

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 1985**

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QUEENSLAND



# Parliamentary Debates

[HANSARD]

Legislative Assembly

SECOND SESSION OF THE FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT—continued

(Second Period)

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TUESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 1985

Under the provisions of the motion for special adjournment agreed to by the House on 28 November 1984, the House met at 11 a.m.

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

## ROCKHAMPTON BY-ELECTION

### Return of Writ

Mr SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that the writ issued by me on 25 January 1985 for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Rockhampton has been returned to me with a certificate endorsed thereon by the returning officer of the election, on 16 February, of Paul Joseph Braddy, Esquire, to serve as such member.

### Member Sworn

Mr Braddy was introduced, took the oath of allegiance, and subscribed the roll.

**ASSENT TO BILLS**

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr Speaker—

Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act Amendment Bill;  
 Racing and Betting Act Amendment Bill (No. 2);  
 Clean Air Act Amendment Bill;  
 Director of Prosecutions Bill;  
 Fire Brigades Act and Another Act Amendment Bill;  
 Judges' Pensions Act Amendment Bill (No. 2);  
 Land Tax Act Amendment Bill;  
 Noise Abatement Act Amendment Bill;  
 Torres Strait Fisheries Bill;  
 Traffic Acts Amendment Bill;  
 Brisbane Trades Hall Management Bill;  
 Health Act Amendment Bill (No. 2);  
 Local Government (Chinatown Mall) Bill;  
 Main Roads Act Amendment Bill;  
 Mortgages (Secondary Market) Act Amendment Bill;  
 Pay-roll Tax Act Amendment Bill (No. 2);  
 Rural Fires Act Amendment Bill;  
 Stamp Act Amendment Bill (No. 2);  
 Wheat Marketing Bill;  
 Breakwater Island Casino Agreement Bill;  
 Gladstone Area Water Board Bill;  
 Building Act Amendment Bill (No. 2);  
 Industrial (Commercial Practices) Bill;  
 Films (Censorship and Review) Acts Amendment Bill;  
 Urban Public Passenger Transport Bill;  
 Electricity Act Amendment Bill.

**PAPERS PRINTED DURING RECESS**

**Mr SPEAKER:** I have to report that the following papers were ordered to be printed and circulated during the recess—

Reports—

Queensland Probation and Parole Service 1983-84  
 Department of Welfare Services 1983-84  
 Comptroller-General of Prisons 1983-84  
 Queensland Police Department 1983-84  
 Electricity Supply Industry 1983-84  
 Queensland Department of Mines  
 Queensland Recreation Council 1983-84  
 Agricultural Bank 1983-84  
 Brisbane Market Trust 1983-84.

### CIRCULATION AND COST OF "HANSARD"

Mr SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Chief Reporter, Parliamentary Reporting Staff, of his report on the circulation and cost of "Hansard" for the session of 1983-84.

### PRIVILEGE OF COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS

#### Statement by Mr Speaker

Mr SPEAKER: I draw the attention of the House to an article that appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 8 February 1985 in which the author outlined certain proposals that he said were "proposed in a confidential agenda item" to the Standing Orders Committee.

Honourable members and members of the media ought to be made aware that it is a contempt of the House for any person to publish any documents received by a committee until evidence has been reported to the House, or until its publication has been authorised by the committee or by the House.

I further remind honourable members that the privilege of the House to decide its own proceedings is paramount. It is one that ought to be guarded jealously by all members. This can be maintained only by all persons keeping confidential information that is made available to them. In future, the disclosure of matters that are confidential to committees of this House will be treated as a very serious matter.

### MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

#### Death of Hon. J. E. H. Houghton

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.6 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Honourable James Edward Hiram Houghton, former member and Speaker of the Parliament of Queensland.

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

For more than 19 years, Mr Houghton gave outstanding service to the people of his electorate of Redcliffe and he served the people of Queensland in this Parliament with dignity and excellence, both as a back-bencher and later as Speaker.

I was a very close friend and colleague of the late Speaker throughout the entire period of his parliamentary career, and I deeply regret his passing, as I am sure all other honourable members do.

Mr Houghton was Sydney-born but Queensland-bred. He was educated at the Humpybong State School on the Redcliffe Peninsula and later at the Brisbane Technical College.

He embarked on a banking career and for the first 19 years of his working life he gave good service to the Commercial Bank of Australia and was posted to Woolloongabba, Ipswich, and Proston, where I first met him.

At the outbreak of World War II, Jim Houghton joined the army and, during his six years of service, he rose through the ranks to become a major. After the war, he established a real estate business at Proston. Later, he moved to Redcliffe.

Involving himself in public life, he was elected as the first mayor of the city of Redcliffe in 1955 and served in that capacity until May 1964. He had an impressive record of community service, and was involved in many organisations, including the board of the Real Estate Institute of Queensland, the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade, the Consumer Protection Committee, and the Constitution Reform Committee. In addition, he was a trustee of the Incapacitated Servicemen and Women's Association and the Returned Servicemen's League. He was also patron and president of many sporting clubs and other bodies. He was a life member of Lions International.

On 28 May 1960, Mr Houghton entered State Parliament as the member for the newly-created seat of Redcliffe. He was first elected as an independent. Later he joined the Liberal Party, and finally he became a member of the National Party. He applied himself to Parliament with the same dedication and diligence that marked his career in business and in all areas of community service in which he became involved. For nine years, from 1963, he served as secretary of the then Country Party in Parliament, and he was a Temporary Chairman of Committees from 1969 to 1972.

In October 1974, the House elected Jim Houghton as its Speaker. In that very difficult and responsible position, he served with distinction and endeavoured at all times to be impartial in his rulings. However, on 4 July 1979, ill-health forced him to resign from the position of Speaker and the Parliament.

In retirement, Mr Houghton continued to be regarded by many as a person who could be approached for help. He readily assisted people and tried to solve their problems to the best of his ability.

To his widow, Mary, and their four children, we extend our deepest sympathy in their great loss of a loving husband, a kind and generous father and a true Queensland.

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (11.10 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer to express sympathy to the family of the late James Edward Hiram Houghton. As the Premier and Treasurer has said, Jim Houghton's public service stretched over several decades. In 1955 he was elected as the first mayor of Redcliffe, a position which he held for nine years. In the State election in May 1960, Mr Houghton established another first when he became the first member for Redcliffe. He was very proud to be the member for Redcliffe, and his personal attention to the problems of the people whom he represented won him many friends.

Mr Houghton's interest in Redcliffe dated back to his primary school days when he attended the Humpybong State School. After completing secondary studies at the Brisbane Technical College, he joined the Commercial Bank of Australia and served as a bank clerk at Woolloongabba, Ipswich and Proston. After war service with the 2/12 Battalion in Papua New Guinea, he was able to settle back into banking. With his family he moved back to Proston and bought a general business. He later returned to Redcliffe and commenced a real estate business.

He was always public-minded and served as a member of the board of the Real Estate Institute of Queensland for 15 years. He was also a member of the board of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade for 18 years, a trustee of the Incapacitated Soldiers Association and the Returned Servicemen's League and a member of the Consumer Protection Committee. In appreciation of his efforts on behalf of trotting, the Redcliffe Trotting Club made him a life member.

His period as Speaker was noted for his strict enforcement of the rules of dress, dignity and decorum. Only 55 minutes after taking the chair for the first time as Speaker, he suspended a member for continual interjections. Mr Houghton particularly rejected those members who used parliamentary privilege to make unfounded allegations. In his maiden speech, Mr Houghton gave notice of his interest in keeping debate within the bounds of parliamentary dignity. In that speech he castigated members who used the Chamber as a place where, under parliamentary privilege, they could denigrate a person

or organisation. He was particularly critical of members who, having made allegations, refused to make information available outside the House to assist police investigations.

Mr Houghton worked hard to have the toll on the Hornibrook Highway removed and have the road links with Redcliffe upgraded. With the naming of the Houghton Highway, which links Redcliffe to the bayside suburb of Brighton, the Government recognised his contribution to Queensland's development, and to the people of Redcliffe in particular.

I join with the Premier and Treasurer in extending condolences to the widow and family of the late Mr Houghton.

**Mr WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (11.12 a.m.): The Queensland Parliament has been very fortunate in that some of those members who have been Speakers have been men of great personality and individuality. As members, we are all very much aware of the unique role that a Speaker has to play in the Parliament.

James Edward Hiram Houghton was known to one and all as Jim Houghton or "Big Jim". He certainly had a very chequered political career. His experience with more than one political party and his rebellious streak made him a lively, popular and very respected man, especially on the Redcliffe peninsula. From a personal point of view, I always found Jim Houghton very approachable and he was certainly ever ready to chat in a friendly fashion.

As the umpire in this place, Jim Houghton certainly had his hands full, as all Speakers do, in discharging his responsibilities. Many of us can remember some of his more famous comments, which are still reiterated from time to time. Jim Houghton was prepared to speak his mind and was not afraid of doing so. He will long be remembered by those whom he represented in local government, in this Parliament and in the many community organisations with which he was associated. To Mrs Houghton and the Houghton family, I say that the Opposition sincerely joins with the Government in this motion of condolence.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX** (Nundah) (11.14 a.m.): The Liberal Party supports the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer and seconded by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer.

On occasions, Jim Houghton was a man who spoke very bluntly and not always popularly. He held principles which he considered important to him and he made a point of making his views known.

Those honourable members who attended the funeral service would have learnt a great deal more about Jim Houghton from those who were present, and particularly from the panegyric delivered by the minister. Jim Houghton was greatly interested in the rights of individuals. Because of that, he took up many causes, including a very special interest in consumer affairs. Because of his interest, he served on a consumer affairs committee, and that eventually led to the establishment of the Consumer Affairs Bureau in this State.

He was jealous of Parliament. Although he did not know a great deal about Parliament when he was first elected, he came to respect it and was jealous of the institution and what it represented. Those who heard him speak at various conferences would know that he became very interested in the establishment of a Department of the Parliament, which has been established in some other Parliaments operating under the Westminster system. Perhaps that matter could be pursued in memory of Jim Houghton's efforts.

I found that one of his greatest attributes was a personal one. On many of the occasions that I spent yarning with him in the back room of his business at Redcliffe I discovered that he had a tremendous retinue of friends, who called to talk and yarn. That was one of his great attributes and no doubt was why he was the first mayor of Redcliffe and why he became a very distinguished citizen in that area. He made himself

available to everyone. When he became Speaker, he translated that attribute into the Assembly. Every member of this Assembly who was present at the time when Jim was Speaker in this Parliament could go to his chambers and sit down and have a comfortable conversation with him on any matter of concern. That particular trait of Jim Houghton will be remembered by many past and present members of this Assembly, who enjoyed his company and the conversations that they had with him.

Jim Houghton's interest in the Parliament was somewhat dampened by the ill health that he suffered towards the end of his time as Speaker. Not very many people realise the enormous agony in which he lived his last few years and the injuries and operations that plagued him for some time. His physical disability in moving round in his last few years was enormous. I do not want to dwell on that matter. Many honourable members admired him as a man of senior years who was able to cope with the tremendous difficulties that faced him because of that illness.

The members of the Liberal Party join in extending their very sincere condolences to his widow, his family and his relatives.

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology) (11.18 a.m.): When I was elected to this Assembly in 1968, I shared a room with Jim Houghton. When one is elected in a by-election, Parliament can be a lonely place; but it was not for me because of the friendship that was offered to me by Jim Houghton and a few other persons. From that time until his death, Jim Houghton remained my good friend. Because of our proximity in the little room in the old Parliament House, we got to know each other very well. We used to interject on each other's deputations and we shared many happy times together. Like other honourable members, I speak with some knowledge of the man. Jim Houghton and I were good friends, and we were very close.

Jim Houghton had a great feeling for the ordinary bloke—the Aussie battler. Fishermen, housewives and pensioners—diminutive people with little problems—would come in to see Jim in a small room in Parliament House. It seemed that the very next day he was in this Chamber lashing somebody about the inequity of a particular situation and pleading for those persons. At times I was astonished. I asked, "Was that the guy who came in to see you yesterday?" He would lecture me and say, "That is what this Parliament is all about—the ordinary people. They probably receive the most benefit from it. You are their last hope." I believe that he was right. In spite of what happened to him during his years in this place, Jim Houghton always held that this was the place in which the ordinary citizens' rights were addressed.

Jim Houghton was at all times completely honest with himself and his principles. Whenever he spoke in this Parliament he did not spare his Government or himself.

Jim Houghton's perspective on parliamentary life was of tremendous importance to me. I use the word "perspective"; perhaps it is better described as a sense of humour. Jim Houghton's sense of humour carried him through some very difficult times in this place. He had a great sense of humour and a great perspective of things.

I could relate to honourable members many incidents concerning Jim Houghton. However, I particularly recall one incident that he often mentioned to me. It related to the time when he was secretary of the Country Party, as it then was, and Frank Nicklin was the Premier. A matter that had arisen in the party meeting caused the Cabinet Ministers some considerable concern during the ensuing week. That matter was to come up again for discussion the following week. Much discussion took place as to how the matter would be handled when it came up again. Naturally, as secretary of the party, Jim was from time to time brought into those discussions in an endeavour to achieve a resolution. In the final analysis, it was resolved that Jim Houghton be sent home sick, taking the minutes with him, half an hour before the meeting was to begin. Jim often spoke about that incident. I asked him, "Did it work?" He said, "Of course it did. It was a master stroke. No meeting took place the following week, the Parliament rose, the recess followed and the problem blew over."

Honourable members need to maintain a sense of humour, as Jim Houghton did. Those of us who shared his sense of humour are the richer for it. Jim Houghton was a great member for Redcliffe. He battled on behalf of his patch in Redcliffe. On many occasions in the party room he drove us mad talking about various issues affecting his electorate, such as Wednesday night trotting at the Redcliffe track and, of course, the Hornibrook Highway. Jim would have made 100 speeches in this place concerning the Hornibrook Highway. It was very fortunate that the bridge was finally built, and the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) decided to call it the Houghton Highway. At that time no-one in Redcliffe or in this place argued against it.

I offer my sympathy to Jim's wife, Mary, and to his children. They have lost a great fellow, and I have lost a good friend. I summarise the Jim Houghton that I knew in this way: he was, in the best sense of the Australian vernacular, a damned good bloke.

**Mr WHITE (Redcliffe) (11.23 a.m.):** I support the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer and seconded by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer and already supported by other members.

Undoubtedly, Jim Houghton will go down in the history of this State as being a great Queenslander. He was most certainly a wonderful person. He was also a most approachable person, and he was somebody that my father befriended many, many years ago.

As was indicated earlier by the Premier and Treasurer, Jim Houghton was educated at the Humpybong State School. He was very proud of that fact. Last year he took the opportunity of revisiting that school. In fact, he tried to go there each year and talk to the youngsters. It is pleasing that at the school entrance, a little plaque has been erected pointing out that Jim Houghton attended that school. I am sure that students who attend that school in the future will remember Jim Houghton and speak of him with great, great affection.

He came to Redcliffe as a very young lad. He stayed with his aunt, Mrs Beedham, who then owned the local picture theatre. Like so many people who went to Redcliffe in those days, he and his wife, Mary, were very much pioneers on the Redcliffe peninsula.

During his mayoralty, the Redcliffe peninsula experienced unprecedented development and growth. He had the fortitude to oversee the provision of such basic essentials as an adequate water supply and a sewerage system, as well as the establishment of roads to enable Redcliffe to progress. I have no doubt that his personal drive and determination were largely responsible for having those decisions made by the Redcliffe City Council and supported by the Government. I am sure that the people of Redcliffe will be eternally grateful for its efforts.

One has only to visit the peninsula today to see the facilities built during Jim Houghton's period in public life. I know how strongly he felt early in that period about the provision of a major hospital. It gave him immense pleasure when—from memory, it was in 1980—the hospital was officially opened by the then Minister for Health (Sir William Knox).

One could refer to many other facilities on the peninsula for which he was responsible. The Houghton Highway, of course, has been mentioned already. He was determined, first, to have the toll removed from the old bridge and, second, to have a new bridge built. It was a wonderful day for him when the Houghton Highway was opened.

As has already been said, he was the first mayor of the city of Redcliffe. He was mayor when Redcliffe was proclaimed a city. On that occasion, Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra of Kent visited Redcliffe to celebrate the proclamation.

