rated material. Queensland has followed that lead.

The press release goes on—

“Mr McKechnie said Queensland would not go along with the ‘anything goes’ attitude of New South Wales, in particular.”

I am afraid that the Minister is totally incorrect there.

It continued—

“New film and video legislation to be introduced in the August session of Parliament would lay down firm guidelines to protect the public and the retailers.

‘X’ rated movies will not be allowed and ‘R’ rated movies will be reviewed.

The aim of censorship is to protect young people until they are old enough to make their own decisions.”

Government members should listen to what I am saying. This Minister has been telling us ad nauseum over the last month or two how worried he is about young children. I will read what the Minister said in that article—

“ Queensland—”

I presume he is referring to the Queensland Government—

“was quite happy for the sordid pornography industry to remain over the border at Tweed Heads in Neville Wran’s territory.”

Fancy the Minister saying that! He appears on television and tells everybody how concerned he is about the children and young people of this country, and this State in particular, yet it is in black and white, in his own press release, that he does not care what happens to people, to use his words, on the other side of the border.

Mr Veivers: It shows it is all political; the whole motivation of this is political.

Mr UNDERWOOD: That is correct. People travel across the border of south-east Queensland as though it does not exist. Gold Coast residents have free access to New South Wales.

The Minister is condemned by his own words. The smile has been wiped from his face. He is not so jovial now, because he has been caught out and exposed.

Mr McKECHNIE: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member said that I have been caught out and exposed. I make it very clear that I have always stated that pornography should be banned in Australia, including New South Wales. However, if the New South Wales Government will not live up to its responsibilities, I cannot do anything about it. I ask that that comment be withdrawn.

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

Mr UNDERWOOD: Because of the noise, Mr Deputy Speaker, I could not hear your ruling.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ruled that there was no point of order.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Thank you.

Mr McPhie: Are you in favour of pornography or not?

Mr UNDERWOOD: The Labor Party does not support pornography. Sadly for the Minister, the Opposition is not opposing the legislation.

I deal now with a question headed “Pornographic Video Movies” which was asked of the Minister on 20 September 1984.

Mr FitzGerald: Is this going to be a speech of quotes?

Mr UNDERWOOD: I am pointing out the hypocrisy of National Party members. It is sickening to listen to them carry on. The double standards displayed by Government members are absolutely unbelievable.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask all honourable members to keep the debate within the context of the Bill and in accordance with the dignity of the House. I ask the member for Ipswich West to continue with his speech.

Mr UNDERWOOD: In December last year the Minister announced that he was treating the matter as one to be attended to by the Government and was having meetings with his ministerial colleagues. In April, the Government was treating the matter urgently. In May it was claimed that the legislation would be ready for the August session of Parliament. On 20 September 1984, when the August session of Parliament was well under way, the Minister was asked the following question by the member for Gympie (Mr Stephan)—

“In asking a question of the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts, I refer to the great concern displayed by many parents, particularly those with young children, regarding pornographic video movies and I now ask: What

action is he prepared to take to protect the young people and the public from this type of ruthless exploitation?"

The Minister replied—

"The honourable member's question is very timely, because this morning the Minister for Justice, the Minister for Police and I had a discussion aimed at trying to finalise the details of plans to try to overcome some of the major problems of pornographic video movies in this State.

If the Federal Government was serious about attacking this problem, it could act today. Because it can act under the customs regulations, it does not have to consult the States. It was some years ago, at the time of a Liberal Government, that Senator Chipp opened the floodgates in that area. So Senator Chipp and his Democrats should not say too much about pornographic literature at the moment."

He continued in an aggressive manner. There is a demonstrable difference between the statements made earlier this year and last year, and those being made now, before an election.

A matter of urgency—one that the Government has said puts children, family morality and the life-style of Queenslanders at risk—was still being dealt with on 20 September 1984. On 13 July 1983—some 15 months before—the Government knew that it would have to legislate. Quite frankly, the Queensland Government has not been fair dinkum on the issue. Today is 22 November, and we are only now debating the second reading of the Bill. This is a matter of urgency! Where does the National Party stand? It could have introduced the Bill early this year or last year.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: It could have done it five years ago.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Yes, it could have done something much earlier. It is not fair dinkum about it. It is playing politics.

Mr Davis: That is the reason why Tony Elliott was sacked. He wouldn't bow to jackbooted Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

Mr UNDERWOOD: It is quite clear that the member for Cunningham (Mr Elliott) upset the Premier in some way. I understand that one of the problems was that Mr Elliott did not vote for Mr Gunn in the Deputy Premiership ballot. His other problem was that, because he was doing a good job as the Minister responsible for national parks, he was considered to be a greenie.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask honourable members to debate the matter in hand. If that is done, as I said before, the dignity of the House will be maintained.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I was pleased to note that, in his answer, the Minister pointed out that Mr Chipp was then a Liberal Minister. The Queensland Minister is attempting strenuously to dissociate himself from the actions of Mr Chipp when he says that Mr Chipp was responsible for opening the floodgates.

I point out to the Minister and his colleagues, as well as to all honourable members, that Mr Chipp was the Minister for Customs and Excise in a Liberal/National Party Government, or the Liberal/Country Party Government, as it was known in those days. It is interesting to note in the censorship debate in Federal Parliament on 22 February 1971, as the report appears in Federal "Hansard", the measure of support Mr Chipp received not only from Liberal Party members and Labor Party members but also from National Party members. The Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts has tried to hoodwink the people of Queensland into believing that the National Party would not have a bar of the activities of Mr Chipp in the administration of his portfolio.

At that time, the National Party, as much as anybody else in Federal Parliament, supported Mr Chipp; so let it be on National Party members' heads as well, if the Minister's contention is accepted that Mr Chipp was responsible for opening the floodgates.

Let us examine the speech of Mr Bob Katter Senior, the Federal member for Kennedy and member of the National Country Party at the Federal level.

Mr McPhie: He will be returned at the next election to hold that seat.

Mr UNDERWOOD: The people in the electorate of Kennedy will decide that matter, but I suspect that he will not be returned, because the National Party has been exposed for being hypocritical on so many issues.

However, I turn now to the remarks of Mr Katter. Honourable members should bear in mind that he is a National Party member who the Minister claims was against the legislation. His opening remarks in the censorship debate, which was the first censorship debate that had taken place for many decades, were—

“I commend the Minister for Customs and Excise (Mr Chipp), on the fact that the statement we are discussing has been approved generally.”

Mr Katter commended the Minister, and he went on——

Mr Stephan: How old is it?

Mr UNDERWOOD: As I said before, the date in this copy of “Hansard” is 22 February 1971. The trouble with the Government members is that they are either asleep, dense or absent-minded. The honourable member for Gympie has obviously not been following the comments of the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts, who has been saying that the Federal Act and the Minister responsible for the administration of the Act at that time (Mr Chipp) are the reasons why this debate is taking place today.

It is relevant, therefore, to discover the attitude of the National Country Party of the day. The quote to which I have referred indicates that the National Country Party supported the legislation on that occasion. I point out to Government members that, at that time, the leader of the National Party in the House was Mr Katter, so I hope that Government members have understood. He went on to say—

“One hears comments and gauges the general feeling of a mixed community when one deals with the mining community at Mount Isa and then the farming community in the lower parts of the Kennedy electorate. One obtains a cross-section of opinion. There is general approval of the policies of the present Minister for Customs and Excise.”

I urge honourable members to listen to this, because these are the words of the leader of the National Country Party in the debate that caused the opening of the floodgates, which, according to the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts, is the reason for our being here today—

“His policy of censorship is sane, moderate and acceptable.”

The honourable member for Kennedy (Mr Katter) then said—

“We come back to this matter of censorship set by community standards. I think the Minister pays a tribute to the Australian community by the standard he has set.”

What have Government members to say about that? The smiles have gone from their faces. I notice that the honourable member for Surfers Paradise has disappeared. I hope that for his benefit I do not have to repeat the passage I have quoted. I believe he has some intelligence.

Mr McKechnie: Would the honourable member like me to comment, or not?

Mr UNDERWOOD: The Minister can respond in his reply to the issue I have raised. However, I am happy to take interjections.

Mr McKechnie: If you take interjections—I think it is appropriate to point out that the standard of pornography in those days cannot be compared with the standard of

pornography that exists now. No comparison can be made at all. That is why greater control needs to be exercised by the Federal Government at the customs level.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I find that argument incredible. It is an argument that is totally unrelated to the argument the Minister presented as to why we are debating this issue today. He blamed Mr Chipp for opening the floodgates, and I have demonstrated how the National Country Party and the more conservative side of politics supported the introduction of that particular Act.

I do not disagree with the comments that the Minister has made about the level of activity in the production of films. It is certainly hotter now than it was in 1971—

Mr Borbidge: There were no videos in 1971.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I find that statement very surprising, and I would doubt the veracity of it. Video films had been invented by 1971, although they may not have been for general exhibition.

Mr Davis: And they were the same films.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Government members have been caught out. They have tried to argue a way out of the problem by changing tack. They have been caught out because they have used the wrong argument.

I turn now to Mr Donald Cameron, another critic of what has been happening recently on the Federal scene. As Liberal member for Griffiths, Mr Cameron said—

“The Minister certainly is taking a step forward and he is doing it seriously, but he moves in accordance with what he believes to be the public standards of the day; what the public is bound to accept.”

The member for Deakin (Mr Jarman) said—

“I understand that this debate on censorship is the first that has taken place in this chamber for over 30 years and I commend the Minister for Customs and Excise (Mr Chipp) for the realistic approach which he has taken to this problem.”

Mr Lingard: Why don't you look at what Don Cameron said in the Federal House in June 1984.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I just referred to that. The honourable member is supposed to be a schoolteacher, an educated man. I have shown that Mr Cameron changed his views. I pointed out what a hypocrite he is.

Mr Lingard: June 1984.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I just told the honourable member that he has reversed his opinion.

Next is Mr Corbett, a well-known, long-standing, reputable member of the National Party and the former member for Maranoa. He made a lengthy speech in which he said—

“... I would hope that the Minister would proceed with due caution in his approach to this subject. He has received a lot of commendation for the liberalisation that he has introduced to censorship, and in some respects I believe he has approached it in a fair and reasonable way.”

On his own admission, Mr Corbett adopted a very conservative approach to the subject, but he still said that Mr Chipp's approach had been fair and reasonable.

I turn now to Mr MacKellar, the member for Warringah, who said—

“I would like to join a lot of other honourable members on both sides of this House in congratulating the Minister for Customs and Excise (Mr Chipp). I congratulate him on 2 counts: Firstly, for his decision to provide the opportunity for

a debate on censorship, which I consider is a topic of great importance to all people in the community, whether they are aware of it or not—I believe many are not aware of the true implications of it—and, secondly, for the substance of his statement. I believe that the debate is important because it has provided an opportunity for members to put forward ideas and suggestions which presumably reflect their own and, to a certain extent at least, their elector's viewpoints with respect to attitudes towards censorship."

Mr Davis: Was that Mr MacKellar?

Mr UNDERWOOD: Yes.

Mr Davis: He was the man with the television set.

Mr UNDERWOOD: That is right.

Mr Davis: He knows all about television sets.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Yes, he is an expert on television sets in more ways than one.

I turn now to Mr Hamer.

Mr FitzGerald: What are your views?

Mr UNDERWOOD: The honourable member has either not been in the Chamber, been asleep or been too long at the bar. I have already expressed my views on this.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I ask the honourable member to address the Chair more frequently and not to address his remarks across the Chamber.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order. I object to the allegation that I have been at the bar all afternoon. "Hansard" will record that I have been here all afternoon interjecting on the member. I find the remark offensive and demeaning. It is untrue, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I withdraw, but he was rather blurry and he made some very inane comments.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw without qualification.

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order.

Mr UNDERWOOD: If censorship is to be retained——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have said before that I will not allow this debate to develop into a series of points of order on frivolous matters. I consider that the matter has been dealt with in relation to the remark made. I ask the honourable member for Ipswich West not to provoke the Chamber by qualifying his withdrawal. He will withdraw unequivocally.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I do so accordingly. I never provoke the National Party members; they provoke me.

Mr Hamer said—

"If then we are to retain censorship, as I am sure we should, I think the only sensible policy is that of the Minister in his attempt to move with the shifting of public opinion."

So there we have——

Mrs Chapman: What year is this?

Mr UNDERWOOD: How many times do I have to explain to the dummies on the Government side, Mr Deputy Speaker?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member is not obliged to take interjections.

Mrs Chapman: That was in 1971.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Oh, look, I suggest that the honourable member read the pulls tomorrow morning. I do not intend to go over the same ground for every member of the National Party who will not listen.

I have just cited a number of National and Labor Party members who endorsed Mr Chipp for doing what the Queensland Minister has condemned. The Minister has not been honest. He has tried to blame just the members of the Liberal and Labor Parties. I have placed the facts on the record. If that is the argument that the Minister is using, the National Party is in there swimming with us as well. Now let me look at what is happening—

Mr Lee: Don't rush. You have another 53 minutes.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I thank the honourable member.

I now mention someone who is not on the Liberal, National or Labor Party ticket. He expressed certain views on the current flood of pornography into the country, on who was responsible for the flood and who has or has not taken action about it.

A certain letter to the editor in "The Courier-Mail" of 13 August 1984 was titled by the editor, "Legislation will put brake on pornography". It was signed by a well-known conservative in Queensland politics, namely, Michael Macklin, the Senate candidate for the Democrats, and then senator for Queensland. He wrote—

"In the present furore over the import of pornography most people have entirely missed the point.

Whereas pornography has been flooding into this country at an alarming rate, the new Federal Government legislation will put a brake on it.

Where once we had the worst kind of dehumanising material available to anyone, such videos are now banned; many former R-rated videos are now X-rated.

Western Australia has banned X-rated and other states are expected to follow. All videos will now be classified and prominently labelled with their given rating. R and X-rated videos cannot be sold or hired to anyone under the age of 18 years and this will be strictly supervised.

At least the new legislation makes a start in dealing with the problem in a responsible way, unlike the former government which completely ignored the issue and even insisted that prevailing community standards did not warrant legislation preventing this material from entering the country."

It should be noted that Western Australia led the way.

These are very interesting comments. In laying the blame at the feet of the National and Liberal Parties, he went so far as to say that the National and Liberal Parties refused to do anything about it. I cannot be asked to withdraw that statement, because it was Mr Macklin who said it, and he should know, shouldn't he?

A Government Member: He is one of yours.

Mr UNDERWOOD: He votes with the conservative parties most of the time. He is not one of ours. The honourable member should not be mistaken about that.

The letter to the editor continues—

"Once a video has been classified then the point of sale or hire becomes a State Government responsibility. It is up to state governments to ensure the provisions of the new legislation are enforced.

But the fact remains that government legislation won't stop the spread of pornography because it still pours in via a black market, goes underground and falls into the hands of adolescents and children.

The legislation at least gives the community a healthy breathing space, while the final control must rest firmly with parents."

Those were the views expressed by Michael Macklin. He put the blame right at the feet of the National and Liberal Parties.

Mr Simpson: Who controls the Customs Act?

Mr UNDERWOOD: Until 18 months ago the National and Liberal Parties controlled it and, before that, they controlled it for between 30 and 35 years. What did they do about it? Nothing! In the words of the Minister, the National and Liberal Parties opened the floodgates and that is why we are debating the matter today.

Mr Lingard: You would not even know some of the terms used in the videos.

Mr UNDERWOOD: It is interesting to hear the honourable member for Fassifern virtually tell us that he is an expert on X-rated videos. How many has he seen? Has he been to every hotel in Queensland to look at them?

Recently I was shocked when the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts made his extraordinary ministerial statement. Sometimes I think the Minister should be censored. He may not have noticed that, above him, the public gallery was packed with young people. He made a ministerial statement after he had attended in Sydney a meeting of Ministers responsible for censorship.

Mr Lingard: He has to explain them because you don't know the technical terms.

Mr UNDERWOOD: That is not the point that I am making. The honourable member for Fassifern should go back to the bar, as well.

Mr Burns: All you blokes are in the movies.

Mr UNDERWOOD: The honourable member for Lytton knows what he is talking about.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I remind the honourable member for Ipswich West that the Bill under debate is the Films (Censorship and Review) Acts Amendment Bill. I have allowed a wide-ranging debate and the honourable member has referred to comments by many people. I ask him to return to the Bill under discussion.

Mr UNDERWOOD: In the ministerial statement, the Minister referred to this legislation. He stated—

"These Governments, which claim to be concerned about families gave their stamp of approval to movies which highlight the following—"

and he listed five examples of explicit sexual acts. He read them out in front of a gallery packed with children. The Minister claimed in his statement that he was sickened and disgusted by the type of material that some Governments want to legalise in Australia.

The Minister jumps from one argument to another. Because a Federal election is imminent, he has taken an aggressive stance on this issue. At one time the Government supported it.

Mr McKechnie: The Government has never supported it.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I refer the Minister again to his answer in this place on 20 December 1983. I will not argue about that any more, but he may wish to comment in his reply.

Probably anyone who reads "Hansard" will find my speech boring, but I have taken pains to point out the absolute lethargy of the National Party Government in dealing with this issue.

In a press release, the Minister made the extravagant statement that pornographers were like drug-dealers and had no conscience about ruthlessly exploiting young people. If he believes that to be the case, why has the Government taken so long to do something about it? From July 1983, the Government has known that it would need to legislate in this regard. The Minister promised that this legislation would be before the House in the early part of this session. Later it was promised for the beginning of September. The legislation is being debated as late as now, the end of November.

Mr Lee: You told us that before.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Yes, I have. I am reading the statements of the Minister to show——

Mr Mackenroth: They have to be told 10 times so that they understand.

Mr UNDERWOOD: That is exactly right. I am reading these statements to demonstrate the hypocrisy or the double standards of the Minister on this issue. It is really a political issue. One of the most worrying aspects is that this Bill gives him more direct control.

I bring to the attention of honourable members a question asked on 16 December 1983 by the honourable member for Wynnum (Mr Shaw) of the Minister about the screening of the film "Goodbye Joey", in these terms—

"I ask the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts: Is it true, as stated recently by the distributors of the film 'Goodbye Joey', that they have been warned not to exhibit this film in Queensland? If so, what was the basis for the decision that the film is unsuitable for Queensland? If it is not true, can he indicate how the distributors gained this impression and can he assure Queenslanders and the distributors that the film may be distributed freely so that the people of the State can make their own judgment on its merits?"

The Minister replied—

"I do not know whether the distributors have applied to screen the film in Queensland."

I believe that he would say such a thing. Every time I have asked him a question, he either does not know the answer or will not answer it. He is totally out of touch with his portfolio. The answer continued—

"If such an application has been made, quite frankly I would oppose it because it is a film that is taken completely out of context. It is a fraud. It is an effort to make money out of cruelty to animals. There is no doubt that some of the scenes were staged. I do not believe that those who appear in the film are genuine professional kangaroo-shooters."

The Premier then interjected—

"They are probably Labor Party people."

What an inane interjection. The answer continued—

"Yes, it would be a fair chance that Labor Party people were actors in the film because they are simply mini-capitalists who hide behind socialism. They would do anything to earn a quid. I am not speaking about the Labor Party generally.

The kangaroo industry is very important to the people of Queensland, particularly those who live in country towns, because part of their economy is based on it. If 'Goodbye Joey' encourages the conservation lobby to successfully protest against the kangaroo industry, that would be a great shame for people living in country towns and for the grazing industry, which is so important to not only the people

from western Queensland but also those living in Brisbane. For every job the kangaroo industry creates on a station property, many more jobs are created in Brisbane and the provincial cities.

Some of those responsible for the film have been the subject of court charges. I hope that something positive comes out of this publicity. The community will learn that those who are involved in the kangaroo industry are responsible and are not like the people portrayed in that film. The only other thing I say is that it is a disgusting film. It is a fraud and I do not want it screened in Queensland."

The Minister can hold the personal view that it should not be screened in Queensland. However, as a Minister, he has no right to ban it because it does not fit into the provisions of the Act.

Mr McKechnie: I have no power to ban it.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I am pleased to hear the Minister say that, because the Act does not give him the power.

The fact of the matter is that, in a de facto way, the film had been banned in Queensland. The distributors have said that the Government, through the Minister and others, has made it quite clear that it did not want the film shown in Queensland. As a result of that, it was not.

Mr Elliott: Do you support "Goodbye Joey"?

Mr UNDERWOOD: No wonder the member for Cunningham was sacked from the Ministry. He does not even know what is happening in the kangaroo industry. Labor Governments in Canberra, Victoria and other places have been leading the fight to maintain a properly managed kangaroo industry. A great deal of money has been spent in the United States of America and Europe to maintain the viability of the kangaroo industry by counteracting the rubbish that has been put out against that industry. Despite that, the Chamber is subjected to inane interjections from Government members.

Mr Elliott: The way you are talking, I think it shows you support the film.

Mr UNDERWOOD: That interjection shows how dumb Government members are. They have missed the whole point.

The Act provides for the banning of video films that are a danger to the community because they are violent, unnecessarily sexually explicit or drug-orientated, or exploit people in a community in some ruthless way.

I am speaking about a movie with which the Minister disagrees. The Minister, who is charged with the responsibility for administering censorship, has said that he wants it banned. He doesn't like it as it is fraudulent and fictitious. To use a phrase that the Premier uses, goodness me! Many films are shown on television as being factual, but in fact they have a fair content of fiction. Does the Minister want to ban every one of those, too? If the Minister uses the same argument, he can have those films banned. He effectively had the film "Goodbye Joey" withdrawn from distribution for quite some time. I am pointing out the danger of having this Minister in charge of censorship, particularly as the Bill gives him greater direct involvement in the censorship laws of the State.

I have dealt with the Minister's attitude on a number of occasions. The Minister adopts a very dangerous attitude towards censorship, particularly if he does not like certain matters. Even though something might not breach any Act or regulation, if the Minister and his Government do not like it, they will stop it.

I turn now to the attitude of the honourable member for Toowong. Reference has already been made to him. In his rebuttal during the debate on matters of public interest, the member for Toowong agreed that the movie that he produced was probably salacious.

However, in the speech that he made on 1 February he said that he condemned salacious material being made available to children.

Mr BAILEY: I rise to a point of order. I said nothing of the kind about that film being possibly salacious. It was not salacious. I find the remark offensive and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I ask the honourable member for Ipswich West to withdraw the remarks that offended the honourable member for Toowong.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Unequivocally.

Mr Burns: He doesn't have to withdraw unequivocally.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have asked the honourable to withdraw the remark without qualifying his statement. I am trying to get the honourable member to do that.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I withdraw without—

Mr Burns: He said, "I withdraw."

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I inform the honourable member for Lytton that I am in the chair.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the honourable member.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I would like to explain that withdrawal. The "Hansard" pulls that I have in my office, a copy of which was delivered to every member of the Opposition, record the words "possibly salacious". Quite clearly, "salacious" is a word that the Hansard staff would not misinterpret. It is a word that is not often used in the House. If it does not appear, the honourable member for Toowong has deliberately deleted it from the Hansard pulls. It should appear in "Hansard" because the honourable member knows that, in press releases that I issued and in interviews that I gave, I compared his statement in the House with the statement that he made on 1 February in this Chamber, and I pointed out his contradiction.

The Minister is in conflict with one of his colleagues. The Minister is in conflict with his statement about "Goodbye Joey" He said that one of the reasons he dislikes that film is that people are making money out of cruelty to animals.

One of the Government back-benchers—the honourable member for Toowong—is making money. He said in this Chamber that he included that segment so that the film would be more easily saleable to a television network. He has admitted to possibly salacious material being used to make money. Another contradiction by the National Party!

Mr Elliott: You obviously didn't listen. He just told you he didn't say that.

Mr UNDERWOOD: If it does not appear in "Hansard", I have explained why—he has taken it out. It appeared in the "Hansard" pulls that Opposition members received. Hansard would not make a mistake like that.

I turn now to another avenue of hypocrisy in the community that creates headlines about pornography. I refer to the media barons of this State, the high and mighties, and the Mr Goannas and Mr Murdochs of this country—the people who ram down our throats every day what we should or should not be doing.

In the "Daily Sun" on 12 September 1984, under the heading "Law arms porn fight", this appears—

"In a few months parents will not have to worry when their children play a video tape.

The violence and pornography which could be hidden under innocuous-looking cassette covers will be outlawed.

No longer will dealers be selling this type of movie—unless they are prepared to pay fines of \$10,000 to \$20,000.

The crackdown foreshadowed by the Minister for the Arts, Mr McKechnie, will be well received.

Nobody should miss videos which turn sex into a bloodsport or warp sexual relations until they are unrecognisable to all but the mentally disturbed.

Certainly these movies should not be within the reach of children.

Reputable video dealers should also welcome the proposed laws.

For several months they have been in the unfair position of being told not to handle obscene films without being told what was obscene.

Mr McKechnie should ensure that the Government adopts guidelines precise enough for responsible dealers to readily know what they are selling."

In the same newspaper on 6 October and in many other editions of the same newspaper, column inch after column inch advertises escort agencies, and column inch after column inch advertises massage parlours.

Mr Mackenroth: Now they advertise the Queensland Government.

Mr UNDERWOOD: That is true.

On the one hand, the Government talks about shadows being bad for the people; on the other hand, it is advertising and making money out of people who must sell themselves to support their drug habit and any other habits that they may have.

A "Telegraph" editorial headed "Filthy Films" contains comments in the same vein. The editorial states—

"The Minister for the Arts, Mr McKechnie, is in the thick of the fight against easily-available video filth. Mr McKechnie is by no means alone in this battle, but on a matter such as this it would be impossible to have too much support."

Once again, column inch after column inch advertises escort agencies and massage parlours.

I refer to an editorial in the "Sunday Sun" of 8 April titled, "A clamp on porn" It states—

"Strict censorship is not something the free citizens of Australia welcome.

But the Queensland Government's decision to clamp down on the sale and distribution of certain X and R-rated videos should be applauded.

It does not mean the democratic rights of people to watch whatever they choose is under threat.

It simply means that the purveyors of sleazy pornography and hideous violence will have to pursue their unsavory trade from outside the borders of this State.

No doubt the mail order business which caters for the tastes of a minority will continue to thrive.

However the Government's intervention is aimed at protecting the majority who do not want freely-available pornography dispensed on virtually every suburban street corner.

As has been proved time and again it is often children who rent these films—generally out of inquisitiveness.

It is easy for a well-balanced adult to adopt a take-it-or-leave-it approach to the pornography and violence.

It is not so easy for an impressionable child to do the same.

The government has acted responsibly and should be given credit for doing so."

I draw the attention of honourable members to three advertisements on one of the back sports pages in the same edition of that newspaper. The Murdoch press talks about the mail order business, about the undesirability of pornographic material being available to children and about the "purveyors of sleazy pornography and hideous violence" Not only is the Minister condemned by his own words; he is condemned also by the Murdoch press.

The first advertisement reads—

"Adults Only

Love Art

Adult book shop for personal service
View our wide range of
New novelties and games
Adult books & videos
Enquiries ph. 52 9185
187 Barry Pde., Fort. Valley
Late Fri. Nite Sat. Morn. 9am-12pm
10am-6pm. Mon-Thurs"

The second reads—

"Shop 586
Adults only
Brand new books & aids
For fun loving adults
X adult books X
X adult videos X
Now open

Mon-Fri 9am-9pm Sat 9am-6pm
Cnr. Annerley Rd & Stanley St.
(Beside B.W. Coles, W'Gabba)
Inspection for personal sale
Phone 44 8952"

The third reads—

"Only the best
X X X X
Adult Video
Tapes
(VHS & Beta)
Latest Books
From the USA and Europe
Aids, Lingerie
etc

At lowest prices
 From
 Kings Cross Mail Orders
 Dept SS
 P.O. Box 238, Waverley
 N.S.W. 2024

For enquiries and orders phone:
 (02) 212 3392 or 212 3992

Or write

For Free Catalogue

Please certify over 18 years of age"

I will not mention all the other advertisements that have appeared in press in this State, but members on this side of the Chamber have carried out a little exercise. People looking through magazines such as "Pix", "People" and "Australasian Post", which are regarded as household literature, will find similar advertisements that are well known to most honourable members.