It could be said that Jim Houghton did for Redcliffe what Clem Jones did for Brisbane. For example, he had the courage to borrow for capital works. It is rather interesting now to reflect on the figures. On behalf of the Redcliffe City Council, he

borrowed a large sum of money at 4.75 per cent, an interest rate that was then regarded as exorbitant. That was in the mid-1950s. Today those loans have largely been repaid.

He initiated the concept of a community cultural centre for Redcliffe and organised a national architectural competition for the design. The winners were two young Brisbane architects, Noel Burnett and Grahame Petersen. It is interesting to note that they were the architects who designed the recently completed community centre at Redcliffe.

Jim Houghton will always be remembered as an independent person who was not afraid to speak his mind, even though it might entail disputation with colleagues. After serving as a successful mayor, he was elected to Parliament in 1960 as an independent, after he lost preselection for the Country Party, as it then was. He joined the parliamentary Liberal Party and was subsequently denied access to the joint-party room. As a result, he resigned from the Liberal Party. In 1962, he rejoined the Country Party. At the time, he said that he was rather tired of sitting on the cross-benches—"like a mangy dog", I think were his words. Following that, he served on a wide variety of Government committees. He chaired the Parliamentary Buildings Committee, which was responsible for the construction of the Parliamentary Annexe. The completion of that was the first major addition to the parliamentary complex since the completion of the western wing in 1891.

As has been mentioned, Jim Houghton had a high regard for the independence of the Parliament and for the parliamentary institution. His disagreement with the executive of the day is well documented. The proclamation of the Financial Administration and Audit Act in 1978 effectively removed control from Parliament to the Government. He felt very strongly about that. Perhaps it was one of the reasons why he decided to get out.

Finally, on behalf of my wife, Rhonda, and the people of Redcliffe, I take this opportunity to express sympathy to Mary and her family.

**Mr BURNS** (Lytton) (11.29 a.m.): Briefly, I pay my tribute to Jim Houghton, who was the Speaker of the Parliament during my period as Leader of the Opposition from 1974 to 1978. He was Speaker from 1974 until 1979.

Politics is a funny old game. When I entered Parliament, I spent most of my time campaigning against Jim Houghton, and in the first few years of my term in Parliament, I did not like some of the speeches that he made. However, we finally became very good friends because I learnt to admire the way in which Jim Houghton stood up for members of Parliament and for the things in which he believed.

I acknowledge that I am not renowned for the good things that I say about Speakers—as you, Mr Speaker, would know. However, I must say that Jim Houghton was a Speaker who stood up for the members of this Assembly, and I must pay tribute to him for that. For example, as far as the role of members was concerned, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was something that the Government seemed to use for the purpose of sending someone on an overseas trip. We did not know anything that occurred, because meetings were never held here. In contrast, when Jim Houghton became Speaker, all honourable members were suddenly a part of the association, meetings were held frequently, and our association was a part of the Commonwealth. Jim Houghton did that because he believed that it was necessary for the association to be run in such a manner.

I can think of a number of other instances in which Jim Houghton made his mark on me as a friend. Jim Houghton and I knew each other because of our enjoyment of the Bay, and we regularly spoke on the telephone about Moreton Bay and Moreton Island. We became good mates also because of the pecking order that exists at functions. The Leader of the Opposition is ranked one position lower than the Speaker, who follows behind the Ministers of the Cabinet. In those days, Jim Houghton and I were at the bottom of the list, so we often got together.

I am sorry that Jim Houghton has gone. I was also sorry that in the last years of his life his hip deteriorated so badly that he was unable to get in and out of a boat and was unable to go fishing as often as he would have liked. I am sure that Mrs Mary Houghton will miss him, because she and Jim were a great pair. The Houghton family worked together and stuck together. I offer my condolences and those of my wife, Angela, and the condolences of the members of my own political party to the Houghton family.

**Mr HARTWIG (Callide)** (11.31 a.m.): I join in the expressions of condolence to the members of the family of the late Mr Jim Houghton in the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) and seconded by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn).

One of the great experiences of my lifetime was my association with Jim Houghton, both as a member of Parliament and as a friend. Jim Houghton was a man whose advice one could always respect.

The facilities and conveniences enjoyed today by honourable members in this building and in the Parliamentary Annexe are due in no small measure to the insistence by Jim Houghton that they be incorporated in the construction. I say that because I served on the Parliamentary Buildings Committee with Jim Houghton. Jim always had a great respect for members of Parliament, and it became the prime purpose of the Buildings Committee to do everything it could to assist in providing comfort for them and making Parliament House a better place in which to live and serve. Jim Houghton did a great job.

I also respected his sense of humour, which was referred to earlier. One of his comments that I will always recollect was that, in the dining-room, members of Parliament were slowly digging their graves with their knives and forks. That is the way Jim Houghton described their over-indulgence in eating.

He displayed an independent attitude to life, and he served this State very well. I first met him when he was the mayor of Redcliffe, and he also served his area well in that capacity.

I express my sincere condolences to Mrs Houghton and to the family of the late Jim Houghton.

**Hon. R. J. HINZE** (Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing) (11.33 a.m.): I join with all other honourable members in offering condolences to relatives of the late Mr Jim Houghton. I shall be very brief, but I want it recorded that I regarded Jim Houghton as a great personal friend.

It is good to sit and listen to the various statements made by honourable members this morning. I recall one or two incidents that occurred when Jim Houghton and I were back-benchers. Jim and I went through the local government sphere together in the 1950s, and in the 1960s, we entered this Assembly. In those days, I would always arrive early, and Jim would arrive at about 9.30 in the morning. When he came into my room, he would say, "Well now, it's time that we had a heart starter." If anyone does not know what that is, I do not intend to tell them. After we had had a heart starter, Jim Houghton and I would discuss what the day would bring. Jim would often say, "Well, you cannot fly on one wing, can you?" I would say, "No", and then we would set about correcting that. All of our days together in this House were spent in appreciation of each other, and he occupied with great dignity the position that you now occupy, Mr Speaker.

My main point in speaking is to record the way that his wife, Mary, attended to the affairs of this House. She was, and still is, a perfect lady, the type of person that we all love to meet. I am pleased to still have the privilege of speaking to her on occasions.

I believe I have lost a great friend—a very, very good man who served his country in war and in politics. He was a good friend—a good bloke to know.

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

### ELECTRICITY STRIKE

**Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.36 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That this Parliament—

(1) condemns both the Electrical Trades Union and the Municipal Officers Association of Australia for their failure to direct their members to obey the orders of the Industrial Commission to terminate the industrial action which was causing excessive hardship and inconvenience to their fellow citizens and substantial losses to the Queensland economy; and

(2) deplors the failure of the Leader of the Opposition in this House and his Australian Labor Party parliamentary colleagues to take any overt steps to persuade the members of the Electrical Trades Union and the members of the Municipal Officers Association of Australia to obey the orders of the Industrial Commission.”

I wish to outline to the House how Queensland and Queenslanders were held to ransom by militant, irresponsible union leaders during the power dispute.

I also want to highlight the position of the State Labor Opposition, which supported the union action—against the people of Queensland and against the law. Today they must be downright ashamed of themselves. They sided with the union law-breakers. They showed scant regard for lawful and democratic processes, and no concern for the interests of Queenslanders generally.

This debate today will give Opposition members another opportunity to show what they put first—the interests of Queensland and Queenslanders or the misplaced motives of union bosses.

A group of irresponsible union bosses who defied the law, supported by the Leader of the Opposition and others, created a position that caused losses of many hundreds of millions of dollars and great suffering for a great many people; wrecked hundreds of businesses, and put many thousands of people out of work permanently. How proud honourable members opposite must be of their achievement.

The history of this section of the union movement has been one continuous record of strikes and defiance of law and disrespect for the rights of the long-suffering public. Now the Government has said, “No more.” Enough is enough. The strike caused one of the saddest and most costly periods in our history. But from it must emerge something better—a strong disputes-settling procedure, enshrined in law, to provide strike-free electricity supply for Queenslanders in the future. That is what must emerge from the dispute.

The estimated losses to industry from the strike exceed \$600m. Revenue loss to the Government was at least \$25m. 6 000 jobs were lost, unknown numbers of businesses were closed, and 2 000 firms applied for loans under the Government’s assistance package. Honourable members opposite ought to be proud that the Labor Party and the unions were responsible for putting 6 000 people out of work, many of them permanently.

The strike exposed the untold hardships and suffering that those union bosses inflicted on people, including old people, sick people and pensioners. In this cowardly exercise the unions were supported, encouraged and abetted by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton). When he announced that the strike was over, he confirmed his link and association with the law-breakers. He wanted to get some free television-time out of it. He said that it gave him a great deal of joy to be able to make the announcement. However, he did not express one iota of sorrow or regret for what he and others had been responsible for achieving—making all the people suffer.

What the Leader of the Opposition did not tell the public about that evening was the great cave-in that had taken place at Trades Hall in the preceding hours. All

honourable members would have seen the headlines in the "Telegraph" at lunch-time that day stating, "No Deal". The Government's proposal to resolve the dispute and restore full power had been rejected by the Trades and Labor Council. Its president, Harry Hauenschild, said that the proposal would put the dispute a couple of steps backward rather than forward. But, in typical fashion, the members of the Trades and Labor Council rejected the proposal out of hand without first checking with those people who were involved in the dispute. On that occasion they got caught out very nicely. By mid-afternoon it was becoming crystal clear that the operators in the power stations would accept the proposal that I, on behalf of the Government, had put to them and restore full power. In other words, they deserted their union bosses. However, it was a long time before the union bosses realised what was happening.

**Mr WARBURTON:** I rise to a point of order. The Premier and Treasurer has moved what I had hoped would be an important motion. I understand that it is scribbled on a piece of ordinary notepaper. Will he do the decent thing and distribute copies of the motion to all members?

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

**Mr Mackenroth:** He wants us to debate it.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier can debate the motion in whatever way he prefers. If he has the motion written on a piece of paper, that is quite legitimate. As I have said, there is no point of order.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** It is quite clear that the Leader of the Opposition and other Opposition members have a very guilty conscience. They do not want a record kept of what took place. After coming up through the union movement, as most Opposition members have done, they have a fairly tough hide; but they have to cop a bit. All I want to do is place on the record for all time details of the type of people that Opposition members are, how callous they are with the public and how irresponsible they are in dealing with the economy of this State.

I was saying that the decision of the operators in the power stations to accept the Government's proposal and restore full power left the Trades and Labor Council with no option but to do a complete about-face and recommend that full power be restored. The Leader of the Opposition was called upon by his union mates to appear on television, which he said he enjoyed doing. In order to help his union comrades, he appeared on television in a union face-saving exercise to attempt to cover up the fact that the TLC's rejection of the solution had been overturned by the rank and file that afternoon. The TLC could not stop the action of the rank and file; it was done like a dinner. The Leader of the Opposition also was done like a dinner.

Although the Government was able to bring the strike to an end, it must, and will, do everything to ensure that the people of this State have a stable, strike-free electricity industry. I am sure that the people who work in the industry now have a deeper understanding and awareness of their obligation—indeed their duty—towards others than they had before the strike. It is a vital industry around which all other activities revolve. Therefore, there must, and will, be a continuity about that.

I pay a tribute, for example, to the Police Force, which operates well without strikes. It can be done, and the Police Force has proved it. Opposition members seem to think that the Government will move away from this strike area. The people of this State have copped enough. They are sick to death of the Labor Party, unionism and the militant thuggery of trade unions. The power industry must remain and operate in a constant and stable manner.

A lot of play has been made by the unions on the need to re-employ those ETU members who caused their own dismissal. However, I have not heard one word of sympathy for the thousands of people who were forced by the unions to lose their jobs and who have little chance of obtaining a good job again.

Those members of the Electrical Trades Union who still do not have jobs learnt that it is very fine and noble to stick by their union and their mates; but they forgot to stick by those who pay their wages. They have since learnt that it is not their union mates who pay their salaries.

**Mr Warburton** interjected.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** They have learnt a lot, and I think that the Leader of the Opposition has learnt a lot, too.

It is interesting to realise that the only ones who were not hurt—they received a good pay cheque every fortnight—were the irresponsible union leaders whose members followed them so blindly. There is no question that they received their pay. The Leader of the Opposition recommended that the workers stay out on strike, and he was paid.

**An Opposition Member:** You got your pay!

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Of course I did. I earned mine—the honourable member did not. He should have forfeited his pay.

The strike was long and protracted and such was the nature of the media coverage that people could be forgiven if they were not quite sure how it all came about. For everyone's benefit, particularly that of members of the Opposition, I will retrace the major aspects that led to the dispute. When members opposite comprehend the basis of the dispute, it is hoped that they will realise how weak-kneed, foolish and stupid they were to support the union leaders who were breaking the law.

The central issue of the dispute was whether the management of a statutory authority in Queensland had the right to organise its work-force and work programs in the most efficient way possible. That is what it was all about. The aim of SEQEB management in this instance was to contain costs and to provide power on a reliable and reasonably priced basis. One regards the right of any employer to decide how to best utilise his work-force. That is solely his decision. However, the Electrical Trades Union, not content with the conditions and job security enjoyed by its members in SEQEB, adopted a stance that it knew would incite confrontation with SEQEB.

The ETU stance prevented the use of private enterprise contractors in essential work required to be done by SEQEB. Despite nearly eight months of continuous negotiations over SEQEB's right to use contract labour in peak work-load and other situations, ETU members employed by SEQEB began strike action from 3 December 1984. It should be pointed out that the ETU was determined to provoke an industrial confrontation on the issue long before that, because it expressed such an intention as early as June last year.

On 1 June, SEQEB presented to the State council of the Electrical Trades Union a draft proposal for an agreement on the use of contract labour. This proposal gave the union specific guarantee as to—

- no retrenchments or forced redundancies;
- security of employment;
- guarantees as to the tenure of employment;
- the possibility of engaging temporary staff; and
- increasing staff establishments to meet the needs of SEQEB.

One would have thought that, on that basis the ETU would have accepted SEQEB's offer. However, the ETU rejected the proposal. Part of its reply stated—

“Therefore we don't agree to the Board's proposal at this time as we consider SEQEB should employ more permanent employees, and we intend to encourage our members to take action, including industrial action, to ensure that more people are permanently employed in the Board.”

That would make the cost of electricity dearer. That was the basis of the strike.

From that time on, the ETU continued to resist any reasonable approach at reaching agreement and banned four contracts that were important to the development of various parts of this State. From that time on, it was clear that the ETU was determined to try to use industrial muscle to influence the efficiency of SEQEB employment and work programs.

Following the four-day strike in December, the dispute between SEQEB and its ETU employees intensified. By 7 February, as a direct result of the threat to the security of the electricity supply system, His Excellency the Governor proclaimed a state of emergency. At the same time, Industrial Commissioner Ledlie ordered—I emphasise that word—striking ETU members to return to work and required both parties to renew discussions. On 8 February, when striking ETU linesmen still had not returned to work as ordered, a further Order in Council was made directing the strikers to recommence work as required by rosters.

It should also be noted that on Sunday, 10 February, the Government accepted from the Industrial Commission a five-part recommendation that would have resolved the dispute, reinstated any dismissed worker and caused the withdrawal of further dismissal notices. But again the ETU absolutely refused to accept the recommendation, which the Government was prepared to accept, and consequently the striking men were dismissed from 11 February.

Sacked ETU workers cannot say they were not warned. Again and again I warned them. Again and again I said, “You have a job, stick to it.” Again and again I asked them to accept their responsibilities. Over an entire week-end they were warned that they would lose their jobs. Further to that, each employee received a letter telling him he would be sacked. The Government could not have made it much plainer than that. I repeatedly said on television and radio that the men would be sacked if they did not report for work, and honourable members know what they did. Those who chose to follow the dictates of their union leaders have only themselves to blame. They can also blame the Leader of the Opposition and several other members of the Opposition who, on television, urged them to stick with their mates and told them that the Labor Party would stick by them. The men have got nothing out of it. I bet that a long time will elapse before they again accept the advice of the unions and, in particular, the Opposition.

Although moves to employ replacements for the sacked ETU linesmen received an enormous response, much more than that was needed. The real damage to the Queensland people and the State’s economy was done by power station operators, who cut power production by about 50 per cent. They were the ones who really caused the havoc, the loss of jobs and the hardships. Many times they, too, defied an order of the Industrial Commission to restore normal power production. In fact, the unions involved in the dispute defied the commission on a total of nine occasions. They defied six recommendations and three orders. So much for accepting the umpire’s decision, which the Opposition speaks about so often!