Those advertisements are available to people of all ages, even people under the age of 18 years. All they have to do is buy a 30c stamp and an envelope and write a letter or cut out one of the advertisements and send it away intrastate or interstate. An even cheaper method of obtaining pornographic literature is via the telephone. That is why I have been at pains to read out the details in some of the advertisements in the Queensland press.

I do not think I have time now to go through the large volume of information that can be obtained through the mail virtually unsolicited. If time permits, I will do so at the end of my speech. Some of that material is more than X-rated, and it is available through the popular press in Queensland and through agencies that are allowed to operate in Queensland by the Queensland Police under the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Act, which is under the direct control of the State Government.

Hypocrisy abounds amongst those who beat their barrels loudest—those who try to come down heavily on the Opposition. I hope that what I have exposed today reveals the Labor Party as an average Australian organisation that, like many other organisations in the country, has wide-ranging views. The State Government claims that it is leading the way. As I said earlier, and as Senator Macklin pointed out, I have news for it. The Western Australian Government led the fight against X-rated videos. It gave the lead to the country, causing revolt on the matter and giving direction to the other States and the Commonwealth. It was followed by New South Wales, and only now is it being followed by Queensland. The Queensland Government is not leading the charge on this matter; the Labor Party is. Where does the National Party stand? Again, it stands exposed.

Mr Davis: National Party people are big pedlars of porno material.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Yes, that is right.

Mr Ian Sinclair was interviewed by "Playboy". A large amount of that material has been tremendously embarrassing to the National Party, particularly in any discussion on the Bill.

The publication went into lengthy detail that I will not go into—it is freely available—

Mr FitzGerald: Where are the seedy bits?

Mr UNDERWOOD: If the honourable member wants the seedy bits, let's go!

Mr Burns: He wants the seedy bits. That's his style.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I think it might be.

Mr Burns: He's one who is against this sort of thing. He's a seedy old fellow.

Mr UNDERWOOD: He was so slurry, I thought he had been to the bar. It must be that he is getting excited.

If honourable members want to know about the seedy bits, let them look at the interview of this born-again Christian who has been telling Australia how immoral the Labor Party is. He admits to his own double standards. This is the man who attracts a call of "George, George, George!" when he rises to speak in the Federal House—a reference to his being charged four years ago with fraudulently forging the signature of his dead father, George Sinclair.

In 1973, the Whitlam Government demanded that Mr Ian Sinclair repay the \$2,500 that he allegedly expended in using Commonwealth cars and rental cars to which he was not entitled. In 1975, allegations were made in Parliament that his second wife, Rosemary, received jewellery worth \$16,000 for launching ships when he was Federal Minister for Shipping and Transport. Sinclair said that the jewellery was worth less than \$1,000 and that the gifts were customary. In 1979, the Finnane inquiry alleged that Sinclair had forged his father's signature on annual returns——

Mr ELLIOTT: I rise to a point of order.

Mr UNDERWOOD: You people asked for the sleazy bits, and I am giving them to you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I ask the member for Cunningham to state his point of order.

Mr ELLIOTT: The subject mentioned by the honourable member has nothing whatsoever to do with the Bill, and I suggest that he return to the Bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I was about to say myself that the member ought to return to the principles of the Bill.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Very well, Mr Deputy Speaker; but members on your side of the House asked for the sleazy bits. There are several others. I would have pointed out three or four to them.

Mr Burns: They demanded it. Now they don't like it.

Mr UNDERWOOD: That is right. When they get it, they cannot cop it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will return to the principles of the Bill.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Mr Sinclair, of the National Party, who is now telling us about morality, spoke in the "Playboy" interview about his drinking, his womanising, his sex life and life in the fast lane. Today the member for Mackay (Mr Casey) exposed Mr Sinclair's attitude on homosexuality. In the Federal House, Mr Sinclair seconded the motion for the liberalisation of laws on homosexuality. Now he has completely changed his views—just like the Government, just like the Minister and just like many other members on the other side.

Mr Elliott: Has anybody ever told you how hopeless you are?

Mr UNDERWOOD: If I am hopeless, you're a bloody disaster. That is one of the reasons why you were sacked from Cabinet. I have already explained the others.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will withdraw the word "bloody"

Mr UNDERWOOD: I withdraw the word "bloody"

I could continue reading the "Playboy" interview of October 1983 titled "Kid Tycoon", which is about Peter Foster. There is a profile by Frank Robson. He details the circumstances surrounding Mr Peter Foster, an associate and friend of the member for Toowong (Mr Bailey). Mr Foster is the person who was seen to be protecting Mr Bailey in the Sunday press.

Time is running out, and I do not wish to recapitulate in detail, because the debate has already exposed the policies and attitudes of the National Party.

I have outlined the approach and policies adopted by the Labor Party that sadly ridicule the Minister's exaggerated claims. It is unfortunate that some months ago the Minister set the tone for the debate by making the issue a highly politicised one, in contrast to the non-political approach of his Federal counterparts. Again I refer the Minister to the censorship debates of 1971.

It is typical of the Premier and Treasurer and members of the National Party that they turn everything into a political issue. Opposition members have had to take the trouble to outline the hypocrisy and double standards of National Party policy in Queensland over the whole issue of censorship. Contrary to the assertions made by the Minister, the National Party Government has not led the way; the Labor States originated proposals in the area of censorship, and the Queensland Government followed along meekly, trying to claim credit.

For the consideration of honourable members and others, I refer to the views held by the Commonwealth Chief Censor about the censorship debate. I offer no opinion at all on the view expressed by the Commonwealth Chief Censor; I will leave that to honourable members to consider.

I quote from "The Age", which is a reputable newspaper in Australia. On 31 August 1984, an article headed "Chief Censor warns of a black market" stated—

"The Chief Censor, Mrs Janet Strickland, warned yesterday that differing State laws on X-rated videos would help open the floodgates to a huge blackmarket.

Mrs Strickland said she was disappointed that X-rated products were becoming synonymous with what have become known as 'video nasties'.

'I'm disappointed that there has been confusion over this and people are now talking about X-rated pornography as implicitly meaning sexual violence. It has become synonymous with video nasties,' she said."

The Minister has been talking in similar terms about the subject of different classifications—

"She was puzzled by the NSW Government decision to ban all X-rated videos.

The Premier of NSW, Mr Wran, announced the ban on X-rated videos this week. He said that some material was unacceptably obscene and degrading, showing sexual violence against women and children.

But according to Mrs Strickland, who originally proposed the introduction of an X-classification, video films showing explicit sexual violence were already refused classification by the Film Censorship Board—an effective ban."

If the reaction of Government is to say, "Ha, ha! That supports us", I point out once again that Mrs Strickland was appointed by a Federal Liberal/National Country Party Government. The article continues—

"Mr Wran said this week that the Film Censorship Board had worsened the 'video nasty' situation by classifying some videos that should have been refused classifications. 'He was saying the board is in part responsible for NSW banning X-rated videos,' Mrs Strickland said yesterday.

'I find that a little hard to understand. The NSW Government was represented by Mr Landa at the last Ministerial meeting in April and the previous meeting in July last year, when guidelines for classifications of video tapes—including those for an X classification—were approved by all ministers responsible.

There seems to be some suggestion that we not only create the laws but we actually apply standards we somehow dream up. This totally overlooks the fact that the guidelines and the standards we apply are on behalf of the States, made after consultation with them.' She said that at those consultations, the Ministers agreed to uniform laws on video classifications. The classifying would all be done by the Film Censorship Board, the criteria would not vary from State to State, and a new 'X-rating' would be introduced."

That woman, who was appointed by the Government, contradicted what the Minister told the House in his introductory speech. The article continues—

"She said that under the laws, it would be illegal——"

Mr Elliott interjected.

Mr UNDERWOOD: The honourable member for Cunningham should be quiet for a while. He can make a speech later.

Mr Elliott: It will be too late for us. You won't leave us any time. You're a real little democrat, aren't you? You aren't going to give us the chance to answer anything.

Mr UNDERWOOD: The Opposition does not intend to move the gag. Is the honourable member suggesting that the Government intends to gag the debate?

Mr McKechnie: No.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Then what is the honourable member talking about?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The honourable member does not have to take interjections. I suggest that he continues.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, will you please keep them quiet, for God's sake?

The article continues—

"She said that under the laws, it would be illegal to sell anything refused a classification by the board.

But since the last meeting, several States had wavered and a uniform law now looked highly unlikely.

Mrs Strickland said it was important that none of the States had abandoned their commitment to compulsory classification by the Film Censorship Board.

Mrs Stickland confirmed that it was well-known in video circles that it was possible to bring one obscene tape into the country, then copy the tape. It was not necessary to bring in large numbers of cassettes.

However, Mr Wran said this week: 'Customs can stop anything being brought into the country . . . if the authorities want to, they can stop anyone bringing in this sort of objectionable material.'

Mrs Stickland said she was surprised at the number of protests against X-rated videos; but was mostly disappointed that the issues had become somewhat confused.

'People have thrown the X-rated classification out on the basis of their concern over sexually violent and violent material, whereas 99 per cent of the material is just hard-porn without any violence, just the explicit depiction of sexual acts performed by consenting adults,' she said."

Mr McKechnie: Do you support that?

Mr UNDERWOOD: I have already said that we do not support pornography and that I was reading that article for the information of members. It will give them something to chew over. It also contradicts what the Minister has told the House.

Mr McKechnie: You disagree with that statement she made?

Mr UNDERWOOD: Yes, except that she points out that this Government has changed its views on the matter; that it had agreed to uniform legislation and now it has changed its mind.

There are a number of other issues that I have not raised, but I will do so at the Committee stage. I now hand over to a National Party member, who will no doubt berate the Labor Party in the usual fashion of National Party members.

Hon. P. R. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon—Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts): I seek leave to reply now, but without closing the debate.

Leave granted.

Hon. P. R. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon—Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts) (5.43 p.m.), in reply: Because the Opposition spokesman has spoken at some length, mainly reading newspaper articles and press releases, I think I should clarify a few points briefly.

For the record—the former Minister (the Honourable Tony Elliott) did a great job for Queensland in his endeavours at the meetings of censorship Ministers. The Opposition spokesman has made great play of the fact that certain things were agreed to by a majority of Ministers, and then tried to make out that the Queensland Government had agreed to them. The former Minister (Tony Elliott) was always very careful to make it well known to the other Ministers that Queensland would not accept anything above the R rating. He also made it very clear that Queensland would reserve the right to review the R rating.

When it comes to what is allowed in the various classifications, Queensland's attitude has always been that it cannot stop people in other States seeing something if they want to. However, Queensland will not accept those standards.

The Opposition spokesman has tried to make out that there has been some change of attitude in Queensland. It was not Queensland that was in favour of the abandonment of compulsory classifications. The former Minister fought tooth and nail to try to have compulsory classifications introduced, against the wishes of the majority of the other States. It was the groundwork that he did that enabled me, when I became Minister and attended my first meeting in March or April, to convince the other States that compulsory classifications were necessary. That was worth waiting for, because it has at least made it a little bit easier to stop some hard-core pornography arriving in the State by mail order, particularly if the other States also attempt to crack down on it.

The honourable member for Ipswich West claimed that the Labor States had given a lead in the abolition of the X-rated films. I have not been specifically critical of Western Australia. I have said publicly in many places that I believe that Western Australia may come on side with Queensland. I have been annoyed recently by the charade of the Commonwealth and the Labor States—with the possible exception of Western Australia because that State's current attitude is not known—which have adopted a holier than thou stand by saying, "We are getting rid of the X rating" while they have been cool, calm and calculating in planning to replace 95 per cent of the X rating with the new ER classification. If I have been a little more vocal and political lately, that is the reason for it.

At the last meeting of Ministers, half an hour was spent on debating how a press statement should be drafted to deliberately fool the churches—the churches were mentioned by name and I am not paraphrasing what happened—so that the churches would not mount a campaign against the new ER classification. Every Labor Minister there favoured doing that. Western Australia was not represented. I should say that the New South Wales Minister told us—I have said this publicly outside the House—that the New South Wales caucus did not want a bar of what was then R-plus and is now ER. The Ministers spent half an hour debating how "poor Paul"—I am quoting exactly—could

be helped to fool caucus. If I have been a little annoyed lately at the Labor Party Governments, that is the reason for it. I feel very strongly about the matter.

I am absolutely delighted that the Queensland Labor Party has come round and will support the Bill. I heard the first public comment today from Opposition members that they would support me. The comments by one Labor front-bencher, which were directed at this side of the Chamber, were very smutty. This is the first time that any member of the Opposition has supported me publicly. Why did not Opposition members do that some months ago? Why do they not try to exercise some influence——

Mr Mackenroth: We were waiting to see what you would do.

Mr McKECHNIE: That is OK, but there was no reason why Opposition members could not have helped me try to set the climate so that the New South Wales Government would make a firm commitment to getting rid of the ER rating. There is no reason why Opposition members cannot make a firm commitment to help me to convince the Prime Minister, in particular, to overrule the Federal Attorney-General, and get the Commonwealth to act.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr McKECHNIE: I will take the honourable member's interjection in a moment.

If Opposition members opposite were to do that, New South Wales, probably Western Australia, Tasmania and the Commonwealth, with Queensland, would be able to ban ER films right throughout Australia. Until that happens the mail order problem cannot be overcome.