It is vital that “Hansard” record the recommendations and orders of the commission which were rejected by the unions throughout this dispute, so I table the following documents and seek leave to have them incorporated in “Hansard”

Leave granted.

#### SUMMARY

E.T.U. rejected 5 recommendations (5.12.84, 8.1.85, 6.2.85, 10.2.85, 12.2.85) and 2 orders (7.2.85) & (14.2.85).

M.O.A.; A.M.F. & S.U.; A.I.M. & P.E.; and F.E.D. & F.A. have rejected 1 recommendation (12.2.85) and 1 order (14.2.85).

5.12.84— Compulsory conference called by the State Industrial Commission, to take place before Commissioner Peebles at 11.30 a.m. that day. At the conclusion of the conference the Commissioner recommended that SEQEB refrain from introducing

contractors onto the contract jobs until Monday morning the 10th of December, 1984, and that striking employees return to work; in the intervening period meetings take place between the parties in an attempt to resolve their differences.

- 6.12.84— Mass meetings held by ETU which resolved that they would not return to work in accord with the Commission's recommendation.
- 8.1.85— Resumed conference before Commissioner Peebles at 2.30 p.m. He requested the parties consider and accept a recommendation that the parties adopt an earlier proposal (drafted by SEQEB and ETU, submitted to ETU on 1/6/84 by SEQEB, rejected by ETU State Council) as an acceptable contract labour agreement and requested a response by 11/1/85.
- 11.1.85— Resumed conference before Commissioner Peebles at 10.00 a.m. ETU advised that it was not prepared to accept recommendation of 8/1/85. SEQEB advised that it was prepared to accept recommendation. Commissioner Peebles indicated further conferences would be futile at this time.
- 6.2.85— 3.30 p.m. Compulsory conference before Commissioner Ledlie. He recommended that parties renew earnest discussions under Chairmanship of the Commission and providing an early return to work, a conference could be convened on 13/2/85. SEQEB accepted the recommendation and the ETU to report back after meeting with delegates on 7/2/85.
- 7.2.85— 11.00 a.m. Resumed conference before Commissioner Ledlie. ETU refuse to accept Commissioner recommendation from 6/2/85 conference.
- 7.2.85— Orders issued for striking ETU members to return to work and parties to meet under Commission Chairmanship on 13/2/85.  
ETU advise media that Orders will not be complied with.
- 10.2.85— Commissioner Birch recommended—
- “1. That the members of the ETU lift all bans and limitations and return to normal work as soon as possible.
  2. That the dismissal notices that have been issued be withdrawn and the employees concerned reinstated without loss of any benefit which had accrued to them prior to them going on strike.
  3. That the dismissal notices that are scheduled to be served on employees commencing tomorrow be not proceeded with.
  4. In the belief that deregistration proceedings have not yet been filed in the Commission, I would recommend that the proceedings be not filed, or if they are filed, that they not be further processed, provided the unions and the employer are prepared to sit down and begin negotiations within a period of eight days from today, with a view to reaching agreement in relation to dispute settling procedure which would have its primary aim of maintaining supply whilst disputes can be processed through various levels.
  5. I recommend that no later than Friday of this week, the parties meet under the Chairmanship of this Commission, to further discuss the question of the four contracts and the negotiations and settlement of some form of agreement in relation to future letting of work on contract.”
- Government accepted. ETU rejected recommendation.
- 12.2.85— Commissioner Peebles recommended power station workers restore power.  
Rejected by all Unions involved.
- 14.2.85— Commissioner Peebles issued recommendations to 5 unions to reconsider their position in relation to limiting power.  
Recommendation rejected by the Unions.
- 14.2.85— Commissioners Ledlie and Peebles issued orders against 5 unions.  
Unions disobeyed orders.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Now, listen to this—

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I bet they are listening.

What I am about to say shows how stupid the Opposition and the unions were. On behalf of the Government and the Minister for Mines and Energy, I put forward a proposition that was rejected outright by the unions. That offer was to place the whole issue—the employment of contract labour and the future of the sacked men—before a full bench of six commissioners of the Industrial Commission, with the proviso that the power be turned on and the unions and the Government abide by the decision. I did not think that the unions would be so stupid as not to allow the matter to go before the six commissioners. The Opposition and the unions knocked that suggestion out of the ring.

**Mr Warburton:** You knew the commission did not have the jurisdiction.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** That was before the declaration of the state of emergency. The Leader of the Opposition should not tell another lie. During the dispute, I saw the Leader of the Opposition on television telling lie after lie.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** If the honourable member wants me to prove it, I will.

An offer was made on Saturday, 16 February. The only condition of the offer was that both parties agree in advance of the hearing to abide by the decision of the Full Bench of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. One could not get anything fairer than that. The State Government gave its commitment to accept the commission's decision. However, the unions refused to give any such assurance.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I rise to a point of order. From the lack of action that has just been displayed, may I take it that "lie" is now considered to be a parliamentary term?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! If the honourable member wishes that term to be withdrawn, that is a matter for him. When certain words are used, it is up to the person who is offended to object to them. I also point out to the honourable member that he has reflected on my authority, and I warn him.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I rise to a further point of order. Mr Speaker, I am sorry that you feel that I reflected on your authority; nevertheless, I draw to your attention that on numerous occasions in the past, without an objection from Government or Opposition members, when the word "lie" has been used, you have ruled that it be withdrawn. I am simply asking for your guidance. Is "lie" now considered to be a parliamentary term?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! It is not. There is no point of order.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Lies or untruths were told by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) when he appeared on television. I saw him with my own two eyes and I heard him. The Leader of the Opposition said that the Government was ordered to reinstate the men. No such order was given at any time; it was only a recommendation. The Leader of the Opposition kept saying on television that the Government was ordered to reinstate the men. The Government was not ordered to do so. He cannot get away from that fact.

At the height of the dispute, the Government and I, in particular, were given a clear picture of the type of industrial thuggery, threats and intimidation in which many Opposition members would have been schooled during their days as trade union members and officials. Mr Speaker, you would have a very good idea of the background of the thuggery and threats that occurred everywhere. I am sure that on television you saw the clenched fists and the defiance of the union leaders. That is the type of people they are. Mr Speaker, you saw them try to change the subject when asked why they should be

allowed to thumb their noses at the commission and defy orders of the commission to return to work. They said, "As far as the commission is concerned, you can jump in the lake." That attitude was adopted nine times—after three orders and six recommendations of the commission. During that time there was not one word from Opposition members about the unions breaking the law. They had to support their union mates by remaining silent. It amazes me that Opposition members are prepared to support law-breakers. Honourable members are elected by the people to maintain the law. However, Opposition members are prepared to support law-breakers. Enormous harm and injury was caused to the people of this State.

Although the threats and thuggery came thick and fast, not a whimper came from Opposition members. I did not hear a word from them condemning the violence and the industrial blackmail by denying people their basic right to electricity. The many threats to kill me did not worry me. Some roughnecks, who are apparently supported by Opposition members, also repeatedly threatened to kill my grandchildren, to blow up my house and to blow up my office and the Parliamentary Annexe.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs** interjected.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** They are the tactics adopted by the honourable member's mates—deceit and deception!

The unions had no regard for the the danger in which innocent people were placed. The Parliamentary Annexe and the Executive Building were repeatedly evacuated after the receipt of phone calls alleging that bombs had been placed in them.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I do not know whether the honourable member is speaking French, Dutch or what.

Many picket lines were set up to intimidate ETU members returning to work. Electricity supplies to some suburbs were sabotaged. Opposition members supported that action. A SEQEB manager had a rock thrown through the windscreen of his car. Not once did Opposition members have anything to say about that incident. Attempts were made to run over SEQEB employees who were prepared to return to work. Opposition members know about that. A number of bomb threats relating to SEQEB premises were received. Never at any stage did members of the Labor Party condemn those threats, which were published in the newspapers.

People wanting to send telexes or telegrams in support of the Government's stand were denied that right by Telecom workers, who applied bans. They would process only messages in support of the union stand. Therefore, I have directed that legal action be considered. At the present time the Government has engaged lawyers to assess the possibility of action being taken against the ETU in relation to the TAB and SEQEB, and the losses suffered by the Government. The Government will pursue these people, who have defied the laws of this land, caused so much havoc and hurt so many people. It is a safe bet that, given half a chance, the Government will pursue them.

Printers and some journalists went on strike in support of action to prevent the publication of advertisements outlining the Government's case in the dispute. Mail deliveries to SEQEB were stopped. Fuel supplies to Government aircraft were cut off. That action brought Queensland to the very brink of anarchy.

All members of the Labor Party supported that action. They should wake up to themselves. Members of the Labor Party will never live this down. They supported the bans. Shame on honourable members opposite because, at a time when this State was in crisis, instead of speaking on behalf of the people of Queensland, they went against the people.

The unionists placed themselves above the law. The Government had no option but to take a strong stand to protect the rights of the community. For far too many

years, Queenslanders have been plagued by industrial lawlessness in the electricity industry, which is an essential and vital industry.

The Government resolved to use the settlement of the dispute as a lever to lift the electricity industry once and for all out of the industrial quagmire and place it in a strike-free situation, as an essential service should be. For too long militant union leaders have used the electricity industry and, through it, every Queensland, as a pawn to achieve their goals. As I have stated previously, the unionists have been supported by the Labor Party.

Initially, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton), a former assistant secretary of the ETU, made statements criticising the Government's handling of the dispute. When he first became a State member, the honourable member for Sandgate was content to draw two salaries, one from the Brisbane City Council and one from this Parliament. He could not have cared less about the interests of Queenslanders. He was more intent on supporting his comrades in the ETU. On this occasion, when the supposed alternative Premier of this State had a chance to stand up for the rights of Queenslanders, he refused to do so. The Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity to follow the lead of the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and urge all unionists to return to work. However, he refused to do so.

In conclusion, I reiterate my Government's belief that the electricity industry is an essential industry and, as such, must be kept strike free. Queenslanders are absolutely tired of being held to ransom by dictatorial union leaders, supported by the Labor Party, who are quite content to see people suffer physically, mentally and financially while they practise their own form of industrial blackmail, which they are so expert in doing. Such action in essential industries will no longer be tolerated in this modern age. That is why my Government has resolved to make strike-free dispute-settling agreements a feature of employment conditions in the electricity supply industry. I firmly believe that the people of Queensland will accept nothing less.

The motion requires the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues to end their fence-sitting on the vital question of obedience to orders issued by the Industrial Commission. It is a barbed-wire fence and so far the Leader of the Opposition has been trying to walk along it with one foot on either side. If that spectacle can be pictured in one's mind's eye, it would not be hard to visualise the inherent dangers of such a stance. It is a very dangerous exercise. Each step the Opposition Leader takes brings some discomfort to him, I am sure, but today he will finally have to come down on one side of the fence or the other. He will have to decide whether or not the ALP supports breaking the law. Do the ALP and the Opposition Leader in this State support the principle that a union should obey a legal order issued against it by the Industrial Commission, or will they continue to support anarchy? I commend the motion to the House.

**Hon. I. J. GIBBS** (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy) (12.6 p.m.): I second the motion so ably moved by the Premier and Treasurer.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members will resume their seats. They will desist from moving round the Chamber as much as they have been.

**Mr I. J. GIBBS:** I shall give honourable members details of the most serious and damaging industrial dispute that this State has ever experienced—of the most horrendous exercise of deliberate union callousness that we have had the misfortune to not only witness but also experience. No fair-minded person can place the blame for this tragedy other than where it truly belongs—squarely on the shoulders of those electricity union officials who first created and then nurtured a situation of complete chaos in Queensland for their mysterious, selfish ends.

I challenge honourable members opposite to atone publicly for sitting back in miserable silence or for giving vocal support to their union colleagues who appeared hell-bent on destroying the quality of life in Queensland. The people of this State suffered

intolerably during those recent black days of February 1985. They suffered in a most disastrous manner.

Queenslanders have a right to expect a reliable and continuous electricity supply. It is not the right of a handful of union bosses to decide when in excess of 2 million Queenslanders can turn on the lights, switch on any electrical appliance of their own choosing or earn a living dependent on electricity.

Queenslanders were suffering in almost every imaginable manner. Hundreds of thousands suffered from loss of employment, from loss of wages. Thousands of small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy, either went to the wall or went close to it. Untold thousands of ordinary Queenslanders suffered both physically and mentally from these union-inflicted black-outs.

Did we hear any honourable members opposite calling for an immediate end to the unauthorised action by power station operators who were directed by union officials to slash the output of our power stations by over 50 per cent? Did we hear a call for a prompt return to work by striking ETU members of SEQEB who were delaying the restoration of electricity supply to thousands of blacked-out consumers in south-eastern Queensland? Did we hear them trying to end the suffering of the sick and the elderly, many of whom had to sit totally isolated in the dark while the union bosses refused to make a telephone call and direct the restoration of full power to their homes? No! Emphatically, no! Their silence was deafening, and I am sure the electors will remember when next asked to vote in a State election. I will certainly be reminding them of it.

I will now provide the facts on this whole sorry episode which must go down as the blackest saga of union manipulation in our State's history. The central issue of this abominable dispute is whether management of a statutory authority in Queensland has the right to organise its work-force and its work programs in such a way as to be of benefit to the community it serves. The belligerent stance by officials of the Electrical Trades Union prevented the utilisation of free enterprise contractors in essential work that needs to be carried out in SEQEB's area.

In earlier negotiations dating back to mid-1984, SEQEB clearly spelt out the only circumstances in which contract labour would be introduced. They were: where peak work-loads exist; where specialisation applies; where it is in the public interest; and where the work had not been traditionally performed by SEQEB employees.

Despite almost eight frustrating months of continual negotiations over SEQEB's right to utilise contract labour in peak work-load and other situations, all members of the ETU employed by SEQEB were goaded into taking strike action from Monday, 3 December 1984. I mention that, for approximately four months, during attempts to settle this issue, the negotiation stage that led up to the strike could be compared with walking on hot coals.

That strike continued for four days and ended when the State Industrial Commission ordered that four contracts, which were at the centre of the dispute, be delayed pending further negotiations between the parties, and that the striking employees return to work.

The specific contracts that were the subject to the dispute concerned three transmission lines, namely, Beenleigh-Rocky Point, Loganlea-North Springwood and Burleigh-Mudgeeraba, and a substation destined for use in the new Sunstate Cement project on Fisherman Islands. All of these projects are necessary if not vital to the State of Queensland. At risk in the case of the three lines is continuity of supply to many thousands of consumers, and, in the case of Sunstate Cement, the establishment of a new industry in the south-east part of the State.

The orders of the State Industrial Commission led to discussions between the Electrical Trades Union and SEQEB representatives over a one-month period. Those orders expired at 10 a.m. on Monday, 7 January 1985.

For its part, SEQEB said that, in the public interest, it was not prepared to hold up these projects any longer because it was costing a considerable amount of money to do so. In addition, it was placing the public interest in jeopardy.

At a further compulsory conference, the commission asked the parties to consider their positions and report back on Tuesday, 8 January 1985.

In considering the request by the Industrial Commissioner, SEQEB believed that it had exhausted all avenues of sensible and reasonable negotiation with the Electrical Trades Union. SEQEB had been attempting to reach some agreement with the Electrical Trades Union that would allow contract labour to be introduced in certain situations. In fact, a proposal drafted by SEQEB was submitted to the State council of the Electrical Trades Union on 1 June 1984.

I believe that honourable members, especially those in the Opposition, should hear the details of that agreement. It reads—

“(Agreement between the South East Queensland Electricity Board and the Electrical Trades’ Union in respect of those circumstances where work is completed by the engagement of temporary employment or contract labour)

1. This agreement shall remain in force between the South East Queensland Electricity Board and the Electrical Trades’ Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch until formal notice of its termination is advised in writing by either party.

2. SEQEB recognises that circumstances arise in the electricity supply industry where the use of contract labour to meet a particular work requirement is either desirable or essential. For its part, the ETU considers that as much work as possible be performed by SEQEB employees.

3. After consultation (including any delegation the parties agree as being necessary) between both parties, it would be agreed that the use of external resources by SEQEB is necessary where:

(A) The work volume is beyond the capacity of the resources or current staff of the employer; or

(B) The type of work or specialisation required is beyond the capacity of the resources or staff of the employer; or

(C) It is in the public interest to expedite such work.

4. (A) Where work peaks exist, SEQEB will, for its part, discuss the nature of the peak and the reason for it with the ETU. During those discussions, the first matter to be addressed will be whether this peak work can be carried out by existing SEQEB staff, or, secondly, the engagement of temporary employees with appropriate experience. Where this is not practicable the ETU accepts that the use of contract labour is the only practical option available.

(B) The parties agree that the appropriate source of engagement of temporary labour will be through the Commonwealth Employment Service;

(C) The parties recognise that from location to location within the SEQEB areas, certain categories of tradespersons, or tradespersons with appropriate experience, will not be available. Therefore, the facility to proceed to contract is recognised.

5. Where work has traditionally been carried out by contractors (e.g. equipment manufacture, line clearing, building construction, certain major line construction) because of specific term work loads or peaks, or where the need for specialised equipment or skills not extensively enough available in SEQEB is required, then contractors shall continue to be used for this kind of work.

6. SEQEB agrees that—

- (a) The security of employment of SEQEB's own employees shall not be impaired by the use of contractors;
- (b) The employment of contractors will not be used to avoid increasing staff requirements to meet developing work demands of a reasonably permanent and continuous nature;
- (c) SEQEB will advise the State Secretary of the ETU (or his nominee according to the magnitude of the contract work) of its proposal to use a contractor or contractors on a particular class of work and the locality in which such work shall be performed. This will take place prior to tenders being called or contact made with contractors."

That was a fair and reasonable agreement. It gave the union specific guarantees as to no retrenchments or forced redundancies, security of employment, full consultation, the possibility of the engagement, and increasing staff establishments to meet the needs of SEQEB.

The ETU refused to accede to the contents of the draft proposal and in fact in its reply stated—

"Whilst we consider it appropriate to have agreement between the parties to consult prior to work being let to contract, we are not satisfied that SEQEB current manning levels are appropriate.

Therefore, we don't agree to the board's proposals at this time as we consider SEQEB should employ more permanent employees, and we intend to encourage our members to take action, including industrial action, to ensure more people are permanently employed in the board."

If that principle was adopted, whenever a contract was due to be let the union could still argue the point that there were insufficient employees and that the board should continue to employ people. As I said, that proposal was made last June, and that was the answer given by the union. The Government has been trying ever since to have the proposal accepted. The union officials should be taken to task by their members for not accepting the proposal and as quickly as possible signing an agreement that gave the required guarantees. That is not on any more. The offer was made, but in all the circumstances the option is no longer available.

From that point, the ETU continued to resist any reasonable approach at reaching agreement, and banned the four contracts to which I have just referred.

On 17 January, three members of SEQEB's steel tower gang who were instructed to work on the Beenleigh/Rocky Point project refused to do so, and were placed in a "no work, no pay" position.

It must be stressed that the work which they refused to carry out was not extraordinary and was part of their traditional duties.

I will now proceed to reiterate some of the points made by the Premier and Treasurer so that Opposition members will remember them.

The Electrical Trades Union instructed its members to proceed with strike action.

On 18 January, an urgent compulsory conference was requested by SEQEB in an effort to have striking ETU men return to work and restore power supplies to 80 000 consumers who were blacked out following a severe storm in Brisbane and nearby areas.

Industrial Commissioner Birch issued orders, which included an order for the men to return to work immediately, without any bans or limitations, for a period of 14 days.

I now turn to what occurred at that compulsory conference. Mr Madden was the ETU representative. A synopsis of the submissions reads—

"SEQEB reiterated its stance that the public calamity was more important at this stage than anything else (including the dispute between the parties) and that the union should return to work to repair the damage."

It reiterated its submission that, in the public interest, the commission should issue orders to ensure an immediate return to work. At that stage, Commissioner Birch said to Mr Madden—

“I want to say this that, in my opinion, if your members do not go out and restore power and existing circumstances, I believe there will be no such thing as goodwill towards your members, and I believe that unionism will suffer greatly by events tonight.”

Mr Madden reiterated that his union was not prepared to recommend a return to work, despite the comments of the Industrial Commission and in the face of such an emergency. The industrial commissioner said—

“Mr Madden, I would ask you is there anything you can do—can you assure the Commission your members will lift bans and limitations—without the Commission ordering them to do so?”

The Industrial Commission then issued orders that striking ETU members return to work and that union officials support that order.

I wish to refer to the reaction of the linesmen to that order. Mr Madden was arguing in the Industrial Commission until almost 9 o'clock at night. The storm commenced at about 5.30 p.m. The people from the State Emergency Service were out working voluntarily, trying to repair people's homes and to help them with other problems. Yet Mr Madden told the Industrial Commission, as late as 10 to 9 that night, that he would not request his men to return to work because they wanted to discuss the effect of SEQEB contracts on ETU members. The ETU and, in particular, Mr Madden must be condemned for that action.

Here I wish to distinguish between the union leaders and the rank and file members of the ETU. Once the members of the union received a message to return to work, based on that order, they performed magnificently. However, it must be remembered that they were being paid, and paid at double time. I repeat that, from about 6 o'clock that evening, the people in the State Emergency Service were doing their job voluntarily.

SEQEB indicated that it would not ask the three steel-tower gang members to perform work which would inflame the situation. That undertaking was given by SEQEB to allow the status quo to be maintained. History will show that that was one of the greatest errors made by the ETU representatives.

On 22 January, a further compulsory conference was held in accordance with Commissioner Birch's order. The conference before Commissioner Peebles was adjourned at 4 p.m., following his recommendation that SEQEB and the ETU hold discussions on manning levels. These were held on 23 January. Commissioner Peebles also agreed to suspend remain-at-work orders for four hours to allow the union to hold a mass meeting.

On 25 January, shop stewards from all SEQEB depots attended a union meeting to discuss the dispute. No advice was received by SEQEB on the outcome of the meeting.

On 29 January, stop-work meetings were held and several depots imposed bans on overtime, call-outs and living away from home. Bans on work on energised concrete poles were also imposed at some locations.

The return-to-work order issued by the Industrial Commission on 18 January expired on 1 February 1985. After that date, the ETU members carried out normal functions, but refused to perform any overtime work except attending to essential services and to “make-safe”, with the result that a substantial and increasing number of consumers were without power.

As a direct result of the threat to the security of the electricity supply system, His Excellency the Governor, on 7 February 1985, proclaimed a state of emergency. Also on 7 February, an Order in Council was made directing that no person was to interfere with another who was carrying out duties in connection with the supply of electricity. Simultaneously with these orders, Industrial Commissioner Ledlie ordered the striking members of the ETU to return to work, and requested both parties to renew discussions.

On 8 February, when striking ETU linesmen still had not returned to work as directed, a further Order in Council was made directing the strikers to recommence work as required by rosters and to perform such duties as had been performed in the past in accordance with custom and practice. That order also required the general manager of SEQEB to dismiss forthwith any persons not complying with that order. Another Order in Council gave power to the Electricity Commissioner to direct persons to undertake the necessary work to restore and maintain the electricity supply.

About 900 striking ETU men were dismissed on Monday, 11 February, when they failed to report for duty in accordance with the requirements of the relevant Order in Council.

On the same day, an Order in Council was made allowing SEQEB to enter into contract arrangements and to employ staff to replace the dismissed workers. The Order in Council provided also for the application of a no-strike provision, a 38-hour working week in lieu of a 36¼-hour week and a ten-day fortnight in lieu of a nine-day fortnight.

Advertisements were placed in numerous newspapers to seek replacements for the sacked ETU members, and a good response was obtained. Moves for the deregistration of the ETU were commenced.

Various other electricity industry unions then directed their members to take action in sympathy with the sacked ETU members. Prominent among these were the power station operators, who reacted by cutting power production to about 50 per cent of normal output. This caused major disruption to Queensland's industrial, commercial and domestic consumers, and necessitated the introduction of strict rationing procedures, together with widespread load-shedding, in an effort to equitably share out the meagre amount of available electricity.

The Industrial Commission then issued an order which, in effect, directed the operators to restore full power and directed other striking electricity employees to return to work. Regrettably, the operators defied the Industrial Commission order to restore power production to normal at that time.

These instructions were issued pursuant to an Order in Council made on 12 February. The operators' actions caused summonses to be served upon them for non-compliance, and these could have resulted in fines of up to \$1,000 per day. Action resulting in the dismissal of the power station operators also was possible.

Because of the deadlock, the Industrial Commission convened another conference, which was held on 16 and 17 February. Arising out of that conference, certain recommendations were made for consideration by the various parties.

The recommendations were carefully considered by the Government, but were unacceptable, particularly in view of the decisions and rulings made previously by the Industrial Commission.

The Industrial Commission then withdrew formally from the dispute, but it indicated that it was prepared to make itself available should either party so wish.

Meanwhile, strike action and bans imposed by those ETU members not dismissed continued in the various electricity boards and the Queensland Electricity Commission. Disruptive action was also taken by other unions associated with the Queensland Trades and Labor Council.

During much of the dispute, the Government instituted a public awareness campaign to ensure that electricity-consumers throughout Queensland were aware of the situation and of the democratic principles at stake. The Queensland Electricity Commission also began advertising nationally to replace operators who continued to defy orders to restore full power.

On 20 February, SEQEB sought to have an injunction issued in the Supreme Court against secondary boycotts by the power station operators. The injunction would have

required the restoration of full power by the operators. On 23 February the Supreme Court adjourned the hearing to 4 March. If the injunction was ignored, fines of up to \$50,000 each could have been imposed. In addition, the operators' unions would face a fine of up to \$250,000.

The involvement of the power station operators brought about load-shedding and rotational black-outs that had such a disastrous effect on this State. It was an industrial matter in which they had no dispute with their employer and in which they should have had no involvement. However, they were directed by their union bosses to virtually hijack Queensland's power stations. The men had no say because they were ordered to take action by the union bosses. I know that among those 600 men there are many responsible men who would have taken no joy from, and had no desire to be party to, what was finally done to the two and a half million people who live in Queensland.

It is opportune to point out to the House that power station operators are party to an agreement to provide a continuous supply of electricity. That agreement was signed in Brisbane on 24 December 1981 between the former Queensland Electricity Generating Board and the following unions—

- the Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union;
- the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers;
- the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association; and
- the Municipal Officers Association.

Although the ETU was a party to that agreement and received the benefits from it, at the last moment it did not sign the agreement. There is a message in that. It is an example of how the ETU has operated in this State for a long time. The agreement was certified by the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission of Queensland on 20 April 1982. Because it is a confidential document between the unions and the generating board and is registered in the commission, I cannot give details of it. However, I can say that the agreement has only one objective, that is, the provision of an adequate and continuous supply of electricity to the electricity consumers of Queensland.

Before the agreement was signed, between 1977 and 1982 disruptive action by the operators resulted in the loss of \$5.6m in revenue to the State's generating authority. When the costs of the distribution boards are added to that amount, it is multiplied many times. However, since then industrial action by power station operators, including the current dispute, has cost \$10.5m, with their most recent effort chalking up more than \$8.5m in lost revenue. That is a tremendous loss to the State. All sorts of estimates of the loss have been published.

What is that agreement worth? I wonder what that latest little bit of paper that was sent to the Government by the unions would be worth. A fairly solid agreement is already in existence, but the State still suffered a loss of power. The power station operators have received the benefits of the existing agreement and were fully paid while they gave the State only half power. So how much credence and faith can we as a Government place in any agreement that is now put forward by the unions and their members to guarantee a continuous supply of electricity to consumers? None at all!

Between Tuesday, 12 February, and Thursday, 21 February, the power station operators deliberately failed to fulfil the objective of their agreement: to provide an adequate and continuous electricity supply. Power station operators are amongst the highest paid workers in Queensland and enjoy the following range of other benefits, which are not available to most other workers—

Their total annual incomes range between \$32,520 and \$60,000.

They work an average of 36¼ hours a week.

Many operators receive heavily subsidised housing.

They receive a 2½ per cent loading over and above award rates.

Sick leave taken by operators is paid at the relevant shift loading, including week-ends.

Long service leave of 13 weeks after 10 years is paid to most operators at a loading of at least 40 per cent.

Operators receive shift loadings additional to the generous week-end penalties that apply.

On retirement, operators receive a maximum payment of 26 weeks unused sick leave.

Most operators receive a 30 per cent loading on their superannuation payout.

No-one can deny that power station operators have an important role in serving the community. I do not criticise their wages and their wage structure. They are important people and they perform shift work. However, they are so important that the union movement should not be able to use them like pawns and hold the State to ransom.

The fact remains that, despite being well paid, many power station operators have not acted responsibly. That was not necessarily of their own choosing; most of them wanted to behave in a responsible manner, but they were directed by their union officials to black out the State.

On the morning of 21 February, the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) announced a detailed proposal to end the dispute. That proposal was developed during the late night meetings of the Premier and Treasurer, senior officers of the Queensland Electricity Commission, the South East Queensland Electricity Board and me. The proposal was approved by Cabinet. In announcing the move, the Premier and Treasurer said, "The plan is a fair compromise to all parties."

Basically, the proposal involved the dismissed employees being offered re-employment within 30 days of the operators restoring full power; no-strike conditions; a 38-hour week and a 10-day fortnight.

On the afternoon of 21 February—the same day—the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission requested that all parties resume talks to inform Commissioners Peebles and Ledlie of recent developments. In a sudden about-face during the commission hearings, the union bosses decided to direct the operators to begin restoring full power.

By late afternoon on 22 February, all available generating units at the power stations were operating at normal output, except two at Gladstone that had been delayed because of various problems. At 5 p.m. on that day, I announced that I would be revoking the rationing order at midnight.

I should like to quote from a section of yesterday's editorial in "The Australian Financial Review", a newspaper that is widely respected in all sections of the community. It states—

"The industrial dispute in the Southern Queensland power industry is a classical example of much that is wrong with our present industrial relations climate in Australia.

To say that unions, and union leaderships, often act selfishly and unwisely is an argument for better unions, not for no unions."

Cop that—"better unions, not for no unions." I interpret it as meaning that it is an argument for better union leadership and more responsibility.

The newspaper further states—

"Similarly, and this is something which unions ought to remember, no-one wants to see a stark confrontation between the authority of an elected government and the unions in which the elected government loses. If unions can defeat duly constituted democratic authority, then they have gone too far and become a threat to democracy.

But neither can governments continue to retreat in the face of increasingly unreasonable union demands.

In the case of the South East Queensland Electricity Board dispute, the matter began over proposals by the board to use contract labour. That is, it was a threat to the exclusive control by the union of labour employed in the industry. The point of using contract labour is that greater efficiency in the deployment of labour can be achieved by avoiding the manning requirements of the union. The point of this, of course, is to reduce the cost of electricity to the customers of SEQEB.

But what often seemed to be the demand being made on the Queensland Premier was that he should concede the demands of the unions, and that he must necessarily be wrong if he resisted them."

"The Australian Financial Review" asked, "Why should this be so?" Every honourable member should ask the same question.

Finally, "The Australian Financial Review" stated—

"If the unions have in fact exacted an effective backdown from the Queensland Government, then the whole of Australia has lost from the Queensland power dispute, and not just as a result of the immediate costs of the blackouts."

That is the most pertinent and objective editorial comment that I have read during the whole dispute. I commend it to every Australian Labor Party member in this Chamber and to every union leader in this State.

I assure honourable members that the Government will not back down to union demands and allow the people of Queensland to be once more held to ransom by a group of militant union leaders in such a vital industry.

Let me turn now to the strike action that has spread to other sections of industry involving unions with no argument or fight with their employers over their own members, wages and conditions. One of the most damaging effects on the economy of this State and the nation is the shut-down of our coal mines by the striking coal-mining unions. The coal industry is Queensland's leading export-earner. Needless shut-downs are occurring at a time when there is intense competition for export markets amongst all coal-producing countries. However, Queensland coal-miners are jeopardising their own future by walking off the job.

During the past year or two, in the West Moreton region constant pressure has been applied by the unions to try to save the jobs of miners working in local mines. I have received many deputations on this matter, and, to assist the industry, the Government provided an additional 150 000 tonnes contract to Southern Cross mine, rail freight concessions for West Moreton coal for export, and the offer of the loan of coal from the Government's power station dumps to assist the mines in meeting any immediate export orders. Yet now these very same miners who pleaded for help have gone on strike in so-called sympathy with their ETU comrades.

All Queenslanders must wonder what this State's overseas customers will think of all this when they negotiate coal contracts in the future. Certainly, they will wonder how much faith they can place in the West Moreton fields providing coal when the miners there strike, despite the economic situation they are now in.