The Opposition spokesman castigated the Government for its alleged hypocrisy. I maintain that the stand taken has been as constant as the guiding star, except for the charade in recent months to try to fool the churches. I became annoyed and I am still annoyed, and I think that the Australian people are entitled to be annoyed.

Mr Mackenroth: You said that you feel that the Opposition should have co-operated with you months ago. Have you ever invited the Opposition spokesman to discuss the matter with you?

Mr McKECHNIE: The honourable member——

Mr Mackenroth: Have you?

Mr McKECHNIE: I want to answer the interjection in my own way. The Opposition member for— I will not name him because he might be victimised, although I do not think he will be—came to me and asked me a number of questions. I answered them quite openly. I am prepared to do that with any member of Parliament.

Mr Mackenroth: Did you invite our spokesman to discuss these things with you?

Mr McKECHNIE: I have not invited him to come and talk to me, but he has a tongue in his head.

Mr Mackenroth: You did not invite him to do that, in an effort to get good legislation before Parliament?

Mr McKECHNIE: I do not intend to be interrupted further by the honourable member's frivolous questions. I will only say that the Opposition spokesman has a tongue in his head. I think that it was he who asked questions about police powers in an attempt to blow that matter up into a front-page story. If it was not the Opposition spokesman, it was one of his colleagues.

The Labor Governments in Australia, with the possibility of one, are on record as wanting the new ER classification. Now that Opposition members have said that they will vote with me on this Bill, I ask them to get behind me to help me convince their

colleagues in the other States to live up to their responsibilities. If that happens, we may all get somewhere.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise) (5.50 p.m.): In supporting this legislation, I must say that I am very pleased that the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts has taken the opportunity to set the record straight in regard to a few of the claims that have been made by the honourable member for Ipswich West. I know that Government members are very pleased that the Labor Party has decided to basically support this legislation.

As the Minister indicated, questions need to be asked about the attitude of Governments in other States, about the attitude of the Commonwealth Government and about the attitude of the Commonwealth Attorney-General (Senator Evans). It is worth making the point that the Commonwealth Government controls the Customs Act and the Customs Regulations, and it has chosen not to act on this matter. In contrast, the position of the Queensland Government has been rock solid. I support the Minister and I support the Government most strongly in this very important legislation.

The video industry, to which this legislation refers, is basically a child of the 1980s. It did not exist a few years ago and, over relatively recent times, it has grown to the point at which many homes and many people have video units. The growth of the video industry is such——

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: I wish that the honourable member for Brisbane Central could contain himself, because I can hardly hear myself think over his inane mumblings.

The growth of the video industry has been such that it is now estimated that there are 2 000 000 video rentals a week.

According to a report in "The Bulletin" of 2 October, in just 30 months, video penetration in Australia has increased from 9 to 30 per cent. It is estimated that by the end of next year video cassette recorders will be installed in 50 per cent of Australian homes—in half of the homes in the country. That is the highest penetration of any country in the world. The comparison is made with countries such as the United States, in which the figure is 18 per cent.

The industry is booming. It is estimated that Australia has 3 000 video outlets and that the industry itself is worth in excess of \$100m a year. Some estimates place the value of the industry as high as \$120m a year.

It is interesting to note that Governments are giving great consideration to this matter. The British experience of earlier this year is particularly interesting. The British Parliament passed a Bill that set up a system of classification for home video films and established a body with the power to deny any certificate to some videos and to restrict others to sale in certain premises. In Britain, the impetus for special legislation on video nasties was rocket-powered by evidence presented to a parliamentary inquiry group. That group was sponsored by a number of British churches. Directed by Dr Clifford Hill, last year that group found that more than 40 per cent of children aged six years or over had seen at least one video film showing violence and perverted sex. As a result of that report, the British Government decided to act. The Queensland Government is very much aware of the implications of this problem and, as the Minister indicated before, it has been rock solid in its attitude, policies and proposals.

Because of the way in which the industry has grown and because of the classification system, it is not always easy for a person to know what he is selecting in a video shop. I am sure that many honourable members on both sides of the House have received complaints to this effect.

Mr McKechnie: The Labor States opposed compulsory classification.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the Minister said, the Labor States opposed compulsory classification. All honourable members would have had complaints from people to the effect that the video film that they took home turned out to be more offensive than they were led to believe from the wrapping in which it came.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: The honourable member may laugh, but I suggest to him that it is not much fun when people take home a video film, sit the children down in front of the television and, in the first five minutes, hear them listening to four-letter words and everything else. Even though the honourable member thinks that is funny, I do not, and certainly other members on this side of the House do not.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the Minister said before, the friends of honourable members opposite opposed it.

Mr Underwood interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: The honourable member for Ipswich West made one of the most curious speeches that I have ever heard in this House. He spoke for close on an hour and a quarter and said nothing.

Mr Simpson: It was a reading lesson.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the honourable member for Cooroora says, it was a reading lesson.

The honourable member for Ipswich West quoted from just about everyone in Australia except himself. With respect to him, I suggest that he has had ample opportunity to voice his opinion. What he did this afternoon was deny other members of this House the chance to contribute further to the debate this week.

I wish to refer to the annual report of the Films Board of Review. It is relevant to take on board the following comments made by that body under the heading "Video Cassettes"—

"The position with respect to video cassettes continues to create a censorship dilemma as video cassettes are not subject to the Films Review Act but are governed by the provisions of the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act. The major problems appear to be firstly, that consumers have no guide as to the content of video cassettes since no classification symbol is required to be displayed on the container; secondly, that distributors and retailers have no clear guide as to what video cassettes they can distribute to the Queensland public and thirdly, that exhibitors have felt prejudiced by the fact that films which have been prohibited by the Board from exhibition in picture theatres may nevertheless be shown in video cassette form in other public places."

Indeed, it is that very concern that has been echoed by the community, by the churches and by members of Parliament such as the honourable member for Toowong, and that is why the Government has responded well with the introduction of the Bill.

I wish to make a few comments about the attitude of some film distributors in Queensland. A great many have certainly tried to do the right thing. Some have not. I wish to talk about one company that certainly has not. A few weeks ago K-Tel International was quite blatant and open in announcing that it was releasing a film to beat this legislation. The film that I am referring to is "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre", which has generally been recognised as one of the sickest films ever made. It is an absolutely appalling film. An article in the "Gold Coast Bulletin" of 28 September 1984 reads—

"The video distributor marketing the underground splatter movie The Texas Chainsaw Massacre is almost certain the film will be banned in Queensland.

Queensland manager for K-Tel International, Mike Redmond, said yesterday he hoped to squeeze two or three months of video shop rentals out of the film before it was banned."

That is a totally irresponsible attitude from such a company.

The article continues—

" 'We have taken a soft-sell approach with this one because of the possibility that it could cause a lot of bad publicity, but really it's not as bad as some already on the market,' said Mr Redmond.

'The film should be available in about 90 per cent of Queensland outlets today including some on the Gold Coast, and if we can get two or three months of shelf life out of it we will be quite happy and so will the retailers.' "

What an appalling indictment of that company and that man, who is its manager in Queensland.

I want to speak a little about the film and about other comments attributed to it in this article, which also states—

"This blood and guts story based on one of America's most bizarre mass murders, has only recently been given a Federal Government R rating for release in cinemas."

In fact, it was so bad that the Commonwealth censors banned it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I call the Leader of the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Wharton, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 6 p.m.

At 7.30 p.m.,

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. H. Warner, Toowoomba South) took the chair.

VACANCY IN SENATE OF COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Nominations of Warwick Raymond Parer, Ceciley Rose Cranstoun and Frederick Allan Pidgeon, vice Kathryn Jean Martin

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have to announce that this meeting has been summoned for 7.30 p.m. this day under the provisions of Standing Order No. 331 for the purpose of the election of a senator. There being a quorum present, the meeting is now constituted. Honourable members should note that the provisions of the Standing Rules and Orders of this Parliament shall apply to this meeting. I now call for nominations. I point out that every nomination must be accompanied by a declaration by the nominee of qualification and consent to be nominated and to act if elected.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah): Mr Speaker, I nominate Warwick Raymond Parer, of 412 Pine Mountain Road, Mount Gravatt, for election to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant through the resignation of Senator Kathryn Jean Martin. I produce Warwick Raymond Parer's declaration of qualification and consent.

Whereupon the honourable member produced Mr Parer's declaration of qualification and consent.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mount Coot-tha): Mr Speaker, I nominate Ceciley Rose Cranstoun, of 17 Pringle Street, Ascot, in the State of Queensland, for election to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant through the resignation of Senator Kathryn Jean Martin. I produce Ceciley Rose Cranstoun's declaration of qualification and consent.

Whereupon the honourable member produced Mrs Cranstoun's declaration of qualification and consent.

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga): Mr Speaker, I nominate Frederick Allan Pidgeon, of 14 Otway Street, Holland Park, in the State of Queensland, for election to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant through the resignation of Senator Kathryn Jean Martin. I produce Frederick Allan Pidgeon's declaration of qualification and consent.

Whereupon the honourable member produced Mr Pidgeon's declaration of qualification and consent.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! As there are no further nominations, I call the honourable member for Nundah.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (7.33 p.m.): I move—

“That Mr Warwick Raymond Parer be elected to hold the place in the Senate of the Parliament of the Commonwealth rendered vacant through the resignation of Senator Kathryn Jean Martin.”

Warwick Parer is 48 years of age, married with seven children.

Mr Parer is managing director of Queensland Energy Pty Ltd and earlier was commercial manager of Utah Development Company. He has been endorsed by the Liberal Party and meets the conditions of section 15 of the Constitution.

Warwick Parer had been and is known to be a member of the Liberal Party and also has been associated with its policy committees and other bodies of the Liberal Party for several years. He was a member and the deputy chairman of the Queensland Institute of Technology, positions from which he resigned recently. He was chairman of the QIT staff committee and the QIT finance committee during his term of office. He is an executive of the Institute of Public Affairs. He has been a leading Queenslander in the mining industry and in many other activities in this State for many years. He would be a very worthy representative of this State in the Senate of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (7.34 p.m.): Mr Speaker, as you have indicated, it has been necessary for Parliament to meet this evening for the purpose of electing a person nominated by the Liberal Party to fill the vacancy in the Senate.

When the Legislative Assembly met on 12 March 1981 to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Senator Glenister Sheil of the National Party, three persons were nominated in the Parliament by the National Party to take Senator Sheil's place. Similarly, this evening, the Liberal Party has nominated three persons to take the place that has been vacated by the former Senator Martin. Parliament is therefore being given a choice in the matter of the selection of a replacement senator. Let me make it quite clear to all that it is the Parliament which has the final say on who is selected. Parliament has the choice.

The meeting has had placed before it as the first choice of the Liberal Party Mr Warwick Parer, a person who should be suitable as a representative of the State of Queensland in the Senate of the Commonwealth.

The meeting has been informed of Mr Parer's long association with the mining industry in this State and the senior position that he has held with the Utah Development Company and Queensland Energy Pty Ltd. I am sure that Mr Parer's experience will stand him in good stead. I want to emphasise the importance of a Queensland senator's standing up for Queensland. I hope that Mr Warwick Parer will stand up for Queensland and that he will not become Canberra-ised as so many of his predecessors did. That is absolutely vital. I can give an assurance that National Party senators will not become Canberra-ised, that they will stand up for Queensland, and will look after honourable members opposite, because they need looking after. I assure honourable members that that is the policy of the National Party. The members of the Liberal Party should support the stand that the National Party has taken in that regard.

I hope that Mr Parer will stand shoulder to shoulder with National Party senators in looking after the interests of this State. That is absolutely crucial at a time in our history when we have in Canberra a Government that is determined by hook or by crook, or by deceit and deception, to promise the world, as it did in the previous election and as it is doing in this election, and then not fulfil its promises.

It is very important that the people of this State should be made aware of those issues and that Mr Parer should take a stand that is commensurate with the important position that he will hold.

Naturally I support the nomination put forward by the honourable member for Nundah.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (7.37 p.m.): Let me say at the outset that the Australian Labor Party supports parliamentary propriety and the protection of parliamentary institutions.

It has never been the practice of the Australian Labor Party in this State to prostitute the parliamentary and political processes by cynical and divisive means, such as were used in this Chamber on 3 September 1975, when a person was chosen by this Parliament to fill the Senate vacancy caused by the untimely death of Senator Bert Milliner, who, we all will recall, was the father of the present member for Everton, Mr Glenn Milliner.

The appointment of Albert Patrick Field to the Senate has left a scar on this Parliament that will never be erased. At that time the ALP supported the nomination of Dr Mal Colston. Members of integrity in this House in 1975 supported the Colston nomination. The only member of the Liberal and National parties who supported the Colston nomination and who is still in this House, was Mr Bill Kaus, the member for Mansfield. Mr Kaus, of course, was then a Liberal, but is now a National Party member. The motion supporting Colston was lost 63 to 15.

That decision helped to destroy a long-standing political convention, which earlier in 1975 had been prostituted by the Tom Lewis Government in New South Wales when the joint sitting of the New South Wales Parliament appointed Mr Bunton to fill the Senate vacancy in place of Lionel Murphy.

Later in this speech I will refer to the eventual replacement for the late Senator Milliner and the voting record of those concerned.

As a party which believes in being consistent, the Australian Labor Party will give its support to the favoured nomination of the Liberal Party to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Kathy Martin as a senator for Queensland on 5 November 1984.

The appointment of the Liberal Party choice in this particular case, or the future nomination of a person by a party whose senator has resigned or died, should be both automatic and a simple administrative arrangement pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution. If there is any fiddling with this constitutionally valid process, it could result in senators being restricted or even denied the opportunity to contest a House of Representatives or perhaps a State seat.

The referendum in 1977 for casual Senate vacancies stated—

“An Act to alter the Constitution so as to ensure as far as possible that a casual vacancy in the Senate is filled by a person of the same political party as the senator chosen by the people and for the balance of his term.”