Only this morning, in "The Courier-Mail", the executive director of the Queensland Coal Owners Association, Mr Bob McLeod, outlined the huge losses both the industry and Government were suffering from the miners' strike. The bill for the coal industry has already topped the \$100m mark while the State Government has lost rail freight and royalty revenue of \$25m, both of which are increasing every day. When the Government loses that revenue, it will be forced to look at other forms of revenue collection, which must mean other forms of taxation. So, responsibility should be placed

firmly on those to whom it belongs, that is, the unions and their fellow travellers in the ALP. If Mr Dempsey thinks that the people of this State are so foolish as to believe his claim today that the Government and not his unions should be billed for these losses, then he should go back to the United Kingdom and join his fellow comrade Arthur Scargill in another lost union cause.

Finally, I issue a vital warning to the people of Queensland. This catastrophic power dispute, which has been foisted upon us, is in fact the watershed of industrial relations in this State. The people of Queensland have had enough of union lawlessness and of union blackmail. They have had enough union-inflicted blackouts. Queenslanders have a right to expect and demand a safe and reliable electricity supply. If the irresponsible demands of the union bosses succeed, then Queensland might as well revert to the law of the jungle.

I place on record my wholehearted thanks to my personal staff, to the staff of the electricity industry who remained at work, to the ETU men who returned to work and carried on their jobs in a responsible manner, and to members of the public who reacted in such a magnificent way to the rationing order. This dispute has been one of the saddest things that I have ever had to deal with—sad for the community, sad for the union movement and sad for Queensland's economy.

Lastly, I thank members of the public for their tremendous support for the Government. Support in writing came from all sections of the community, including many ALP supporters, indicating that the 2.5 million people of Queensland are no longer willing to cop the serve that has been dished up to them by a handful of union leaders in this State. They are fully behind this Government, and, on their behalf, the Government will accept no less than a strike-free essential service electricity industry.

**Mr WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (12.44 p.m.): I intend moving an amendment. However, before I do that, I indicate that I should perhaps be flattered by the attention that I received from the Premier and Treasurer during his speech, which was obviously a very hurried and, might I say, pathetic attempt by the Government to preserve any semblance of respectability in the light of its role in the current electricity dispute.

It is a sad day for Queensland and Queenslanders when, after what the community has suffered as a result of the Premier's and the Government's mishandling of the dispute, the Premier has to read a motion that has been hurriedly written in longhand on a piece of notepaper.

I move the following amendment—

“Omit all words after ‘Parliament’ in line 1 and substitute the words—

‘deplores the ways in which the Premier and his Cabinet of faceless men have deliberately set a course which has promoted hatred and division in our community. The House gives full support to our State's arbitration system and instructs the Government to at all times set the example by acting in accordance with arbitration commission recommendations. The House therefore instructs the Government to implement the provisions of the arbitration commission's recommendation of 17 February 1985, a recommendation that the arbitration commission said was a serious and earnest attempt designed to resolve the electricity dispute. The House instructs the Government to immediately take whatever steps are necessary to allow the arbitration commission to carry out its responsibilities under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, free of interference, particularly the Premier's interference. The House views with disgust the way in which the Premier has been prepared to further damage our State's already depressed and lagging economy, an action which will no doubt add to our unacceptably high unemployment rate now standing at 11.1 per cent—the highest of all Australian States.’ ”

**Mr I. J. Gibbs:** Is that written on a piece of paper by hand?

**Mr WARBURTON:** It is done properly.

The events of the past two weeks show that this Government is willing to hold hostage the future of our State for political gain. The Government, led by a man more interested in winning than in resolving a crisis, was willing to risk the already shaky economy of Queensland in a bloody-minded attempt to destroy a free trade union movement in this State. The Premier played politics, and Queensland has suffered enormously, whether it be Queensland families, the Queensland community, collectively and individually, or Queensland business and industry. The whole State has suffered, as did all of its residents.

Let us consider the matters that presently stand out in the power industry dispute—

- (a) the Government's deliberate rejection of our State arbitration commission's recommendations—particularly the firm recommendation of 17 February;
- (b) the Government's contempt for the arbitration commission and its deliberate downgrading of the role of the arbitration commission by purposely setting out to reduce the commission's area of jurisdiction;
- (c) the pursuit of injunction under the Industrial (Commercial Practices) Act, although the Government was advised by the Crown law office that the Act was invalid.

**Mr HARPER:** I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is deliberately misrepresenting the facts. He is endeavouring to mislead the House. At no time did the Crown law office indicate that the Act was invalid.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I advise honourable members that a point of order has to be related to a more direct and personal imputation than that. There is no point of order.

**Mr WARBURTON:** The Minister for Justice and Attorney-General (Mr Harper) will have an opportunity to speak in the debate. The next matters that stand out are—

- (d) the pursuit of a course of action by the Premier and his Cabinet of faceless men that will bring our State to its economic knees and increase unemployment now standing at 11.1 per cent, the highest of all Australian States;
- (e) the pursuit of a course of action knowing full well that the electricity distribution system in Queensland's south-eastern corner has been subjected to immeasurable harm and will break down unless urgent repairs and maintenance work ensue.

That will ensue only if the Government, led by the Premier and Treasurer, is prepared to re-employ the 900-odd electrical workers.

**Mr I. J. GIBBS:** I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will state his point of order.

**Mr I. J. GIBBS:** The Leader of the Opposition is trying to mislead the House. He said that the system will break down as there is no-one to carry out repair work. We have contractors out now. There will be no trouble in effecting repairs.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Once again, I remind honourable members that continual points of order that call for a determination by the Chair merely delay the debate unduly. I suggest, with due respect, that points of order should be taken only where there is personal imputation. At a later time members will have an opportunity to reply to matters raised in the debate.

**Mr WARBURTON:** The last two matters are—

- (f) the very obvious endeavours by the Trades and Labor Council of Queensland to bring about a peaceful, long-lasting settlement of the dispute—endeavours that have been consistently pushed aside by the Premier and Treasurer as he takes our State down a path of destruction; and

- (g) the Premier and Treasurer who one would think must, because of his stated religious convictions, be prepared to show some compassion and be prepared to show some understanding in respect of the position of the sacked SEQEB employees instead of quite deliberately promoting hatred, vindictiveness and division in the Queensland community.

**Government Members interjected.**

**Mr WARBURTON:** I will outline the endeavours that have been made consistently, and I emphasise the word "consistently", and have been pushed aside by the Premier and Treasurer—the so-called religious giant of the Queensland Parliament.

The matters that I have mentioned illustrate only some of the negative points against the Queensland Government. What the Queensland people want is not continuation of argument about who was or who was not correct in respect of previous actions taken, but a cessation of the hostility forthwith. I agree that the people also seriously want an assurance about the future continuity of electricity supply. That assurance was inherent in the proposition that I put forward as a solution to this very serious dispute.

The Premier and Treasurer and Cabinet's rejection yesterday of the six point proposal by the Queensland Trades and Labor Council is clear evidence that this Government is not really interested in bringing about an acceptable end to the current electricity dispute. It is also clearly evident that it is not prepared to allow our State Arbitration Commission to carry out its duties free from National Party Government interference.

At this stage, I seek leave to have incorporated in "Hansard" the proposition that was put forward by the Queensland Trades and Labor Council in recent times.

Leave granted.

**PROPOSAL TO THE MINISTER FOR MINES & ENERGY, THE HON. IVAN GIBBS  
ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY DISPUTE**

1. Concurrent with the acceptance by the South East Queensland Electricity Board of the terms and conditions of reinstatement of their dismissed employees as enunciated in the recommendation of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission of 17th February, the Trades & Labor Council of Queensland on behalf of its affiliates in pursuance of the maintenance of continuity of supply in the Queensland electricity supply and distribution industry commits the trade union movements to the following:

2. The Trades & Labor Council and power industry unions recognise that the electricity supply industry is one upon which the community has become reliant to the extent that the continuity of supply to meet system requirements is vital and should be maintained.

3. The union movement shares the publicly expressed concern of the Government and the community as to the effects of load restriction and the catastrophic effects of cessation of supply.

4. The unions categorically undertake to exercise and use their leadership and influence to ensure the continuity of supply.

To achieve this objective the union movement undertakes to assist in the identification and resolution of problems within the industry and believes the most appropriate means of addressing these matters to be the establishment of an Electricity Industry Consultative Council comprising representatives of Government, the industry and the Trades & Labor Council of Queensland.

Where a matter has been referred to this Electricity Industry Consultative Council for consideration the unions are prepared to use the necessary leadership and influence to ensure that normal work will continue. The continuance of normal work shall not prejudice the position of either party in the process.

5. Any unresolved matters will be pursued through the Industrial Commission for ultimate determination.

6. It is essential to the operation of such a proposal that the Industrial Commission retains the unfettered right to carry out its obligations.

24th February, 1985

**Mr WARBURTON:** It is true to say that the role taken by some sections of the State's industry during the dispute is not consistent with its often-stated support for the arbitration system. Except for the Confederation of Industry, which has publicity supported the Premier's actions, the rest of the industrial relations community has been conspicuous by its silence.

Many industries in this State—industries with management that fully understands the benefits derived from a sound industrial relations environment—have worked in a co-operative effort with their employees and the relevant unions.

It is difficult to understand from my point of view how these Queensland industries can stand aside in silence while the Queensland Premier and Treasurer pursues his ill-fated vendetta against organised labour when those industries must surely know that our depressed economy is now on the very brink of disaster.

Last Thursday, 21 February, saw the Premier and Treasurer lay claim to a new peace plan. It is interesting to note the so-called peace plan, which was an insult to any normal person's intelligence, was promoted as the Premier and Treasurer's very own formulated solution to the dispute. Needless to say, the Premier and Treasurer was yet again deceiving the people of Queensland. However, I will not call him a liar. I simply say that again the Premier and Treasurer has deceived the Queensland people.

**Mr Fouras:** I would call him a liar.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! The honourable member for South Brisbane will withdraw that remark.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I have asked the honourable member for South Brisbane to withdraw the comment that he has made.

**Mr FOURAS:** I will do so, according to your wishes, Mr Deputy Speaker. However, Mr Speaker earlier said that an objection or a point of order had to be taken from the opposite side of the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The context in which Mr Speaker's ruling was given was different from the context in which the words have been used on this occasion.

**Mr WARBURTON:** The truth is that the so-called peace plan was the brainchild of an officer of the Queensland Confederation of Industry who spent some time with Trades and Labor Council representatives on the Monday prior to the Premier and Treasurer's announcement trying to sell the plan.

The Premier announced his so-called plan to the world on Thursday, 21 February, knowing full well that his stooge in the Confederation of Industry had had the plan rejected out of hand on the previous Monday.

Let me examine the situation as it presently stands. Before the electricity dispute commenced, all indicators showed our State to be in economic trouble with unemployment running at 11.1 per cent, which was the highest in Australia.

The Premier and his faceless Cabinet Ministers, despite the continuing hurt to our economy and our people, have taken a seemingly irreversible stand, which is undoubtedly politically motivated. There is no way that the Premier's stated goal can be achieved by jackboot methods. In fact, there is great doubt whether it can be achieved at all.

The unions have initiated attempts to resolve the problem, which undoubtedly revolves around the re-employment of sacked SEQEB workers. Until those men are re-employed, unions will fight with the only weapons available to them. Meanwhile, because of Government interference, our State's economy flounders on the brink of disaster,

business and industry suffer irreparable damage and Queenslanders continue to be the meat in the Bjelke-Petersen sandwich.

It is known that the State Government has thumbed its nose at the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, and that the Government, to meet its own political ends, deceitfully brands SEQEB workers as law-breakers. Orders for return to work were certainly issued by the commission, but this Government purposely never proceeded to the next phase available to it under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

It is important for people to understand that point. Although the Premier called the SEQEB workers a bunch of lawless dogs, as well as describing them as a number of other things, the Government on no occasion sought to pursue the penalties under the Act. Only as a result of a hearing before the commission in respect of what might be termed normal stage two proceedings can it be determined whether the unionists acted in breach of an order. In other words, they have done nothing illegal at this stage, and that is a fact of law. The SEQEB employees are in no way the lawless trouble-makers as described by the Premier. He has acted deceitfully towards the people of Queensland, and he knows it. For political motives he has pursued a course of divisiveness and hatred in the community.

The question must therefore be asked: Why hasn't the Government or SEQEB taken its rightful opportunity under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act to try to prove that orders were breached and that penalties should be imposed? The Government has the right to do that. It could have gone back to the commission and said, "We believe that the orders have been breached." There was no proof at that stage, because the commission had not determined that that was the case. The Government or SEQEB could have gone back to the commission and requested that penalties be imposed. The Government and SEQEB have that right under the relevant Act. The reason that was not done is that the Government has washed its hands of the arbitration system. It knows that the commission could, and would, resolve the dispute tomorrow if it was given the chance, and if the Government did not interfere.

**Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen:** You're hopeless.

**Mr WARBURTON:** I challenge the Premier to allow the commission to handle this problem free of the state of emergency and free of his intervention. That is the challenge. Let us see what the Premier will do about it. The powers of the commission have been diminished deliberately, and the Premier knows it.

**Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen:** You're hopeless, absolutely hopeless.

**Mr WARBURTON:** The Premier should put another pill under his tongue; he will feel better.

There is nothing clearer at this time than the fact that this National Party Government has made a deliberate decision to keep this electricity dispute fired up, irrespective of the hurt and the cost to our State and its people.

*Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.*

**Mr WARBURTON:** Because of the remarks that the Premier has made here today, I have issued a challenge to him to put the dispute back firmly into the hands of the arbitration system, doing all things necessary to ensure that the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission is able to carry out its duties under the Act free of any intervention, particularly by the Premier. If he accepts that challenge, there is no doubt in the mind of the industrial relations community in this State that the commission will resolve the dispute forthwith.

At this time, there is nothing clearer than that irrespective of the hurt and the cost to the State and the people, the National Party Government has made a very deliberate

decision to keep the electricity dispute fired up. Of course, the main target of the Premier is the group of power station operators. He is prepared to keep almost 1 000 men out of work, to say that his stand is irreversible and to ensure that those operators and their families suffer. Honourable members may recall that the Premier referred particularly to the fact that he was out to make those people suffer. He is prepared also to see the metropolitan area of Brisbane sacrificed to get what he is after.

The Government has attempted to paint a picture of the State's electricity generation and distribution industry being for ever involved in industrial turmoil. Statistics show that that is not the case. Brisbaneites recall that the electricity industry had a proud record of achievement and of being free from major disputation until the Government introduced its rationalisation program that has resulted in higher electricity costs and a complete breakdown of industrial relations in those areas in which amalgamation of electricity authorities took place. Although the generating authority seems to have been able to overcome its problems, 80 days of disputation have occurred within SEQEB during that brief period. It is a disgrace that that position should be allowed to continue. Certainly SEQEB, as distinct from other Queensland electricity authorities, has a bad industrial relations record, and that will continue until urgently needed administrative changes take place.

Let us look at what the Bjelke-Petersen Government's deliberate prolonging of the dispute could mean to Queensland's south-east corner, and particularly to the city of Brisbane. In 1979, SEQEB did begin upgrading the electricity distribution system, but only in regional areas. Since SEQEB was formed, not one major 11 000-volt substation has been built in the old Brisbane City Council distribution area. For 30 years, electricity poles, crossarms, transformers and high and low voltage mains in some of the older areas of Brisbane, namely Red Hill, Kelvin Grove, Ashgrove, Clayfield, Enoggera, West End, East Brisbane, Coorparoo and Camp Hill, have been trying to distribute three times the power load for which they were originally intended.

Those people in SEQEB who know and understand the system—not people such as the Gilberts—say in no uncertain terms that SEQEB desperately needs more, not fewer, electrical tradesmen for urgently needed maintenance and the upgrading of the metropolitan 11 000-volt distribution system.

I cannot stress more strongly that the power supply situation for Brisbane is now hazardous, to say the least. If Government members do not believe me, they should speak to the engineering people in charge of the operations in the Brisbane area to find out the position. They should not talk to the Gilberts or to those people who have no understanding of electricity systems.

Because of the corrodoring methods needed to supply essential services with power during load shedding, other distribution feeders have had to carry double or triple their usual load, thus placing a tremendous strain on the system. Brisbane's 11 000-volt distribution feeders are now breaking down, and, as a result, black-outs have occurred on both the north and the south sides of the city. Yesterday, because of overloading of the system, the industrial areas of Archerfield, Rocklea and Coopers Plains were adversely affected.