It is important to note that that referendum was passed in all States of Australia, and that includes Queensland. For the record—the 1977 referendum in Queensland produced the following details—

- (a) 1 241 426 electors eligible to vote;
- (b) 12 945 informal votes;
- (c) 662 732 electors for the referendum; and

(d) 463 165 electors against the referendum.

In other words, that referendum was supported by 58.19 per cent of the people of our State of Queensland.

We have circumstances today of the Liberal Party in this State wanting its No. 1 nomination to take the place of Kathy Martin and, I suggest, justifiably so. However, in this Parliament on 5 April 1977, Mr Knox, as he then was (member for Nundah and Liberal parliamentary leader), together with all the other Liberals and the National Party members, voted on a special motion in this House to oppose and to reject the Senate vacancy referendum before the Australian people. In other words, if the view of the Liberal Party in this State on 5 April 1977 had been carried in the referendum, Mr Knox and his Liberal colleagues would most certainly now be witnessing some person other than their nomination being chosen for this casual vacancy.

I believe that these double standards by the Liberal Party clearly illustrate that it has no consistency and is completely destitute as it makes a desperate grab for parliamentary representation, which will be further diminished for it in the Federal arena on 1 December this year. Any semblance of political integrity that the Liberal Party might once have possessed has been found wanting today as its inconsistencies are once again exposed.

There can be no denying that the people of Queensland have spoken on this issue of Senate vacancies. There should be no attempt by this or any future Government of Queensland to fly in the face of such public opinion so clearly expressed by the people in that referendum.

The principle of asking for a panel of names was not necessary prior to the 1977 Senate vacancy referendum and, in view of the fact that the referendum has been overwhelmingly passed, the request for a panel of names for the vacancy is totally irrelevant and, to be frank, is quite obnoxious. It is certainly obnoxious to the Labor Party. This disruptive and divisive attitude by the Queensland Government is something of which it should be ashamed. It has attempted to be the odd one out, and its reluctance to accept conventions makes a mockery of its claims that it upholds traditional values.

This Senate vacancy caused by the retirement of Kathy Martin is the seventh in Australia and the second in Queensland since the 1977 referendum. The other occasions have been Senator Haines's election at a meeting of both Houses in the South Australian Parliament on 14 December 1977, following the resignation of the then Senator Steele Hall. On 7 August 1978, Kerry Sibraa of the ALP was chosen by a joint session of the New South Wales Parliament to replace ALP Senator Jim McClelland and, at the same joint sitting, Liberal Mr Chris Puplick was chosen to replace Liberal Senator Sir Robert Cotton.

In Victoria, the National Party nominee, Mr L. W. Neale, was chosen by the joint session of the Victorian Parliament on 11 March 1980 to replace Senator Webster, who was appointed by the Fraser Government to be High Commissioner to New Zealand. Jean Hearn was chosen by the joint session of the Tasmanian Parliament on 15 October 1980 to replace senator Ken Wreidt, who resigned to contest a House of Representatives seat.

I must point out at this stage that, after perusal of the copies of "Hansard" from those States on all of these occasions since the 1977 referendum, it was necessary for only one name to be placed before each respective joint sitting. I hasten to add that this matter has been equally applied to Australian Labor Party, Liberal and National Party representatives and also in the case of Senator Haines, who is now a Democrat but who was then a member of the Liberal movement in South Australia.

Not all persons filling casual Senate vacancies were of the same political colour as the Government in the Parliament that was appointing them. For example, the Liberal Government in Victoria appointed L. W. Neale from the National Party, then in opposition, and the Dunstan Labor Government appointed Senator Janine Haines, who

is now a Democrat, and, of course, the Wran Labor Government appointed Chris Puplick from the Liberal Party.

Here in Queensland, not a great number of Senate vacancies have occurred since the National-Liberal Government took office in 1957. In fact, this is only the sixth in that period.

The names of senators so elected and the date of their taking office under section 15 of the Constitution are as follows—

Senator G. J. Whiteside 9 October 1962.

Senator W. C. Heatley 14 April 1966.

Senator N. J. Bonner 11 June 1971.

Senator A. P. Field 3 September 1975.

Senator F. I. Bjelke-Petersen 12 March 1981.

On the subject of consistency, I believe that I would be remiss if I did not draw to the attention of the House the track record of this Government in its partisan approach to Senate vacancy appointments. On the two occasions on which Liberal Senators have been appointed, only one nomination was requested from the Queensland division of the Liberal Party. For example, when Senator Robert D. Sherrington died, the then Premier wrote to the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr Jack Duggan. Part of that correspondence stated—

“As you know, the accepted practice when a vacancy of this nature occurs is for the new Senator to be of the same political party as his predecessor, and I have asked the Queensland division of the Liberal Party of Australia to advise me as quickly as possible of the name of the person they wish to nominate on this particular occasion.

As soon as I am in receipt of the name of this nominee I shall advise you accordingly with a view to having your co-operation in regard to his appointment. I presume you would have no objection in this regard, and the necessary Constitutional action could then be set in train for appointment by the Governor in Council.

As I have mentioned earlier, this appointment would have effect until the commencement of our next Parliament when—actually by the elective process—it could be confirmed.”

Subsequently, W. C. Heatley was duly elected.

Likewise, on the occasion on which Dame Annabelle Rankin was appointed to a diplomatic post, the Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, wrote to a predecessor of mine, Mr Jack W. Houston, in the following terms—

“As you know, the accepted practice when a casual vacancy of this nature occurs is for the new Senator to be of the same political party as his predecessor and I have asked the Queensland division of the Liberal Party of Australia to advise me, as quickly as possible, of the name of the person they wish to nominate on this particular occasion.

As soon as I am in receipt of the name of this nominee, I shall advise you accordingly and, at the same time, the necessary constitutional procedure for the filling of this casual Senate vacancy brought about by Dame Annabelle's resignation will be set in train.”

It is abundantly clear that on the two occasions on which Liberal senators have either died or resigned, the Government led by the National Party requested the name of only one nominee from the Queensland division of the Liberal Party.

Now let me discuss the qualities of confrontation and division, at which this Government excels. At the time of the death of Senator Max Poulter in 1962, this Government set different standards before George Whiteside was finally appointed to

fill the Senate vacancy. That was the first occasion that a Senate vacancy had occurred since this Government was elected in 1957.

This Government stooped to low standards in failing to support the long-standing convention of accepting the nomination of a person from the same political party as that of the person who had vacated the Senate. On that occasion the Australian Labor Party named Mr Alfred Arnell to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Senator Poulter. That nomination was rejected by the Country-Liberal Government by 41 votes to 24.

It could be expected that the member for Barambah, then Mr Bjelke-Petersen, would take such action in filling a Senate vacancy, but it is particularly interesting to note that the member for Nundah, then Mr Knox, also opposed the nomination of Mr Arnell. That same member, as I have already pointed out, also opposed the referendum in 1977. Of course that great stickler for convention would be the first to throw his arms up in horror if this Parliament failed to support the No. 1 nomination of the Liberal Party at this meeting tonight.

It is very appropriate for all honourable members to be aware of the double standards on parliamentary propriety that the depleted and disreputable Liberal Party practises. One of the great values of "Hansard" is that it lives on to haunt a member in the years ahead. About 22 years later the record of the member for Nundah, who nominated the senator-to-be tonight, is indeed embarrassing for him.

When the Parliament resumed on 9 October 1962, Alf Arnell's name was submitted once more by the Australian Labor Party but was rejected by this Parliament. Once again, the member for Nundah voted against this great parliamentary convention and he made sure that his vote was counted on that occasion because he was a teller for the division. The Liberal Party's parliamentary propriety in 1962 speaks for itself.

Recent history saw, in 1975, the prostitution by a National-Liberal coalition Government of the parliamentary process in the selection of Albert Patrick Field. So it is painfully obvious that, on the four occasions since 1957 when Senate vacancies occurred, there was one rule for the Liberal Party and one for the Australian Labor Party.

Of course, I would be negligent if I did not point out that, back in those heady days of 1966 and 1971, relations between the Liberal Party and the National Party in this State resembled a sea of peace and tranquility. They were conveniently entwined in a strange marriage of convenience. When one looks at today's relations between those two parties it is difficult to work out which is grabbing for the other's throat more effectively.

As a consequence of the degeneration of the parliamentary processes in this State, when Senator Shiel resigned, the Premier implemented a face-saving exercise by requesting a panel of three names for consideration as a replacement.

You do not need me to tell you, Mr Speaker, that any National Party member of Parliament who had dared vote against Florence Bjelke-Petersen was voting for his immediate expulsion from the National Party. Perhaps some of them had signed undated letters of resignation. There have been instances of that in the past. It is now history that Senator Bjelke-Petersen is a member of the Senate as a consequence of vote.

As far as the parliamentary Labor Party is concerned, the Government in this State should have requested only one name from the Liberal Party for this vacancy caused by the resignation of Senator Martin. The only excuse for requesting a panel is that the Government wants to camouflage the damage done to this institution by this administration's reckless and irresponsible conduct in years gone by, when good Labor members have passed away.

When the legislation for Senate vacancies was introduced in the Federal Parliament, the view of the then Opposition was put both precisely and concisely by the then Leader of the Opposition (Mr Gough Whitlam).

It is particularly interesting that the then Deputy Leader of the National Party, Mr Ian Sinclair, rose to his feet and said—

“There are few occasions when I rise in this House following the Leader of the Opposition that I find myself in substantial agreement with most of what he said. This is one of those rare occasions.”

It is obvious that Mr Sinclair was evidently at odds with his National Party colleagues in Queensland back in 1977. Seven years later, the divisions in opinion are obviously much deeper.

As I have indicated, there have been extraordinary developments within Liberal and National Party ranks since the announcement of the Federal election to take place on 1 December, and none more extraordinary than the Queensland National Party's decision to divorce itself from policies enunciated by Mr Peacock, and Mr Sinclair, who is now the National Party leader in Australia.

National Party desperation has reached the stage at which we see its Queensland president, Sir Robert Sparkes, as a driving force behind the establishment of a new political conservative party in Australia. I suggest today that surely it is reasonable to expect Liberal and National Party candidates to tell us, if they happen to be elected, whether they intend to remain part of a Liberal/National Party Opposition in the next Federal Parliament or intend to be part of this new political party with a new name, with new leadership, and with entirely new policies. Those comments apply to the senator whom we will elect tonight.

Mr Speaker, as a person proud to be a State leader of a party which is offering the people of Australia stability, certainty, predictability and security after 1 December, I reiterate that the Opposition will support the first choice of the Liberal Party to fill the Senate vacancy.

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (7.57 p.m.): Mr Speaker—

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr LANE: I ask the member not to use abusive language when I am on my feet. I know that Opposition members normally behave like larrikins, but I ask the honourable member to try to contain himself and act with a little dignity.

Tonight is a significant occasion in the history of Queensland. As the Leader of the Opposition said, what is written in “Hansard” is important to the people who read it. I should not like this occasion to pass without “Hansard” noting some facts relating to the rather pompous comments made by the Leader of the Opposition. He spoke about the institution of Parliament, and pretended to stand up for the decencies and conventions that go with it and all the other principles that should be respected in this case. But he ignored one very important matter, namely, the policy of the Labor Party, which includes abolition of the Senate.

What hypocrisy! What nonsense it is for the Leader of the Opposition to talk as he did for the last 20 minutes, knowing as he does that it is his party's policy—decided time and again, at conference after conference—that, if ever Labor has the political power in this nation, it will abolish the Senate, the very place to which we are sending a representative on this historic occasion. What hypocrisy! What a two-faced bunch Opposition members are!

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr McLean interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Bulimba under Standing Order No. 123A.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind honourable members that the provisions of the Standing Rules and Orders shall apply this evening just as they do at other times. I ask the honourable member for Cook to pay particular attention to what I have said.

Mr LANE: Mr Speaker——

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Cook under Standing Order No. 123A. He has been sent from the House once today. I assure him I will have no compunction in sending him out again.

Mr LANE: In the history of this nation, no party has done as much at the Labor Party to politicise the Senate in Australia. No party has ever done as much by way of campaigning and public effort to put a political stamp on the people who represent Australians in the Senate—on the people who have always been understood, and named in the Constitution, to be representatives of the States, beyond the bounds of political parties.

The Labor Party campaigned successfully for a change to the Constitution and senators can only be nominated if they are endorsed by a political party—not by the people of Queensland. With the Premier and Sir William Knox, in that referendum campaign I campaigned unashamedly against that proposal. I remember vividly standing on the platform in King George Square with Sir William Knox, Kathy Martin, Brian Harradine from Tasmania and Neville Bonner. The Premier of Queensland gave us his support and we were warning the country against the downgrading of the role of the Senate, which is the policy of members of the party who sit opposite in this place. This evening, the Leader of the Opposition pretended pompously to support the role of the Senate.

In the last couple of years, the Australian Labor Party has begun writing its own version of this nation's history. It puts its proposals up as conventions and, in due course, they become traditions. After a while, people—particularly the media—begin to accept them as having legal validity or constitutional standing.

Recently a Queensland senator had the temerity to suggest that, if Bills containing taxes were brought into the Senate by a Labor Government, and if he believed that those Bills would not be in the interests of the State that he represents, he would oppose them. I support his stand right down the line. I do not believe that a legal or moral obligation can be placed on a senator to go down to Canberra and vote in favour of an Appropriation Bill that is obviously against the interests of his State. No law says that he should, and the Constitution does not place such an obligation on him.

The only place where that proposition can be found is in the policy of the Australian Labor Party, and, according to the party, it has become a convention or a tradition. If a senator disagrees with that proposition, he commits a dastardly sin. If I were a senator and if an Appropriation Bill came forward that contained taxes or financial measures that were against the interests of the State of Queensland, I, too, would oppose it in the interests of Queensland. That is what the Senate is all about; it stands up for the interests of the States.

The prime nomination put forward by the honourable member for Nundah is a worthy nomination. I am pleased that the Liberal Party has found amongst its ranks an experienced businessman who has first-hand experience of commerce on a national and international scale. I hope that when Mr Parer goes to Canberra he will not be Canberraised—to use the Premier's word—but will maintain his loyalties to business and commerce

in this State and to the interests of Queensland. He must do so, despite the pressures that will be brought to bear on him by the Canberra colleagues of members opposite.

Since the honourable member for Sandgate became Leader of the Opposition, the behaviour of Opposition members in this place has been like that of a bunch of larrikins. It is what one would expect of a bunch of paid trade union officials at a union rally at which the rank and file were bullied to conform. That has been the conduct of members opposite since the Leader of the Opposition's faction took control of the Labor Party in this House. The Leader of the Opposition stood up in this place and pretended to show respect for the institution of Parliament. The record will show that he has not done so.

Mr VEIVERS (Ashgrove) (8.5 p.m.): As a relatively new member of this Assembly, I am absolutely amazed that the member for Merthyr can stand in this place and speak about principles. He ought to be the last person to do that. He does not know which party he represents. The honourable member for Merthyr should think very deeply about what he said about the principles of the Westminster system, party loyalty and the things that Parliament represents.

I wish to quote from a speech made by the member for Merthyr in 1981—

“First of all, the ALP will support the choice of a nominee from the political party that held the vacant seat. I am opposed to the constitutional amendment that resulted in the situation where parties have to certify to a candidate's membership for nomination to the Senate.”

The principles of loyalty, convention and constitutional arrangements support one nomination from a political party, which is very important.

In a debate in this House on 3 September 1975, the then leader of the Liberal Party and Deputy Premier (Sir Gordon Chalk), who was a man of principle, said—

“The A.L.P. decided that it would not submit more than one nomination and I do not deny the A.L.P. that prerogative.”

He went on to make a very relevant comment, which exposes the Liberal Party's weakness in not supporting its No. 1 nomination, Mr Parer. He said—

“I have said that I will vote for Dr. Colston.”

He was the nominee of the Labor Party. Sir Gordon Chalk went on to say—

“If he is unsuccessful, I again make it quite clear that I do not propose to vote for Mr Field. My reason is that, if I did, I do not believe I would be fulfilling the desired right of selection within my own political party.”

The present leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Nundah (Sir William Knox), was very heavily involved in 1977 in campaigning against the proposed amendments to the Commonwealth Constitution. As well as the Premier and the member for Nundah, another key campaigner was Kathy Martin. The member for Nundah, who campaigned so strongly for the “No” vote at that referendum, was reported in the “Telegraph” of 9 May 1977 as follows—

“On the question of filling casual Senate vacancies, Mr Knox says the move is designed to seek to dictate to state parliaments in an unacceptable way.

He says the referendum would ‘give political parties the right to dictate to state parliaments who should or should not be appointed to fill casual Senate vacancies. People who are not even elected by the people will be dictating to this parliament.’

‘This referendum is a dangerous subversion of the role of state parliaments and their relationship with the Senate,’ he adds.”

I simply wish to record my support for the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition and my disappointment with the Liberal Party for not getting fully behind its No. 1 nominee.

Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (8.9 p.m.): I rise to make a number of points that should be made tonight, particularly when I remember the act of political treachery in

which this Government involved itself on a past occasion. I am speaking about the appointment of Senator Patrick Albert Field, when the Government broke every accepted constitutional convention in this country on casual appointments to the Senate.

On this occasion, as my leader has said, the Labor Party certainly has no compunction in supporting the No. 1 nominee of the Liberal Party. This debate must be shockingly embarrassing for the very small number of people left in the State who support the Liberal Party and, indeed, for the even smaller number of Liberals who are left in this House—the six of them on the back bench.

Mr Mackenroth: The six-pack.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Yes, the six-pack, or, as I have referred to them in the past, four stooges, one reject from the seven dwarfs and Queensland's modern-day version of Paladin.

In Australia, the constitutional law says that, following a vacancy in the Senate, only one nominee is required from a particular political party. However, members of the Liberal Party have come into the Chamber and absolutely prostituted their principles, as they have done on so many occasions in the past, by acceding to the requests and knuckling under once again to the heavyweight requirements and the jackboot tactics of the National Party.

It must make any decent Queenslander sick in the stomach to hear the snide, underhanded, dirty remarks made in this Chamber tonight by the member for Merthyr. He has changed jerseys so many times that one would not want him in a test side because one would never know to whom he would throw the ball. He would leave everyone bamboozled. He is a disgrace to this Parliament. That is the only way in which I can describe him. He is guilty of one of the most shocking offences of which any member of this Assembly could stand accused. He advocated a return to the division, the spitefulness, the hatred and the tactics that were adopted in 1975. He is an irresponsible person—an irresponsible Queenslander and, even worse, an irresponsible Australian.

The honourable member for Merthyr, like the member for Wavell, is a great one for standing up in this Chamber and quoting the policy of the Australian Labor Party. I challenge him or any other member on the Government side of the Chamber to show me any section in the Australian Labor Party rules, platform and policy that advocates the abolition of the Senate. My friends on the other side of the Chamber have one thing to thank the Australian Labor Party for and one person whom they should thank. They like ragging him in this Chamber at every opportunity. I refer to the former Senator Lionel Murphy, now Mr Justice Murphy, who was one of the leading lights in this country. Because of his perseverance, his recommendations for the complete reconstruction of the Senate were accepted in Canberra by members of the National Party and the Liberal Party. The Senate changed from being a place for tired old politicians—tired old men and tired old women—into a Chamber that now operates on a properly constituted, fair and democratic basis of committees involving all members of Parliament.

That cannot be said for this Chamber, in which the conventions are dictated by a National Party that does not want a fair and democratic system of Government. One should never forget the magnificent statement made by the member for Merthyr tonight. He told us that he went out with Sir William Knox and Senator Brian Harradine and campaigned against that constitutional referendum change. What a motley company—a defeated Liberal, Sir William Knox, a man for whom I had some respect but who has broken down and lost his fight, this other thing—I can only describe him as a “thing”—and Senator Brian Harradine! I can understand why the member for Merthyr would be on a street corner with Senator Harradine. They are both card-carrying members of the National Civic Council; that is why he was there with Senator Brian Harradine. As I said, what motley, disgusting, slimy company!

Tonight the Australian Labor Party Opposition shows very clearly, as my leader has pointed out, that it will not be a party to breaking any accepted parliamentary or,

more importantly, constitutional requirements in this State or in this nation. The attacks from the opposite side of the Chamber about the irresponsible approach of the Australian Labor Party are hollow and full of rhetoric. Government members have said that the Opposition does not care about the things that make it worthwhile to be a citizen of this country. Opposition members stand up for the people. The Government has a record of broken promises. The Labor Party is proud of its record.

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (8.15 p.m.): After that tirade by the member for Wolston, perhaps this is the right time to examine the credentials of the members who talk about divisiveness. An election is being fought at the moment in which the main platform put forward by the ALP is that it is opposed to divisiveness. Yet tonight honourable members have been subjected to a bitter outburst by the member for Wolston in which he appeared to be more intent on wrecking reputations than making a contribution to this meeting.

I am not opposed to the prime nomination of the Liberal Party.

Mr Fouras: Why did you want the other two? Tell us that.

Mr BOOTH: There is no harm in having three. If the first nomination was unsatisfactory to the National Party, the National Party would have had the selection.

I do not believe for one moment that members on that side of the House or ALP members throughout Australia are opposed to divisiveness. The Labor Party tries to promote the emotional idea that members on this side of the House stand only for wealthy people. The National Party stands for a fair go for everyone.

It was enlightening today to see how many Labor Party members stood up for the sugar-producers, who are having a bad time. Where were the Labor members today? They were conspicuous by their absence. They were running for cover. The ALP offers nothing to the sugar-producers, who are destitute. Labor members try to be sarcastic and snide.

I have never heard a more hypocritical speech than the one made by the member for Wolston. He should be thoroughly ashamed of himself. If the people want to judge which party is creating divisiveness and which party is prepared to sit down and talk, they will only need to look at tonight's debate. Tonight honourable members have witnessed a classic example of ALP members making claims, attempting to blackmail people and at the same time trying to have two bob each way.

Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (8.18 p.m.): I have never heard a more irrelevant speech than the one made by the member for Warwick. If National Party members quieten down, I will get back to why this meeting has been called. It has been called to discharge an important duty that is set out in the Constitution. That duty is to fill the casual Senate vacancy caused by former Senator Kathy Martin's excursion into House of Representative politics. That constitutional duty is set out very clearly in section 15 of the Constitution, as amended, thankfully, by the people of Australia in 1977.

It does not surprise me that members opposite proudly state that they were out of step with the people of Australia when Australians voted overwhelmingly to amend the Constitution in the referendum in 1977. That is in keeping with the tradition that Labor Party members have come to expect in the Queensland Parliament. It is a tradition that has shamed this Parliament and dispels any claim that this Parliament adopts the Westminster system of Government. I refer to the shameful actions of this Government in the filling of the casual Senate vacancy which followed the death of Senator Bert Milliner.

Mr Underwood: Tell us how they wiped him like a dirty rag after they used him.

Mr HAMILL: That was another shameful act. They did the same to Senator Sheil.

Mr Speaker, I am sure that you would appreciate that the operation of the parliamentary system in Queensland is in a state of delicate balance. Australia's whole

parliamentary system and constitutional system is in a state of delicate balance. Some of the tradition is written in the Australian Constitution and some is in the norms, the conventions and the mores that have to be followed if that Constitution is to work; yet those people who sit opposite—those who so proudly proclaim that they support the traditions in Australian society—have consistently trampled tradition underfoot in Australia. Let us look at their record.

Mr Bailey: Rubbish!

Mr HAMILL: Hello! Bed-knobs and broomsticks has suddenly woken up in the back!

The conservatives are those who have consistently trampled parliamentary and traditional systems underfoot. We have witnessed that in filling casual Senate vacancies. The first instance was by the Lewis coalition Government in New South Wales. Then it occurred in Queensland in the appointment of Albert Patrick Field to fill the casual vacancy in the Senate in 1975. It has happened in other places, too. Conservative Upper Houses in Victoria rejected the Budgets of Governments that had the support of the Parliament. It happened in the Senate when the conservatives, after using the numbers which had been stacked by the unconstitutional activities of this place, withheld the Supply required by a duly elected Government which held the confidence of the House of Representatives.

From the outbursts of the member for Merthyr, it is obvious that the conservatives have learned nothing from that experience. In his speech, he was full of praise for the National Party's Senate leader who, I understand, most people regard as "Senator Who?", the senator who so recently said that he would vote against Supply. It took the Leader of the Opposition—the leader of the coalition in the Federal Parliament (Mr Peacock)—to chastise him.

Mr Davis: Are you talking about that boofhead Boswell?

Mr HAMILL: Yes, that boofhead Boswell.

Mr Sinclair, the Federal leader of the National Party, also dissociated himself from the madcap political exercise that Opposition members have come to expect from the Queensland National Party.

Mr McLean: Is that the same bloke who wants to build four nuclear submarines?

Mr HAMILL: Yes, the same Sinclair.

It is interesting to note the comments of the member for Merthyr (Mr Lane) this evening about the institution of Parliament and how members of the Opposition carry on like larrikins. If he has such regard for the institution of Parliament, why does he repeatedly act as though he is in the institution of bedlam? He would be one of the worst examples of members who consistently abuse Standing Orders and the whole tradition of the Westminster system. The conservatives who uphold the traditions are the ones who supported the vice-regal intervention to sack a duly elected Government—a Government that enjoyed the confidence of the Parliament.

How did members vote in that important division that put Albert Patrick Field into the Senate over the body of the late Senator Milliner? An analysis of who voted on which side discloses some very interesting facts indeed. It is appropriate to read out the list of Liberals, most of whom are no longer in the Parliament, who voted in support of the Australian Labor Party's nomination, Senator Colston. They were Mr Akers, Mr Campbell, Sir Gordon Chalk (the then Liberal Party leader), Dr Edwards (another former Liberal Party leader and my predecessor in the electorate of Ipswich), Mr Gygar—he is back as the member for Stafford and I congratulate him for voting on the correct side on that occasion—Mr Hewitt and Mr Kaus. I regret Mr Kaus's wayward turn. He is no longer with those men of principle who took that stance in 1975. However, I congratulate

him for the stand that he took at that time. Others were Mrs Kyburz, Mr Lamont and Mr Lee, who tonight fell into line with the wishes of the Premier and Treasurer in moving a nomination. After all the scuttle-butt, I was surprised that it was not a self-nomination. There were also Mr Lindsay, Dr Lockwood and Mr Young.

What about those members of the Assembly who were in the parliamentary Liberal Party at that time and who voted for Albert Patrick Field? Surprise, surprise! They both sit on the other side of the House today—Mr Miller and Mr Alison! If ever there was an omen, if ever there was a portent, about their future political activity, it was obvious on that occasion in 1975. I do not expect any better conduct from them today.

In an examination of the history that surrounds this matter, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Warburton, has clearly pointed out the development of the convention that is followed in the replacement of a senator who had resigned with a person from the same political party.

The point is that in 1966, when Liberal Senator Sherrington died, the Senate vacancy was filled by a Liberal nominee, Mr William Heatley. When Liberal Senator Dame Annabelle Rankin left the Senate to take up the High Commission appointment in New Zealand, the vacancy was filled by one nominee from the Liberal Party, Senator Bonner.

Of course, when the Labor Party had to put forward a nominee to fill a vacancy that was created by the death of a Labor senator in 1975, the rules were changed. The traditionalists in the then coalition Government in Queensland changed the rules when it came to dealing with the Labor Party, and a choice of candidates was insisted upon. The Labor Party was required to nominate more than one candidate, and history records what happened when the Labor Party indicated that it was not prepared to fall into line with the political whims of the then Government of Queensland.