Repairs are sometimes taking days instead of hours. It seems that the SEQEB distribution system cannot and will not last much longer. The consequences of a severe storm over Brisbane will be enormous. It is a strong possibility that a total loss of electricity supply for at least one week would occur in many areas. That includes supply to households and industry. If a cyclone hits Brisbane in March, I can only say, "God help us!"

The 11 000-volt distribution system of Brisbane can barely cope in normal times, and recently it has taken a hammering because of the hailstorm and load-shedding. In the main, repairs are being carried out by senior SEQEB staff, but, in some cases, usual safety procedures are being disregarded. Much has been said in this issue about private enterprise. Perhaps the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) can inform the

community how many contractors have been forced by the Government to carry out repairs as a result of the proclamation of a state of emergency and the sacking of the SEQEB workers.

It is estimated by those people who fully understand the distribution system in Brisbane that, if all sacked SEQEB employees were re-employed tomorrow, it would take them at least six weeks to restore the distribution system in the SEQEB area to normal.

It is beyond comprehension that any responsible Government could deliberately procrastinate on an inevitable end to the dispute when it has been told of the perilous state of the electricity distribution system in this city. Regardless of whether the SEQEB workers were right or wrong in the stand they took—they thought that their decision was right—the salient point in this whole issue is that they are essential. If Brisbane is to be free of prolonged electricity black-outs in the foreseeable future, the SEQEB workers must be re-employed.

I ask honourable members on the Government side to note the actions of their leaders—the Premier and Treasurer and his faceless Ministers. When Brisbane suffers another break-down in electricity supply, they will not be able to say that Labor Party members did not warn them of the dangers.

In 1976 the Government sowed the seeds of the power crisis when it began to tamper with power generation and distribution in Queensland. It could not stop itself from wrecking the reliable and efficient electricity supply system. For years the Brisbane City Council and the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland provided cheap power to south-east Queensland homes, without major industrial problems. However, the Government could not leave that system alone; it could not wait to get its hands on the electricity department of the Brisbane City Council. It could not wait to use its power to override all the logical arguments against the take-over. In fact, the Government could not have drawn a better blueprint for disaster. The so-called benefit that SEQEB consumers receive from the Government's meddling in the power industry in the mid-1970s is the highest electricity bill in Australia. A typical domestic consumer in Brisbane now pays \$115.65 per quarter for electricity. Similar users in Sydney and Melbourne pay almost \$30 less. This hard-hearted Queensland Government is the only Government that does not give a discount to pensioners on their electricity bills.

Since the formation of SEQEB, electricity bills have risen twice as fast as the Consumer Price Index. When the Government created SEQEB, both low electricity bills and good industrial relations went out the window. Following years of reliable supply from the Brisbane City Council and the old Southern Electric Authority of Queensland, the short life of SEQEB has been plagued with problems which, for the most part, have been of an administrative nature. From the inception of SEQEB, its industrial relations have not been good. However, the Government continues to prompt SEQEB to confront power unions rather than to head off disputes before they arise.

As I said last week, the only way to stop future disputes is to clean up SEQEB's management. That is where the Government has to start—right at the centre of the problem. If the Government cleans up SEQEB's management, for the first time it will have done something sensible. The only way to clean up SEQEB's management is to appoint an outside administrator to sort out the mess that threatens to breed more and more disputes. Yet the Government ignores the problems within SEQEB, and, in its usual style, continues to bash the labour movement.

Honourable members should not forget that it was Cabinet and SEQEB that ignored approaches by the power unions to negotiate on the issue of contract labour. Honourable members also should not forget that it was SEQEB and the Government that acted to provoke the dispute.

Political interference in the power industry by this Government is nothing new. All honourable members will remember the issue of the Tarong Power Station. If honourable

members will take their minds back a few years, they will remember how the Government has continually interfered in the power industry in the State. Yes, we all do remember Tarong. The State Electricity Commission said that the new power house should be built at Millmerran, but the Premier interfered and it was built at Tarong. The SEC said that that decision would add \$10m every year for the next 25 years to the cost of running the station. Once again the Government's meddling has forced higher costs on consumers.

In this dispute the Government has politicised the new Queensland Electricity Commission. The QEC started life in January but now has little hope of fostering decent industrial relations in the power industry. The longer this Government stays in office, the longer it can be expected to play politics with the power industry and, consequently, the lives of Queenslanders.

Everyone knows that, on behalf of the Government, the Premier and Treasurer is playing a very prominent role in the power industry dispute; such a prominent role that one would be forgiven for thinking that his Cabinet has gone on long service leave. It has been the Premier's, not the Government's, dispute. Seemingly he has played a lone hand, with the remainder of Cabinet displaying timid acquiescence to his views.

**Government Members interjected.**

**Mr WARBURTON:** That is the way the people on the outside see it, and all the giggling from the gaggle of Ministers who are sitting near the Premier and Treasurer will not change that position.

The totally dishonest manner in which the Premier and Treasurer acted from the beginning of the dispute is worth highlighting. As I said before, I will not call the Premier and Treasurer a liar, as he called me. I am saying that the Premier and Treasurer has been hopelessly distorting the facts from the very beginning, and that distortion has been paid for mostly out of the public purse.

**Mr McLean:** You are too kind, Nev. He is a liar.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I warn the honourable member for Bulimba that he must not make direct reference to any member of this Chamber as a liar. I ask him to withdraw that remark.

**Mr McLEAN:** I withdraw.

**Mr WARBURTON:** On the Sunday immediately after the dispute commenced—in other words, when it was in its infancy—the Premier and Treasurer intervened at a stage when the dispute was within an ace of being resolved. Recommendations made by the Industrial Commission set out a proposed basis for settlement of the dispute. Those proposals were the subject of negotiation between SEQEB and the ETU on that Sunday, 10 February. However, when agreement was about to be reached, it was the Premier and Treasurer who issued the command that no negotiation was to be entertained. As a result, the recommended basis for settlement evaporated and the dispute moved into a more serious stage. Three days later there appeared in the columns of "The Courier-Mail" a letter from the Premier and Treasurer in which he sought to blame the Electrical Trades Union for that breakdown of negotiations. He said, "The union refused to accept the recommendation . . ."

The Premier and Treasurer was manipulating the facts to suit his own propaganda purposes. The position was that the union was about to conclude a settlement with the South East Queensland Electricity Board on the recommendations of the commission, but at the last moment the Premier and Treasurer interfered once more and the chance of a solution flew out the window.

The public should know that three days after the dispute began it was ready to be resolved, but that did not suit the Premier and Treasurer's premeditated orchestration of how it should unfold. Last week, he was guilty of similar dishonesty when he made

claims about a so-called peace plan that he said was being advanced by the State Government. The Premier and Treasurer knows quite well that the peace plan was nothing but a sham. The so-called peace plan was put forward by one of his stooges in the Confederation of Industry. The Premier and Treasurer, by his claim about the Government's intentions, misled the Queensland public in a totally irresponsible way. The Government asked the industrial commission to arbitrate in an area in which it had no jurisdiction. The Premier and Treasurer knew that, too.

Under the legislation, 1 000 SEQEB workers were sacked. If what the commission says can be believed—and I think it can—the commission had and still has no jurisdiction to arbitrate on that legislation. That highlights the furphy put forward by Queensland's supposedly esteemed Premier and Treasurer. It was just another one of his deceitful actions. That so-called peace plan provided concrete evidence of the Government's hypocrisy on the issue of the sacked SEQEB workers.

In one breath the Premier and Treasurer says that the Government is prepared to abide by arbitration on the position of the sacked workers—he said that again this morning—but in the next breath he says that the acceptance of any recommendation to reinstate those workers would open the floodgates to union anarchy. That shows how fair dinkum the Premier and Treasurer was about the whole issue. There was no sincerity in what he had to say.

On the one hand, the Premier and Treasurer is saying that the Government will be bound by arbitration on the sacked workers; on the other hand, he is vowing that those men will never be reinstated and that it would be impracticable and irresponsible for the Government to accept their reinstatement. In other words, the Premier and Treasurer is deceiving people by saying that he is ready to accept arbitration. I reissue a challenge to the Premier and Treasurer to put the matter back before the arbitration commission, free of the shackles that he has applied, so that it can carry out its proper responsibilities to the community under the terms of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

The Opposition has discovered, and the people of Queensland now know, that the Premier and Treasurer is willing to accept only what suits him. That demonstrates how false and empty the Government's so-called peace plan really was.

There is further evidence to establish that the plan was not a genuine attempt to resolve the dispute. The Government rejected the industrial commission's final settlement proposal on the basis that the sacked workers could not be reinstated as the South East Queensland Electricity Board would be overstaffed and that the cost to the community would be too great. That situation would have applied also had there been arbitration in favour of the reinstatement of the sacked workers. There never was a genuine peace plan from the Government or the Premier and Treasurer; the Premier and Treasurer deserves the Opposition's condemnation and that of the House for suggesting otherwise.

To further demonstrate the double standards of the Premier and Treasurer, I refer again to his public letter of 13 February in which he said—

“No system of industrial democracy can survive if unions are allowed to treat the processes of arbitration with contempt.”

What the Premier and Treasurer failed to say was that he expected his Government to be allowed to treat the same processes of arbitration with contempt but without reproach.

Let us also look at the State Governments' industrial relations record. Only last month it was reported that industrial relations were improving almost everywhere in Australia, except in Queensland. That fact was revealed in figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. What was the Premier's response? He said, “I cannot believe figures like that. No, I cannot accept those figures. I just cannot accept them.” That was the way in which the Premier and Treasurer viewed the position. He said that he would not accept the facts. The Opposition has found that such a response is typical of the Premier and Treasurer's policital conduct.

I should like to quote another statement made by the Premier and Treasurer when those figures were released last month. On 17 January he said that he was not particularly interested in them because, "They are the past. I'm interested in what is happening in the future."

Within a couple of weeks, the Premier showed precisely how interested he was in what would happen in the future. He embarked on a course of industrial relations madness. Government members must understand that the Premier has now embarked on a course of industrial relations insanity.

The Premier and his National Party State Government are a total disaster in the area of industrial relations. There is no room for common sense in their approach to this important area of Government responsibility. They prefer the discredited bash and bludgeon style of the eighteenth century. Queensland badly needs from its Government a different approach to industrial relations. The Labor Party lists the achievement of that objective as one of its foremost priorities.

One quite sinister aspect of the National Party State Government's role in the power industry dispute must be brought to the public's attention. It is now reasonable to assume that this Government is deliberately prolonging the dispute for two reasons. Firstly, the Government wants to get at the power station operators. Government members are prepared to allow 1 000 men and their families to suffer because they know quite well that at some stage those men will have to go back and perform the work that is so necessary for this city. Secondly, the Government is prolonging the dispute in an effort to manufacture an excuse for its mismanagement of the State's economy. In so doing, it is acting in a cynical and despicable way. The Government is using Queenslanders to further its own ends. It has acted deliberately to prolong the power industry dispute. It has inflicted suffering, hardship, grief, distress and loss on the Queensland community. For that reason, the National Party Government led by the Premier deserves public censure and condemnation.

For purely political motives, the Government decided that a protracted dispute within Queensland's power industry would suit its interests. It is to be condemned for that. The Government must have been well aware of the damage that such a dispute could cause and is now causing. Apparently, that was a secondary consideration. The interests of the Queensland community and the interests of the State's business and industry were also a secondary consideration, and that is still the case.

It was of prime importance to the Government to pursue the Premier's blind obsession to crush the trade union movement in Queensland. At the same time, the dispute would provide a convenient scapegoat for the Government's slipshod management of Queensland's economy. However, the Opposition will not allow the National Party to wash its hands of responsibility for Queensland's substandard economic performance. The Labor Party will not allow the Premier and Treasurer and the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer, who are both abysmal failures, to get away with the stupid decisions that are causing this State to go down the economic drain-pipe.

I fully expect the Premier to attempt to allocate the blame for this State's serious economic decline on the power industry dispute and, more directly, on the trade union movement. Undoubtedly, the Premier will seek to use this dispute as an excuse for the State's economic downturn. He will stop at nothing to blame the trade union movement as Queensland's economic position deteriorates further. It is important to ensure that the Premier and the National Party State Government are not allowed to escape their primary responsibility for the poor performance of this State's economy.

**Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (2.39 p.m.):** I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton). It represents the only way in which normality can be restored to the State's power system. Over the last few weeks the Premier and Treasurer and his Government have embarked on a campaign that will completely destroy industrial relations in this State, if they ever existed, and also bring to the ground our State's power system.

Typically, the Premier and Treasurer read a prepared speech to the House today. He tried, as he has been attempting to do in relation to the finances of our State, through the press and other sections of the media, to advertise his side of the story throughout the length and breadth of the State. Naturally, in the House, he tried to blame the trade unions.

Industrial relations and industrial disputes are a two-way street. It takes two to tango. In the recent dispute, two parties were involved—the South East Queensland Electricity Board and the Electrical Trades Union. The Premier and Treasurer, in his usual way, seized upon an industrial dispute and proceeded to use it for political purposes.

The hitherto silent Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) today attempted to outline some of the background to the dispute. He presented a biased point of view. I will later highlight some of the anomalies in his speech.

It is significant that, throughout the dispute, the Premier and Treasurer has stood in front of his Cabinet saying, "This is what will be done." The silent 17 members of Cabinet, who sat there obviously struck dumb, prepared to kowtow to the Premier and obey him through hell and high water, watched the State's economy fall even further. They sat and watched the State sustain a loss currently estimated in the press at \$600m, and the figure is increasing. We neither heard of nor saw the Minister for Mines and Energy except when he was waiting in the corridors and the television cameras happened to catch him as they focused on the Premier and Treasurer who was speaking about dead horses rolling one way or the other, or about mouldy loaves of bread. What ridiculous statements he made when he was asked straightforward, simple questions by the media—questions as simple as it would be possible to have.

I genuinely thought that on Monday last week, when the dispute had reached an extremely serious stage, sanity would have prevailed in the Cabinet. I hoped that the few members of Cabinet who had previously exhibited leadership and responsibility would do so on this occasion, but they did not.

The recommendations that were made by the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to the representatives at the conference were referred to Cabinet, which supposedly strongly supported the Premier and Treasurer. Somebody told me that Cabinet was treating him like Humpty Dumpty, hoping that he would have a great fall and that nobody could put him together again. Many Ministers are sick and tired of his antics and attitudes and want to see him removed from office. It could very well be that on this occasion the Premier and Treasurer has gone too far. There is a time in all circumstances when even the most unwise should know when to stop or back off, when to call a halt. Many examples exist in history of dictators, such as the one in this State, going to the brink, with the object of completely annihilating their enemies, only to find that all they have done is consolidate opposition.

**Mr Hinze:** They call you Francis Drake——

**Mr VAUGHAN:** I like playing bowls.

**Mr Hinze:** interjected.

**Mr VAUGHAN:** You were one of the responsible Ministers I was talking about. I thought you had more sense than to watch the State being brought to its knees by an irresponsible Premier.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! Slanging matches will not be tolerated.

**Mr VAUGHAN:** There will be no industrial peace in this State until the Government changes its industrial relations policies. It has a shocking record in the industrial field, both inside and outside the commission and inside and outside the electricity authorities.

It was significant also that the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs was silent. He was never seen other than when he appeared to be walking around in circles.

Possibly because the Minister is so incompetent he was never consulted. Although nothing has been heard from the Minister, perhaps honourable members will hear something from him today. The fact of life is that neither the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs nor the Minister for Mines and Energy has been heard. Both have been extremely silent, and they have actually been by-passed over this particular matter.

I now return to the history associated with the dispute. As the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) outlined this morning when he put forward the point of view of the South East Queensland Electricity Board, in early 1984, the Government introduced into the SEQEB organisation a man who has been referred to as the hatchet man. In February 1984, that gentleman—an importation—was brought into the organisation from outside industry to do a particular job. In August 1984, having taken the place of the previous general manager, he circulated a document to all employees. The document was titled, "A message to All Staff from the General Manager, Mr Wayne Gilbert." The document outlined what had been planned by Mr Gilbert—or, should I say, what the Government had planned—for SEQEB in the future.