In 1981, it was the turn of the National Party to nominate a candidate to fill a Senate vacancy. It was supposedly to be on a choice basis—but what a sham and charade it was when this Parliament elected Senator Florence Bjelke-Petersen to fill the casual Senate vacancy that had been caused by the resignation of former Senator Shiel, who wished to contest—unsuccessfully, as it happened—the McPherson by-election.

In 1984, the sham continues. The Liberal party, running true to form, has fallen into line with the dictates of the National Party Government. Tonight, honourable members have the scene in which the Liberal Party's No. 1 nomination is moved by Sir William Knox. Then two other candidates were put forward.

Mr Miller: Mr Hamill—

Mr HAMILL: I would advise the honourable member for Ithaca to remain quiet. His performance in relation to a casual vacancy in the Senate is a matter of record. I suggest that he keep quiet, because an aura of shame hangs around him.

The matter of choice in 1981 was a sham. The issue was cut and dried; Senator Florence Bjelke-Petersen was to take up her Senate position a few months early. No-one believed that any choice exercised in this Parliament. Indeed, the matter of choice, which was so vaunted by the Government in 1975, did not wash with the people of Queensland, either.

It is interesting to reflect on the circumstances of the time and to consider what was said about the Government's demand of the Labor Party to submit a number of candidates for consideration. The circumstances and events are recorded in "Hansard", and it is worth while recording some of the opinions that were expressed at that time.

In "The Queensland Times", which services my electorate, it was described as a "Shabby Affair", and this was stated—

"Hopefully the State Cabinet will today convince the Premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen of the folly of his stand against accepting the appointment of Dr. Colston for the Senate.

The wave of public opinion against the Government's stand this week has been almost unanimous."

In "The Courier-Mail"—a newspaper not known for its whole-hearted support of the Labor Party—this was said—

"The State Government should abandon its immoral and absurd position on the Colston affair. It is not too late for it to reverse its dishonourable, astonishing stand."

That journal of arch-radicalism that services Mr Speaker's Toowoomba electorate, "The Chronicle", stated—

"Despite the attempts of some to justify breaking with time-honoured precedent and convention by mounting an attack on the propriety of the Opposition's nominee, there can be no doubt that the Government's motives were unscrupulously political."

In the "Townsville Bulletin", beneath the headline "An Unreasonable Attitude"—what an understatement!—the following appeared—

"Sheer cussedness appears to lie behind the attitude of the Premier and most Government Members on the Senate vacancy issue.

The reason, ostensibly, is to give Parliament a choice. This is utterly unconvincing."

It was as unconvincing as the Government is tonight.

Other newspapers echoed the same sentiments. I could well ask—I think all parliamentarians could well ask: Is a choice really being offered tonight? Are members of Parliament really being presented with a choice?

The Liberal Party has fallen into line with the dictates of the Premier and Treasurer—yet again. Three names have been submitted, but honourable members are taking the first nominee. Presumably, that gentleman will be elected to fill the Senate vacancy for Queensland. I wonder whether the Liberal Party had the foresight to require an undertaking from the other nominees that they would resign; that they would not take up the appointment, if they were selected.

I say that because the amendment to the Constitution in 1977 provides that a person selected to fill a vacancy in the Senate shall be from the former senator's political party. If the person selected is no longer a member of that political party at the time the Senate meets, that selection is invalid, and there is a return to square one. I wonder whether the Liberal Party had the political foresight to make sure of that provision tonight. Is the meeting really presented with a choice? I suggest not! I wonder whether those other persons who have been nominated tonight would be expelled from the Liberal Party if the National Party made the decision not to select the first nominee. Does the Liberal party have signed, undated resignations from the other nominees?

I wish Mr Parer well. The Opposition will support him, as the first choice of the Liberal Party. I believe that Mr Parer is used to the decision-making of the Queensland Government. I understand that he was one of the unsuccessful tenderers in the Winchester South tender scandal.

Mr Lee: What is wrong with that?

Mr HAMILL: Nothing is wrong with it, but I wish to make the point that there was widespread public condemnation of the Cabinet decision to award that tender in circumstances which could only be described as questionable. Mr Parer was probably very reserved indeed on 11 March 1981 when "The Courier-Mail" reported, "Mr Parer said yesterday, 'You've got to be a good loser'" I doubt that he will have to be a loser tonight, but let me say that this sort of sham, this charade, this fraud brings no credit to a Queensland Government which has a history of continually flouting the constitutional norms of this country. I believe it is a further injustice in the Parliament, with Government

members piously defending the actions of the Bjelke-Petersen Government in days gone by when it had no hesitation in flouting the constitutional conventions of this country.

Mr MILLER (Ithaca) (8.32 p.m.): The honourable member for Ipswich went to some lengths to explain that the honourable member for Maryborough and I were the only two Liberals who voted for the Government on the occasion of Senator Field's election to the Senate.

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member has misrepresented what I said. What I said was that of those Liberals who voted for Albert Patrick Field only Mr Alison and Mr Miller are present at this meeting, and they sit on the Government side.

Mr MILLER: I accept the honourable member's explanation.

I am very proud of what I did on that occasion.

Opposition Members: Shame!

Mr MILLER: Opposition members do not want me to speak.

Mr McLean interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Bulimba will cease interjecting.

Mr MILLER: I say again that I am very proud of the fact that I looked at what the people of Queensland wanted, not at what a political party wanted.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Lytton is interjecting from other than his usual place.

Mr MILLER: If members opposite will listen I will tell them why I voted for Mr Field. I will be very happy to tell them, but I do not believe for one moment that they want to hear the reason.

Mr McLean: Where are you going next time, London or Paris? You're a hypocrite.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MILLER: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I will endeavour again to make the point that I intend to make before I resume my seat. I do not care if Opposition members scream all night, I intend to make my point. The Government of this State is responsible for ensuring the nomination of a person acceptable to it, not to a political party, to represent the State of Queensland. The Senate exists for one reason, and one reason only—to represent the States. Why do Opposition members think that every State has equal representation in the Senate? What do Opposition members honestly think? The Senate is the State's House.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will not resume my seat until there is order in the House. I call the member for Ithaca.

Mr MILLER: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I want Opposition members, especially the member for Windsor, to understand one thing, namely, that political parties do not control the Senate. The States control the Senate. The Senate is there for one reason, and one reason only—to ensure that the House of Representatives—

Mr Comben interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Windsor under Standing Order No. 123A.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr MILLER: Mr Speaker, I cannot help it if honourable members opposite do not like what I am saying. What I am saying is fact. The Senate is there to ensure that the House of Representatives does what the people want.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr McLean: You are a hypocrite.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have previously warned the member for Bulimba. He has now had his final warning under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr McLean interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I gave the honourable member a final warning. The honourable member has persistently disregarded—

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That probably seems to be very funny to Opposition members at this time of night.

Mr McLean: It is true.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will now leave the House.

Mr McLean: That does not change the fact that he is still a hypocrite.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Will the honourable member please leave the House?

Mr McLean: He is a hypocrite.

Honourable Members interjected.

NAMING OF MEMBER

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Bulimba is named under Standing Order No. 124.

Mr Davis: Do you know what that stands for?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Brisbane Central for complete disregard of the Chair. That is his final warning as well.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (8.39 p.m.): Mr Speaker, we have, for a long time, witnessed a great deal of disrespect for you, for the House and for the rules of the House. I move—

“That the honourable member for Bulimba be suspended from the service of the House for the next seven days.”

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 47		NOES, 24	
Ahern	Lee	Burns	
Alison	Lester	Campbell	
Austin	Lickiss	Comben	
Bailey	Littleproud	D'Arcy	
Bjelke-Petersen	McKechnie	Fouras	
Booth	McPhie	Gibbs, R. J.	
Borbidge	Menzel	Goss	
Cahill	Miller	Hamill	
Chapman	Muntz	Kruger	
Cooper	Newton	Mackenroth	
Elliott	Powell	McElligott	
FitzGerald	Randell	McLean	
Gibbs, I. J.	Row	Milliner	
Glasson	Simpson	Palaszczuk	
Goleby	Stephan	Price	
Gygar	Stoneman	Scott	
Harper	Tenni	Smith	
Harvey	Turner	Underwood	
Henderson	Wharton	Vaughan	
Hinze	White	Veivers	
Innes		Warburton	
Jennings		Warner, A. M.	
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>		<i>Tellers:</i>
Knox	Kaus		Davis
Lane	Neal		Shaw

Resolved in the affirmative.

Whereupon the honourable member for Bulimba withdrew from the Chamber.

VACANCY IN SENATE OF COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Nominations of Warwick Raymond Parer, Ceciley Rose Cranstoun and Frederick Allan Pidgeon, vice Kathryn Jean Martin

Resumption of Debate

Mr MILLER (Ithaca) (8.46 p.m.): The honourable member for Bulimba, who has just left the Chamber, pointed out that I have enough intestinal fortitude to vote the way I want to vote and not the way a political party wants me to vote. As long as I am in this Chamber I will vote the way I want to vote and no political party will tell me how to vote. There are members on the other side of the House who will vote with the Opposition whether they believe in what they are voting for or not.

I have been accused of voting with the Government on the motion to appoint Senator Field. I want to tell the Opposition why I voted for Senator Field. Apart from telling the people of Queensland that the Senate represents the State, I want to remind members of the Opposition of what Mr Whitlam did when he was Prime Minister of Australia. He wanted to manipulate the Senate of Australia. He endeavoured to control the Senate by sending Senator Gair to Ireland as the Ambassador for Australia. The Queensland Government said, "No, you are not. The people of Queensland will have the say." Parliament had the say, and that is why I voted against the Liberal Party and with the Government. The people of Queensland had the right to be represented in the Senate, not because of what Mr Whitlam said but because of what this Government said. It is the Government of Queensland that selects the person to go to Canberra. It was quite right to ask for three nominees.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr MILLER: Obviously the Opposition does not like my reminding the House about the late Senator Gair and the fact that Mr Whitlam, in an endeavour to gain control over the Senate of Australia, sent him overseas. That is what it was all about—controlling the Senate of Australia.

While I am speaking about control of the Upper House, I should say that until 1922 Queensland had an Upper House. Who got rid of that Upper House in Queensland—a Labor Government! How did it get rid of the Upper House?

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr MILLER: The honourable member for Ipswich might like to hear this. In 1922 the Labor Party asked the people in a referendum to decide what should be done with the Upper House. The people wanted the Upper House retained, but the Labor Party got rid of it. That is democracy in its real form! That was similar to Mr Whitlam's actions in sending the late Senator Gair to Ireland.

Mr McPhie interjected.

Mr MILLER: Yes, the Governor of the State was overseas when the Labor Government finally decided that, although the people of Queensland wanted an Upper House and had said so at a referendum, it would do away with the Upper House. That shows what the Labor Party thinks about the Upper House in Queensland and any other State of Australia, and in the Australian Capital Territory.

Make no bones about it—the Labor Party wants to control the Senate. If the people of Queensland are wise enough at the forthcoming election, they will consider whether or not the Senate retains the power that it has now or whether it will lose power. The Prime Minister is trying to get rid of the Senate in another sinister way. He wants to remove the power of the Senate. If we have our way, we will ensure that after the election the Senate continues to have the power that it has now.

An Opposition Member: Why do you yell so loud?

Mr MILLER: If Opposition members keep quiet for five minutes, I will speak normally.

An Honourable Member: It's those Liberals over there.

Mr MILLER: It is not the Liberals over there. Members of the Opposition do not want to hear what I have to say, because they are ashamed of what they have done in the past and they are ashamed of what they are trying to do at the forthcoming election. They are trying to get rid of the Senate, as the Labor Party got rid of the Upper House in this State in 1922. Opposition members are ashamed of what they are doing, and that is why they do not want me to speak tonight.

There is one question that I want to put to this meeting. I believe that when a senator retires it should be only because of ill health or some other personal reason.

Mr Price: You retired from the Liberal Party.

Mr MILLER: I did not retire from politics; that is the difference.

Mr Lane: You are still the member for Ithaca.

Mr MILLER: That is right; I am still the member for Ithaca.

Senator Kathy Martin decided to retire from the Senate after being given a mandate by the people of Queensland for six years. After three years, she decided to resign from the Senate and seek pre-selection by the Liberal Party as a candidate for the House of Representatives. I and the people of Queensland have never been told why. This Parliament is entitled to know why a senator who was representing the Queensland Government and the State of Queensland has resigned from the Senate. I have been given no reason.

Mr Davis: I can tell you.

Mr MILLER: I would not believe the reason put forward by the honourable member for Brisbane Central.

Mr Palaszczuk: You haven't heard it yet.

Mr MILLER: I would not believe what he said.

This is a serious matter. A senator is not elected every day. I want to know why Senator Kathy Martin decided to resign from the Senate and stand for the House of Representatives.

Mr MACKENROTH (Chatsworth) (8.54 p.m.): The speech that honourable members have just heard was a well-lubricated speech. The free grape juice must have been flowing well tonight. The member for Ithaca referred to a mandate and the reason why a senator is being replaced.

Mr Lane: Fancy a drunk like you talking like that about an honourable member!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Lane interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Lane: Sit down, you drunken young lout.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr MACKENROTH: It surprises me that that man would talk about who is a drunk and who is not a drunk. He called me a lout! He is a man who kicked prostitutes down the Valley when he was a police officer.

Mr Lane interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Minister.

Mr MACKENROTH: That is the man who made money on the side by dipping into the pockets of prostitutes and pimps. And he calls me a drunk!

It surprises me that the member for Ithaca talks about the people giving a mandate when they vote in an election. He speaks about Senator Kathy Martin standing down before her six years are up. Yet only 12 months ago he told the people of Ithaca that he would represent them as a Liberal member of Parliament. He was given a mandate by the Liberal Party voters of Ithaca to serve them.

The honourable member then talked about Gair being bought off with an overseas trip. A couple of weeks after the member for Ithaca left the Liberal party, this Government sent him overseas to the Isle of Man and Europe. Whether the member for Ithaca should be elected to represent members of this Parliament overseas did not come before the Parliament. He was sent overseas by the Government. Why did he take that overseas trip? Why did he leave the Liberal Party? He is the man who wants to get down to personalities in this Parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to tell me what that has to do with the filling of the Senate vacancy.

Mr MACKENROTH: I will get to that very shortly. The member for Ithaca said that three names should be put forward tonight because Mr Warwick Parer will be representing the people of Queensland. In the 1977 referendum, 58 per cent of Queenslanders indicated that they wanted only one name put forward to fill a casual Senate vacancy. When this Parliament elected Senator Patrick Field, the Australian Labor Party's nominee was Dr Mal Colston, who is now a senator. At the first available opportunity, the people of Queensland elected Dr Colston.

It is a sham that tonight the Liberal Party in this Parliament should put forward three names. If the Liberal Party had been serious about putting forward three names, it would have selected three people. It did not do that. It selected one person, and then these two other people came out of the blue. I am sure that the member for Nundah has made an agreement with the Premier to ensure that the National Party's preference is chosen. Just to make it look good, in case an Australian Labor party Senate vacancy has to be filled, the Liberal Party put forward two other names. I am sure that a dirty deal has been made for tonight's selection.

The Liberal Party selected only one person. I am sure that the other two people whose names have been put forward have already signed resignations in case they are needed. What surprises me is that the Liberal Party, when it was in Government, had more backbone and was more prepared to stand up against the National Party. Members of the Liberal Party crossed the floor and voted with the Labor Party on more occasions when they were in the coalition Government than when they came over to this side of the House. They do not know where they are. The Labor Party could place more reliance on members of the Liberal Party voting with it when they were part of the coalition. They are crawling and snivelling, trying to get back on the Government front benches, and to get back those cars. They want to be in a coalition Government.

The member for Wolston said that he has never seen a more dejected person in this Parliament than the member for Nundah. What a dejected person he is—a person who would lead his party across the Chamber to support a move to throw a member out of Parliament for seven days for interjecting. He took his members across the Chamber. It is a weak-kneed party; it is a mob of has-beens. If they do not find some backbone, at the next election they will all be finished.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise) (9 p.m.): It is interesting to observe the hypocrisy and double standards of the Labor Party, which are plain for everyone to see. A little while ago, we heard a long tirade from the member for Ipswich about conventions, the Constitution and the sovereignty of Parliament.

Mr Austin: He hasn't got any constitution.

Mr BORBIDGE: The Minister may well be right.

I suggest that if honourable members opposite are concerned about such things—if they are concerned about the Constitution, the sovereignty of this State Parliament and the sovereignty of the courts of this land—they might like to consider what their Federal colleagues are doing through their proposed Bill of Rights. They might examine their own behaviour in this Parliament and their massive disrespect for the Chair and for the traditions of this place. They might consider what is being done—

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: Why is the member talking about tradition? What did Labor do to the national anthem? What is Labor doing in all of the Commonwealth buildings, in which portraits of the Queen are being pulled down and replaced by a portrait of the Labor Minister of the day? If it is so interested in conventions, what is it doing about the flag?

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise to a point of order. I point out to the member for Surfers Paradise that, when we walk into this building, we are greeted by a portrait of the Premier, not by a portrait of the Queen.

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

Mr BORBIDGE: That is typical of the standard of debate that we have heard from the Labor Party tonight. How dare they enter a debate such as this when everyone knows that they are committed to creating a republic in this country. If they want to talk about conventions, let me ask: What have they done to the letters patent of the

office of the Governor-General? What are they doing in so many other crucial ways if these proud conventions are so much a part of democracy as we have come to know it and see it in the history of this Federation? They are a pack of frauds. Tonight they pretend to be the great defenders of democracy in this country.

No party has done more than the Labor Party to undermine the Constitution, the rights of the States, the rights of the Parliament and the rights of the members of this Parliament. It has done it by stealth, deceit and deception.

A little earlier in the debate, the honourable member for Ithaca referred to what happened in this Parliament in May 1922, when the Legislative Council of Queensland was abolished. What are the facts? The honourable member for Ithaca was quite right in what he said.

Mr Miller: It was against the wishes of the people.

Mr BORBIDGE: It was put to the people but did not receive the required vote. What did the Labor Government of the day do? Despite the will of the people, it stacked the Legislative Council and then, when the Governor was overseas, persuaded the Lieutenant-Governor to appoint sufficient members to vote themselves out of a job and the Upper House out of existence.

Mr Hamill: It was not a democratically elected House. It's obvious that you're no democrat.

Mr BORBIDGE: The member for Ipswich says that it was not an elected House. That is correct. However, I remind the honourable member that the people of Queensland, by referendum, indicated that they did not want the Legislative Council abolished. That is what he is ignoring. If the will of the people does not fit in with the Labor Party's philosophies and commitments, the Labor Party is simply not interested.

It is well known in Victoria that if Premier Cain is successful at the next election in that State, he will move to abolish that State's Legislative Council; yet members of the Opposition in this place, political phonies that they are, pretend that they are interested in the Senate, that they are interested in preserving the Constitution and that they are the champions of parliamentary democracy. What a sham! What a fraud!

I hope that the people of Queensland read some of the diatribe that we have heard in the Parliament tonight and remember the history of what the Labor Party has done in Australia over the years whenever it has had the numbers and the will to implement its political philosophy. Let them remember what happened in Queensland in May 1922. I hope that the people realise that that could well happen to the Senate in Australia in this decade as the Labor Party tries to move towards creating a socialist republic in this country. The Labor Party has taken the preliminary steps, and Parliament is now down the track. Day after day, action is taken either to undermine the Constitution or to break down the role of the Governor-General and undermine the rights of the States. It is the absolute height of political hypocrisy for the Labor Party to espouse the virtues of protecting convention and parliamentary democracy. In the history of Australian politics, no party has ravaged convention and democracy as the Labor Party has.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Mr Speaker——

Mr CAMPBELL: Mr Speaker——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Nundah.

Mr DAVIS: I move—

“That the honourable member for Bundaberg be heard.”

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 23

Burns
Campbell
Comben
D'Arcy
Fouras
Gibbs, R. J.
Goss
Hamill
Kruger
Mackenroth
McElligott
McLean
Milliner
Palaszczuk
Price
Scott
Smith
Underwood
Vaughan
Warburton
Warner, A. M.

Tellers:
Davis
Shaw

NOES, 47

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

Resolved in the negative.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (9.14 p.m.), in reply: Mr Speaker——

Mr Campbell: Let's hear it from the invertebrate.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The honourable member may make his rude remarks, and he can make them quite gratuitously to any member at this meeting. However, the honourable member who just interjected has a long way to go before we see what he is made of—if anything at all.

Mr Campbell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Bundaberg under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr Campbell: Record that.

Mr SPEAKER: I thought that the honourable member would like to be in it as well, and he certainly will be.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I was a little disappointed by the debate because I thought that some discussion would take place on the merits of Mr Parer as a representative of the State in the Senate.

Mr Fouras: Do you believe that that is the issue here?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It should be the issue.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Mr Parer is a very worthy citizen of this State and one who is prepared to serve the State in the Senate. He possesses many qualifications that make him eminently suitable for that role. It is a pity that Opposition members have spent so much time raking over old coals, talking about history and distorting it and trying to rewrite history to suit their own philosophy. It is time that they were dealt with.

Mr Scott: What does history tell you?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: History has told me that if we stick to our principles and stand for the things that we know are right we survive.

Mr Comben: You have survived? You call that surviving?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Yes, I have survived. I have survived 28 years in this Parliament by standing up for what I believe is right. I will continue to survive for many years to come. Labor has been trying to get me out of Parliament over all that time, but it has not been successful. And it will not be successful at the next election. I have no problems, I have no qualms and my conscience does not worry me.

As the Premier said, Mr Parer will stand up for Queensland and Queenslanders in the Senate of Australia. I repeat that he will stand up for the Senate—and that is something that not one Opposition member is prepared to do. It is Labor's policy to abolish the Senate, to make the Senate impotent, to destroy the value of the Senate, and to have a highly centralised executive socialist Government run this country.

I cannot understand why any Opposition members support senators. Why should Opposition members want to endorse senators for a Senate that they wish to abolish? Why don't they boycott the Senate elections by not standing candidates? Why don't they demonstrate their real contempt for the Senate?

Federation would not have been considered if the Senate had not been created. The minute the Senate is destroyed, Federation will end and a highly centralised executive republic will come into being. That is the policy of the Australian Labor Party. I again ask Opposition members why they bother to run senators when they have such contempt for the Senate, which is held in such high esteem by Australians generally.

The Premier is right; Warwick Parer will join the 23 and possibly more Liberal senators, and the four and possibly more National Party senators after 1 December, as a strong and powerful representative of the people of this State.

I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that section 15 of the Constitution is not a simple proposition. It calls on the respective State Parliaments to fill vacancies in the proper manner when casual vacancies occur in the Senate. It does not say that there shall be one, two, three or 20 nominees before a Parliament; but it does say that only one person ultimately will be selected on the recommendation of the Parliament through the Premier and the Governor of the State, and through the President of the Senate. That is what is happening tonight.

Mr Miller: Tell the Opposition why that is so.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It will be a little history for them. It is because the ALP, for the first time in this country's history, has politicised the Constitution of Australia, and political parties are entrenched in the Constitution of Australia. That will be to the detriment of the Constitution and will ultimately lead to the most critical constitutional crisis that this country will ever face.

The day will come when a senator resigns from his party and from the Senate. The Parliament of the day will have to find some way of overcoming the problems caused by the casual vacancy. I wonder what it will do. The Constitution has not provided for that circumstance, among others, that could arise.

The Constitution contains nothing to guide State Parliaments in filling such a casual vacancy. When that situation occurs, as it undoubtedly will, the nation will be faced with a major constitutional crisis, particularly if Government numbers in the Senate are small. That will be an interesting event. I hope that I am around when it occurs, because it will justify my stand in 1977 in the campaign to amend the Constitution. It will also justify the stand taken by Kathy Martin, against the wishes of her party, in opposing the amendment. The provision is a mistake but, because it is the law in this country, this Parliament must honour and support it.

Because of the deficiency in the Constitution, the day will come when a constitutional crisis will occur that will outdo all other constitutional crises. Unfortunately, the Constitution has been politicised. The ALP can be blamed for that deficiency, but that does not worry Opposition members at all. To them, the Constitution is just a piece of paper that can be torn up, and the Australian flag is just a limp rag.

I turn now to the policy of the ALP. The ALP has refused to boycott the Senate, yet it has put up senators in the hope that they will eventually vote the Senate out of office or cause problems for it. Three nominations have been placed before this meeting, and I am not ashamed of that. The Liberal Party was asked to put up three names and it had no trouble in doing so. No pre-signed resignations from the party by those nominees exist. The Liberal Party will not hold the meeting in contempt. The meeting is entitled to have three, four or even five nominations, and I hope that it will support the Liberal Party's first preference.

If a Labor Party casual vacancy occurred in the Senate it would find it hard to put up one name. The meeting would probably be presented with a nominee from every faction—one from the Left, one from the centre Left, one from the Right, one from the united Left/Right, one from the centre, one from the old guard, one from the rearguard—

A Government Member: One from the mudguard.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: There would be a multitude of nominations. The Labor Party must be one of the most democratic parties in Australia. However, it has so many factions that they get in one another's road. A good example is the recent attempt by Gareth Evans to seek selection for the House of Representatives. What did the Victorian branch of the Labor Party do to him? The left wing rolled him so that he could not go into the Lower House. Had Gareth Evans been successful in his attempt to stand for the House of Representatives, I wonder how the Victorian branch of the Labor Party would have filled the resulting casual vacancy in the Senate. It would be a crisis. One can imagine the multitude of candidates that would appear out of the woodwork to fill that vacancy.

Mr Innes: That would have to be the most intelligent thing that the socialist Left ever did.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Well, that is what the Left did to Gareth Evans, who may be Bob Hawke's successor. I do not know what the Labor Party has in mind for him.

The Labor Party should not criticise the nominations of the Liberal Party because I doubt whether it could select one name to put before the meeting. Because of the hatred and bitterness that exists between the many factions of the Labor Party, I doubt whether it could select one name.

Mr Davis: Tell us about when you got knifed in the back by Llew Edwards.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Did some members of the Labor Party get knifed in the back? I do not know about those sorts of things. I know that, if there was to be any knifing in the back in the Labor Party, the honourable member for Brisbane Central would be part of that plot. He has always been very clever and has stood a long way back in the shadows.

I am certainly very proud to be seen with Senator Harradine. I know the leader of the left faction of the ALP in this House rubishes Senator Harradine, but the Labor Party cannot beat him in Tasmania. In fact, after 1 December he will have a running mate in the Senate. He is held in very high regard in that State. No matter what the Labor Party has tried to do to Senator Harradine by way of personal abuse, rumour and mud-slinging, he has been able to stand above all that and is still held in high regard throughout that State. Because of his reputation, he will gain a running mate on 1 December at the expense of the Labor Party.

Warwick Parer is a man of considerable merit. Honourable members will be proud to be associated with him and to have him as part of the Queensland team in the Senate.

Mr White: He comes from a famous family.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Indeed he does. He is a man with many interests in the State and is a man of quality. The Liberal Party is delighted to be able to support him, and I hope that the Parliament will, too.

Motion (Sir William Knox) agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The motion has been agreed to and Warwick Raymond Parer has accordingly been elected to fill the vacancy in the Senate of the Parliament of the Commonwealth.

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer): I move—

“That Mr Speaker inform His Excellency the Governor that Warwick Raymond Parer has been chosen to hold the place in the Senate of the Parliament of the Commonwealth rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator Kathryn Jean Martin.”

Motion agreed to.

The meeting concluded at 9.28 p.m.