I will not outline in detail what is contained in the document, because its contents will be referred to by other members of the Opposition later. However, page four contains an explanation of why the employees of SEQEB felt concern about their future and about the Government's policy and practice of phasing out certain sections of the organisation and bringing in outside contractors and farming out, or "hiving off", some of the work that had previously been performed by employees of SEQEB. People in the community and some Government members ought to realise the basis for that concern.

Page 4 sets out a proposal for streamlining the operations of SEQEB, and it reads—

"It is appreciated that many of the support or specialist 'services' within SEQEB today were inherited in 1977."

I point out that many of the services and classifications that exist in SEQEB were inherited from the Department of Electricity of the Brisbane City Council, which in 1977 was the most efficient electricity authority in Queensland. The Government saw fit to wipe the Brisbane City Council's Department of Electricity off the face of the earth. The document goes on to state—

"It is also recognised that many of these 'services' were established at a time when the predecessors of SEQEB could not rely upon outside bodies, either because of cost or acceptable time frames for performance of the work. Still other functions were created in response to specific problems at the time.

In many instances the problem has long gone, but the function is still carried on.

Streamlining of operations will be concerned with removing these anomalies."

On the next page of the document, Mr Wayne Gilbert, the hatchet man who was imported from the south, goes on to say—

"3. Changes to existing structure. In assessing the organisation's role and the functions required to be undertaken to enable it to fulfil its objectives, a number of activities have been identified which, in their present form, are of questionable value to SEQEB."

That is a statement by a man who had been in SEQEB for less than six months.

**Mr Scott:** What was Mr Gilbert's previous work experience?

**Mr VAUGHAN:** I understand that Mr Gilbert had obtained previous work experience with Carlton and United Breweries Limited, Coca Cola Bottlers Limited, and either Tooths or Toohey's Brewery in New South Wales. Everywhere that Mr Gilbert has been, he has left a similar, sad trail of destruction.

**Mr Davis:** He was involved in the brewery strike, too.

**Mr VAUGHAN:** That is true, I have referred to the sub-heading, "Changes to Existing Structure." Under that sub-heading, Mr Gilbert adverts as follows to the questionable value of these activities to SEQEB—

- “1. Activities to be ‘hived-off’
2. Activities to be reduced in scope
3. Activities to be incorporated directly into line operations.”

Mr Gilbert expands on the activities that will be hived off, and the document reads as follows—

“The adoption of a narrower interpretation of SEQEB’s objectives leads to a questioning of a number of activities.

Some of these activities have an industry focus and as such would be better located under the control of the Queensland Electricity Commission.

Other activities duplicate services already offered by other organisations and businesses: for SEQEB to continue to perform them is an unnecessary cost.

Functions to be hived-off from SEQEB include:

Apprenticeship . . .”

The first function to be hived off by the South East Queensland Electricity Board is apprenticeship. I point out that the South East Queensland Electricity Board is one of the most efficient training grounds for electrical apprentices in this State. Although other organisations, Mount Isa Mines Limited and the Department of Railways, could be classified as efficient training grounds, the important fact is that the very people the Government wants the work presently being performed by SEQEB hived off to are the electrical contractors that operate in this State. Through the organisation that represents electrical contractors, a decision has been made, because of the attitude of this Government, and for other reasons, to phase out or cut down on engagement of apprentices. One comes back to the point that apprenticeship training by SEQEB is to be phased out. Heaven knows, there are enough problems regarding the training of youth in our society today without one of the biggest and best trainers of apprentices hiving off that activity.

**Mr Casey:** I wonder what the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) has to say about that to all of our young people.

**Mr VAUGHAN:** He would adopt a dumb look and start talking about something completely irrelevant.

The point I am making is that that man, who was imported into SEQEB and had less than six months’ experience—if he was not engaged by the Government to embark upon that activity, then I do not know what it is all about—turned round and said—

“Some of these activities have an industry focus and as such would be located under the control of the Queensland Electricity Commission.”

The Queensland Electricity Commission has been in existence for only about a month, and at the time this document was written had not even come into existence. Yet Mr Gilbert talked about hiving off apprenticeships and technical training, the technical library, and, in part, testing and development.

During this dispute, notwithstanding all of the assurances that were given to the Electrical Trades Union during negotiations last year over the use of contractors—it was stated that no-one would suffer and that no-one’s job was in jeopardy—my information is that the test department and the transformer section at SEQEB’s Banyo depot in my electorate have been closed. The employees have been told that they will be found a job somewhere else, perhaps in some other part of the industry, or that they will be transferred to another Government department. The employees have been told, “We will start bringing our transformers in from outside producers.” But the fact is that those outside producers cannot meet the demands because of the particular nature of the

industry. They can supply the new equipment, certainly, but they cannot carry out the maintenance and repairs.

**Mr Hinze:** Don't be silly.

**Mr VAUGHAN:** They cannot, or not with the same degree of expertise as can be found at the Banyo depot, which is very efficient. It was set up by the Brisbane City Council, and has proved itself over the years.

I know what the Government and the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) intend to do. The Government is starting with SEQEB. It will then shift its attention to the other distribution boards. As I pointed out last year during the debate on amendments to the Electricity Act, the Government plans to gradually phase out all the electricity distribution boards in this State. It is about time that the Government made an honest, forthright statement as to its intentions. But, no, it does not have the guts to do so because it knows that there are people in the north who are vitally concerned about the Government's intentions.

I certainly have no doubt about the Government's intentions. It wants the stage to be reached at which employees have no security of employment, no long service leave and no superannuation. It is a fact that, at this stage, because of the turnover of labour in the contracting industry, people working for contractors do not enjoy those advantages. The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing would well know, from his association with the industry and from his association with friends in the industry, that employees do not remain in the industry long enough to qualify for long service leave. When they have been employed for almost long enough to qualify for long service leave, unscrupulous employers dismiss them. I can cite instance after instance of employees with nine years and 10 months' service being told that their services are no longer required. The employers dismiss them because they know that when the employee completes 10 years' service he becomes entitled to pro rata long service leave.

The people of Queensland should be told of the Premier's beliefs. He does not believe in compensation, long service leave, superannuation or sick leave. A perusal of the records of this Parliament will show the way in which the Premier attacks the working people of this State. I have been told that when he was in the contracting business clearing land, he tried to insist that the members of the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association who operated his equipment service their machines during their lunch-hour. When he was pulled up about it, he said, "Well, you won't be servicing my machines in my time." That is the man who tries to talk about industrial relations.

I want to return to the nitty-gritty of this dispute and where it was supposed to have started when the issue was picked up by the Premier and used for his own political purposes. I will go back to last year. Firstly, an approach was made to the union to have outside contractors perform certain work for SEQEB.

The employees of electricity authorities throughout the State should be under no illusions about what the Government intends to do. If the Government gets away with this action in SEQEB, it will move to the Wide Bay-Burnett Electricity Board, the Capricornia Electricity Board, the Mackay Electricity Board, the North Queensland Electricity Board and the Far North Queensland Electricity Board. Those men in the outside depots of SEQEB who have returned to work should be under no illusions about what the Government intends to do.

**Mr Hinze:** I got the impression that you don't trust the Government.

**Mr VAUGHAN:** I would not trust the Minister as far as I could throw him—and honourable members know how far that would be. Later, I shall prove why people should not trust the Government. It proclaimed a state of emergency to get the men to return to work. The only people who are preventing the men from returning to work are the Premier, the 17 faceless men in Cabinet and the henchmen who support them.

What the community does not know is that the first approaches to introduce private contractors were made to the union in May last year. A deal was entered into by the previous deputy general manager of SEQEB. I shall not mention his name, because I have a lot of time for him. It is a pity that he was not appointed general manager of SEQEB ahead of the hatchet man who was appointed to do the Government's dirty work on this occasion.

Recently a SEQEB worker said to me, "It will only be a matter of time, after he completes his work, before he is moved on and given a cushy job somewhere." The present general manager of SEQEB will not last, because he does not have the ability to last.

During negotiations over the Wivenhoe Dam project, the previous deputy general manager of SEQEB gave an undertaking to the Electrical Trades Union that, if the ETU agreed to the performance of that job by private contractors, the next three power line construction jobs in south-east Queensland would be performed by the SEQEB construction people.

Construction gangs have existed for as long as I have been associated with SEQEB and the previous Southern Electric Authority. There were the north construction gang, the south construction gang and another construction gang that floated around the area. The number has been reduced to two. The old SEA construction gangs performed a very important task. They carried out construction work in the country areas under the control of the SEA and they also provided a good training ground for linesmen. The Government has no idea of the work performed by linesmen, the training of linesmen and the safety aspects that are required for linesmen and by linesmen.

Private contractors are trying to perform the work that is usually carried out by the men who are in dispute, but I understand that they are making an unholy mess of it. As the Leader of the Opposition said today, the SEQEB power system is progressively grinding to a halt.

As I say, the two construction gangs perform construction work and also provide a good training ground for linesmen. In this State, after men have completed their training as tradesmen's assistants they become trainee linesmen. Trainee linesmen cannot work on live work. Most of the live work performed around Brisbane is on the power distribution system. The men have to work amongst live wires and they observe very strict safety precautions. As I say, trainee linesmen are not allowed to do that type of work. They must work on dead line work.

I refer now to the training provided by private contractors. What has happened in the past is that the electricity boards have trained linesmen, and the private contractors, whose linesmen training schemes are not of the same standard as those provided by SEQEB or the other power distribution boards in this State, have robbed the boards of their qualified linesmen.

The community should be under no illusion. For years the Electrical Trades Union has agreed to the use of contractors on construction work. The transmission lines that run between Gladstone and Brisbane and the steel power lines across the length and breadth of the State were constructed by contractors under agreement with the Electrical Trades Union. The awards and conditions were negotiated by the union with the contractors, including Electrical Power Transmissions Pty Ltd, Ascom and Transfield (Qld) Pty Ltd, to name three.

The use of contractors, such as in the construction of steel power lines, is nothing new. Perhaps the Government is attempting to expand the use of contract work so that it can pass off to its friends some of the cream of Government contracts. Honourable members are aware of what has been happening in other Government departments in farming out to friends of the Government the cream of Government contracts. I will refer later to a statement made by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn) about the extent of the work that has been performed by contractors.

**A Government Member** interjected.

**Mr VAUGHAN:** Certainly. The union has agreed that contract work must be carried out, but only under strict provisions.

The Opposition will be seeking information from the Minister for Mines and Energy about the contracts. I understand that one of the contractors involved was R & R Constructions, which is run by two former Telecom employees. On one construction site, an employee in an elevated platform vehicle came into contact with 11 000 volts. He is in hospital now. I would like to know how many other fellows have been seriously injured as a result of the Government's contract policy.

Many of the contractors that the Government wants to carry out the work of permanent SEQEB employees do not employ personnel with correct classifications. Invariably these contractors send labourers up poles to do the work of an electrical linesman. Safety standards are not being maintained. I understand that some of the contractors employed by the Government in south-east Queensland are using aluminium ladders. Some employees do not wear long sleeves or hard hats. Some are wearing thongs. Safety procedures are going by the board.

I rang SEQEB at about lunch-time last Friday to find out why the Zillmere/Brackenridge/Boondall area was without power. I was eventually put through and told that work was being carried out on the system and that it was hoped that the work would be finished by the afternoon. However, I was informed that the contractors do not telephone SEQEB in the same way in which SEQEB employees do. The system operated by highly trained SEQEB employees is far superior to that provided by private contractors.

I am interested to learn whether the contract work will be put to tender. A contractor will set himself up to do line work and submit a successful tender for a contract. If the Government follows a correct tendering system and that contractor is not successful another time, he will dismiss his employees and they will lose their long service leave and accumulated sick leave. Those benefits will go down the drain and those workers will have to start afresh with another employer.

The Government is under an illusion if it thinks that that will happen with the introduction of a contracting system in the State's power distribution system. In fact, logs of claims will be served on the contractors for the same entitlements enjoyed by employees of electrical authorities. In effect, the Government will go through the same hoop again. It cannot avoid that. There is no way in the world that the employees in a contract system will work for anything less than the employees of the electrical authorities; they will most probably want more. If the Government knows anything about industrial relations, it will recognise that that is a fait accompli.

**Mr Casey:** Those fellows with thongs, without hard hats and long sleeves—are they Vietnamese?

**Mr VAUGHAN:** I did not want to introduce that point. However, I understand that many of the people who have been lining up at the depots are from that country. They do not have the necessary qualifications. I cannot believe that even this Government would be stupid enough to employ such people on that important work.

The fact of life is that industrial relations in the electricity industry of this State have not been good and, since 1977, have been particularly bad. In 1979, when the Government introduced the Essential Services Bill, it put this House through the hoops, just as it intends to do with the much talked about strong legislation that is to be introduced to combat strikes and to try to impose better industrial relations through the "club" method. The House will go through the same motions again. I am on record as telling the Government about the bad industrial relations in the electricity industry.

It is true that, in this dispute, on a number of occasions orders have been issued against the Electrical Trades Union. When agreement could not be reached in the

Industrial Commission on the use of contractors, SEQEB, knowing very well how the industrial system works, went to the commission and said, "If these fellows do not do the required work and if they impose bans and limitations, it will affect the community." This is what happens every time. As I have said before, when essential service industries are being dealt with, the electricity authorities hide behind the skirts of the State Industrial Commission. Whether the matter deals with electricity, the railways, the ambulance or hospitals, the same thing happens. During the debate on the Essential Services Bill in 1979, the Opposition told the Government that the way the Government goes about industrial relations is not the way to do business and is not the way to industrial peace and harmony. I suggest that the Government knows that it is not the way to achieve good industrial relations and that the Government does not want good industrial relations, because it wants to exploit industrial disputes for political purposes.

What happens with monotonous regularity in the electricity industry is that when a dispute develops between an electricity authority and a union—it does not matter which union—because that dispute will ultimately affect electricity consumers in the State, the electricity authority stonewalls, allows the dispute to roll on until it knows very well that people will be affected, and then goes to the Industrial Commission, from which it knows very well it can obtain orders against the union. It then uses those orders like a club.

Recently I inquired of some of the fellows in trade unions whether anything had changed in the Industrial Commission from the old days, when, in a dispute in an essential service industry, after going through the motions and supposedly listening to the arguments advanced by both sides, the commissioner would pull the orders out of his pocket and force the men to return to work.

In this dispute three lots of orders were issued against the Electrical Trades Union. The first three were obeyed, but there was no change from SEQEB, which continued with its stonewalling attitude. The electricity authority knows that it can get orders. So why should it negotiate on an issue?

If honourable members wish to see an example of the way in which stonewalling takes place and the way in which the Government, through its industrial advisers, treats the Industrial Commission, they should turn to page 5 of "The Courier-Mail" of Tuesday, 19 February 1985. An article headed "The inside story of the power stand-off" displays the contempt with which the Government, through its industrial representatives, treats the State Industrial Commission. This example is not an isolated one. When a dispute involves an essential service industry, this sort of thing happens all the time. The newspaper article is the transcript of the compulsory conference held on Monday, 18 February. It reads—

"The conference resumed at 11.22 a.m.

Mr Ledlie: Let us resume the proceedings this morning. The intention, I understand, was to allow all parties to consider their position overnight and, unless there were any other matters to record or to offer for consideration, we indicated we would hear the viewpoint of Government and the two statutory bodies this morning. Mr Nutter, are you in a position to proceed?"

Honourable members will note that Mr Ledlie, the Industrial Commissioner, pointed out that the adjournment of the conference on the previous day was to allow the parties to consider their position overnight and to obtain the viewpoint of the Government and the two statutory authorities. Mr Nutter, the industrial advocate who represented the Government, said, "I have not been able to contact my principals overnight. . . ."

A most serious dispute had occurred in this State. Discussions had been adjourned to allow the parties to confer with their organisations. The following day, Mr Nutter said—

"I have not been able to contact my principals overnight, but I will indicate what I understand to be the Government's position as it exists at the present time on those various points that were suggested the other day."

Finally, he said—

“I have not been in contact with senior Ministers in relation to that matter since the hearing yesterday.”

That is certainly not the way to conduct industrial relations. However, that is what happens all the time.

Before I became a member of this Assembly I was frustrated in my endeavours to have industrial sanity prevail with the industrial committee of the electrical authorities. When I appeared before Commissioner Pont I pointed out that the electrical authorities were allowing a dispute to continue until Christmas-time. I said to Mr Pont, “Problems will be caused.” Commissioner Pont saw that I was being mucked about in the commission by the representatives of the electrical authorities, who said that they could not give me a definite answer before consulting their principals. They returned to the commission each day and stonewalled, like Mr Nutter, undoubtedly under Government directions. Commissioner Pont ordered the full industrial committee, including the industrial commissioner of the State Electricity Commission (Mr Doug Murray), to appear before the commission to give a definite reply.

The workers in SEQEB, through outright frustration, decided to down tools to protect their employment. I think that they stopped work on Wednesday, 6 February. As the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) said this morning, and as my records show, the Government asked the Governor to proclaim a state of emergency. I believe that that was done for purely political purposes.

The Government knew that a by-election was being held in Rockhampton on 16 February. That is the way the Premier and Treasurer’s political advisers act. The faceless people behind the Ministers knew that the best way to win the by-election was to escalate the dispute. I think that the Premier’s advisers said, “Mr Premier, you need another seat in the House because at present you are on touchy ground. You have a margin of only one or two. You do not appear to be doing badly in Rockhampton. The best way to improve your situation is to escalate this dispute.”

As I said earlier, the reason for the state of emergency was to get the SEQEB workers back to work. Although the state of emergency was proclaimed on 7 February, the only barrier to a return to work by the SEQEB workers, despite the recommendations from the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, is the failure of the Government to reinstate the 960-odd workers who have been dismissed.

Knowing that the by-election was only one week away, the Premier and Treasurer decided to take the bit between his teeth and escalate the dispute by sacking the workers on Monday, 11 February. He knew that that would escalate the dispute throughout Queensland. He knew that Central Queensland would be affected, particularly Rockhampton where the by-election was being held. After he refused to accept recommendations from the State Industrial Commission on Sunday, 10 February, the Premier and Treasurer inserted large advertisements in the press and appeared on radio and television putting forward his point of view. All those advertisements went to Central Queensland.

After the people of Queensland had their say, it was a different ball game. The people of Queensland saw through the Premier and Treasurer of Queensland. He was blinded by his own propaganda. He set about escalating the dispute purposely and involved Central Queensland. It is a fact of life that, as far as the by-election was concerned, his actions were not successful.

Undoubtedly, Queensland is suffering. Reference has been made to the huge cost of the dispute. The people of this State should ask, “What is the dispute all about?” If Government members believe that the Government’s action will improve industrial relations in this State, they are barking up the wrong tree.

On 26 August 1981, because of the state of industrial relations in the State’s power industry and the huge increase in the cost of electricity since the reorganisation of the

industry, particularly the cost to the domestic consumer, I gave notice of the following motion in this House, which was never allowed to be debated—

“That, in view of the substantial increases in electricity tariffs that have occurred since the reorganization of the State’s electricity industry from July 1977, and the high incidence of industrial disputation and disruption to the State’s power supply since that date, this House instructs the Government to conduct an inquiry into—

- (a) Electricity tariffs and existing tariff structures with a view to relieving the burden on domestic consumers particularly those on low and/or fixed incomes and charitable institutions;
- (b) (i) The state of industrial relations in the electricity industry and the manner in which the industry conducts its industrial relations; and
- (ii) The organization, structure and management of the industry, with a view to preventing or reducing industrial disputation in the future and ensuring continuity of supply to the State.”

That notice remained on the Business Paper for three years. The Opposition was not given an opportunity to debate it, as has been the case with so many other very important issues. It was placed on the Business Paper in an attempt to make the Government see sanity.

In the few minutes that I have left today, I point out that another reason for this smoke-screen, this sham that has been perpetrated on the people of this State, is to hide the situation that exists in the power industry.

As I have said, the fact is that Queensland has the highest electricity charges in Australia. Currently the average domestic consumer in Brisbane pays \$115 per quarter for electricity. The average cost per quarter in Adelaide is \$113, which is the next highest in Australia. The people of this State should not be deluded as to what the Government is about. The fact is that the Government is about increasing domestic tariffs to the commercial rates.

A letter written by the State Electricity Commissioner states—

“While there is presently a difference in the charges between domestic and general supply tariffs steps are being taken to progressively correct this situation. At the present domestic supply is undercharged at the expense of the small commercial operator.”

If what the State Electricity Commissioner says is correct—and I believe it is—what that means, and what the people of Queensland should know, is that the Government is intent on increasing power charges for the domestic consumer not by 10 per cent or 15 per cent—this is aside from the normal power charge increases—but by 56 per cent. As the State Electricity Commissioner says in that letter, the Government is about increasing domestic power charges up to the price paid by commercial operators. That means that from July people in south-east Queensland will be faced with not only a 15 per cent increase in electricity charges but also in the future a 56 per cent increase.

The people of this State should also know that, as at 30 June last year, the total loan debt of the electricity industry in this State was 2.7 billion dollars, or \$244m more than it was the previous year. In addition, the value of coal stockpiled at the State’s power stations has increased from \$27.9m in 1981-82 to \$61m in 1982-83 and to \$81m in 1983-84, and I venture to suggest that it will be even higher when figures for this financial year come out.

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (3.19 p.m.): The House has just listened to speeches from two former secretaries of the Electrical Trades Union. If they are any indication of the present office-bearers of the ETU, no wonder the union is in such a sorry mess. The union tried to con the workers and made one hell of a mess of it. It told them they would be back at work within two days. “They won’t sack you,” the union said.

**Mr Casey:** Talking of cons, where have you been for the last few weeks?

**Mr GUNN:** I have been round. The honourable member for Mackay was under the bed. There was not one word from him.

On Sunday, 21 February, this article appeared in the "Sunday Sun"—

"Opposition Leader Mr Warburton yesterday refused to support or condemn power station operators and distanced himself from unions in the power dispute.

Mr Warburton said if he were Premier he would immediately reinstate SEQEB workers.

But he said he could do nothing to solve the dispute and would not ask the Governor, Sir James Ramsay, to act.

On MOA action to turn down power, Mr Warburton said, 'I don't support hurting people, I stand for a resolution of the problem.

'I'm completely divorced from what is happening; the A.L.P. is totally divorced from this dispute.' "

That is what the ALP was doing during the dispute.

Someone then appeared on television—I think his name was Madden—to put the case for the ETU. Wally Walpamur would have done a better job. He did not instil any confidence in the people of Queensland.

Today's debate will give the Labor Opposition members a final chance to stand up for Queenslanders on the power industry issue. The recent dispute has left them sitting like shags on a rock. In fact, the honourable member for Murrumba is sound asleep, which shows what he thinks of it. The Labor Party has been caught between a desire to support militant union leaders in an irresponsible action and a perceived need to support the rights of Queenslanders. That party has failed to support Queenslanders and opted to support militant unions, which provide election funding and, of course, endorsement.

As the dispute unfolded, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) fumbled and stumbled between support for the union bosses and a precarious form of fence-sitting, for which he is noted in the Chamber. In fact, the dispute highlighted the fact that the supposed alternative Government displayed the intestinal fortitude of a wet rag in standing up for the people. This faction-riddled Opposition has always exhibited an anaemic attitude when put to the test, which is no surprise to the majority of honourable members. The dispute underlined the fact that the Labor Party is at a loss to know how to handle unions in serious industrial disputes which threaten the State's economy. I advise members of the Opposition that they will achieve nothing by hiding under the bed, as they did on this occasion. I have already alluded to the comments by the Leader of the Opposition in the early stages of the dispute.

In supporting the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer, I refer initially to the situation on 7 February when, because of the threat to the security of the electricity supply system, His Excellency the Governor proclaimed a state of emergency.

At that time, as a result of the strike by 1,500 SEQEB electricians, 12,000 consumers in and around Brisbane were blacked out. The strikers were told by the union that they would be back at work within two days. "They won't sack you," they were told. Many businesses in the blacked-out areas had been forced to close and employees had been stood down, causing untold losses and hardship.

Simultaneously with the declaration of the state of emergency, the Industrial Commission ordered the striking linesmen back to work. The ETU ignored the order and its members refused to return to work. Naturally, that was on the advice of the officials, who once again said, "They won't sack you. You'll be back in two days." There is no doubt that many ETU linesmen were afraid of the threats by union officials. Many rang me and spoke about the threats. I informed them that the best remedy was to meet the union officials eyeball to eyeball, for they are the greatest dingo mob the men would have ever struck in their lives.

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mr GUNN:** That is quite correct. They are. Who would be frightened of the Leader of the Opposition? Good God!

In refusing to return to work, members of the ETU acted in blatant disregard of the welfare of electricity consumers in the State. Despite nearly eight months of continuous negotiations over SEQEB's right to utilise contract labour in peak work-load and other situations where it was in the public interest, the ETU decided to flex its industrial muscle. The specific contracts at the centre of the dispute concerned three transmission lines—Beenleigh-Rocky Point, Loganlea-North Springwood and Burleigh-Mudgeeraba—and a substation destined for use in the new Sunstate Cement project of Fisherman Islands.

All of these projects are necessary, if not vital, to Queensland. In the case of the three lines I have mentioned, at risk is continuity of supply to many hundreds of thousands of consumers. In the case of Sunstate Cement, at risk is the establishment of a new industry in the south-east part of Queensland.

On 8 February, when striking ETU linesmen had not returned to work as required, a further Order in Council was made directing the strikers to recommence work as required by rosters and to perform normal duties. Another Order in Council gave power to the Electricity Commissioner to direct persons to undertake necessary work to restore and maintain the electricity supply.

After repeated warnings of the consequences of failure to return to work, the SEQEB linesmen, having been given every opportunity to return to work, remained on strike, and were sacked—and rightly so.

Power station operators who, of course, have more protection than koalas, reacted to the sackings by cutting power production, inflicting hardship and expense on people who should never have been involved. It was not their business. By their defiance of an Industrial Commission order, they virtually brought the State to a standstill. The industrial thuggery perpetrated by the power unions will not be forgotten by the people of Queensland.

The ETU and power station unions involved in the dispute defied a total of six recommendations from the Industrial Commission and three orders to return to work.

The people of Queensland have paid billions of dollars to build the State's power stations and they are entitled to a reliable electricity supply, not one which is subject to the industrial whims of the unions involved.

What was published in "The Courier-Mail" on 26 February? It was this—

"Most Australians want the Arbitration Commission to penalise unions that do not follow Commission directions, according to the Gallup Poll. Eighty-one per cent say that the unions should be penalised."

That is what the people of Queensland think about this matter.

Since the Government implemented its rationalisation plans for the power industry in July 1977—and I was present in the House at that time—industrial action by the power workers has crippled the State on 11 occasions. This is not the first time it has happened.

**Mr Davis interjected**

**Mr GUNN:** I can remember that, at that time, the honourable member for Brisbane Central was not present in the House. I think the electors had kicked him out. The people found the measure of the honourable member for Brisbane Central, and ousted him.

The State Government is determined that a handful of union leaders will never again throw the State into chaos. The Government will make certain of that this time,

and I can assure all honourable members of that. We will not be diverted from our responsibility to uphold the law and protect the public interest. We know that we have the backing of the vast majority of the people of Queensland in our determination to rid the State of disputes in our essential industries.

There is no doubt that the Labor Party and its leader have come out of this dispute looking weak and tattered. By looking at members of the Opposition, one can see that half of them are asleep. They are the weakest looking group I have ever seen. What a conglomeration!

Throughout the power crisis, the Leader of the Opposition ran hot and cold with his support of his old mates in the ETU. In fact, what could have been his greatest performance turned out to be a bellyflop—a miserable failure. He has been noticeably quiet since a week-end poll, which showed one in three Labor voters was opposed to the right to strike, particularly in essential services.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr GUNN:** The honourable member for Brisbane Central might have read about that. I understand that he has trouble reading, but I think he may have read that article.

During the power crisis, Mr Warburton had the opportunity to show some leadership. Instead, he opted for rhetoric and tried to retreat to a neutral corner. That corner would have been found to be under the bed, and that is for certain!

It was the Labor Prime Minister, not the Leader of the State Opposition, who called on the unionists to return to work.

The secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (Mr Bill Kelty) came to Brisbane and said to the unions, "Get back, you fools. It is a no-win situation." That is what Kelty said, and the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) said exactly the same thing.

The Leader of the Opposition is always telling us what a democratic organisation the Labor Party is. That is the joke of the season. There are factions in the Australian Labor Party, and more are likely to develop after this razzmatazz.

Where was he when some printers tried to place a black-out on democracy and the freedom of the press by issuing an ultimatum that the State Government's advertisements on the power crisis would not be processed?

Where was he when the Trades and Labor Council rejected out of hand the Government's plan to resolve the power crisis, which only hours later led to the restoration of power? He stood there and said, "The power will be restored." On previous occasions he had said, "We isolate ourselves. We won't have anything to do with this." But, of course, Dempsey knew that he had to give in. He had orders from the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and Kelty, "Get out of this, or you will end up with more than egg on your face." So Warburton was raced down here to Parliament House, where the Australian Broadcasting Corporation was ready. It is always ready for something like that. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition made a fool of himself.

The Government believes that the vast majority of unionists are responsible people who really do want to work. The Swanbank Power Station is in my electorate, and I know the workers there very well. A lot of them support me and hand out my how-to-vote cards, and they always will. I know what happened during this dispute. The employees actually came to my house on a number of occasions to see me.

It is a measure of the arrogance of the militant union bosses that they were prepared to deny the sacked SEQEB employees the right to regain their jobs. In the case of some of the older workers who are close to retirement, that action could cost them superannuation and other benefits that have taken a lifetime to accrue. That is a very sad state of affairs.

I have never seen people run as scared as the SEQEB employees did. They said to me, "Look, they threatened our wives and families." I said, "The only people they are

capable of belting up are your wives and kids, because if they were faced with a decent type of man they would back off. Let them come out into the Lockyer Valley and try it." None of the employees in the Lockyer Valley went on strike. Opposition members did not see any pickets up there, did they? They would have been met with force. Some employees from Ipswich spoke about travelling to the Lockyer Valley, and they were told, "You go into that area at your own risk." None of the employees from Esk and the Lockyer Valley went out on strike. A total of 45 men would not go out on strike. And, by gee, no-one tried to picket them, because anyone who did would have got a real reception.

The union leaders, all in comfortable, paid positions, are OK. They received their wages. They had no right to continue to deny their members the right to a job. They had their well-paid jobs. Likewise, the MOA workers in the power houses were well paid right through the dispute, although they supplied only half power. It was the poor little SEQEB workers, who wanted to go back to work, and who would do so tomorrow, who were denied their jobs and who had threats made against them.

The futile attempt of the union leaders to bargain from a position of weakness will only prolong the hardship for sacked employees, many of whom simply want to get back on the job for SEQEB. Eventually they may have the opportunity to do so, but, as "The Courier-Mail" said, there has to be a penalty. Almost 80 per cent of the people of Queensland consider that a penalty should be imposed on the SEQEB workers.

The union leaders incited their members to industrial lawlessness, and they must now accept the terms and conditions being offered for reinstatement as the just penalty for such action. The Government has made that decision and will not deviate from it. I wholeheartedly urge members to support the motion moved by the Premier.

**Mr McLEAN (Bulimba) (3.34 p.m.):** Although I welcome the opportunity to enter this debate, I do so with a great deal of sadness, because this great State of ours has been left with the burden of decisions of a sick, tired and incompetent Government, to such an extent that all Queenslanders are suffering enormous hardships. They are now seeing the end result of extreme right-wing politics a la Petersen. They have seen this tired hater in action and they know that they are being used as the playthings of his obsessions.

If there is one bright note, it is that they might possibly be seeing the swansong of a frustrated megalomaniac whose efforts throughout life have been foiled by the fact that he was born in a free country. I feel sorry for the Premier, because he could have been born in South Africa or South America, where his efforts would probably have been rewarded by his being able to shoot workers.

On behalf of the people of Queensland I accuse the Premier of gross neglect of their welfare, and that neglect has now reached criminal proportions. I also accuse the Cabinet of co-operation in that neglect. The Premier and his Government have orchestrated the present problems in the power industry to satisfy an obsessive and near lunatic hatred of organised labour in this State to the point at which Queensland's way of life is near collapse. The Premier has finally forced his bitterness, his hatreds, his failure to understand or show compassion, his ability to create violence, his narrow-mindedness, and all his other evil attributes that unfortunately he was born with, upon the people of Queensland. This Government-planned dispute is only the icing on the cake of hatred that he has unfortunately succeeded in making part of the Queensland way of life.

This dispute has left a sour taste in the mouths of all Queenslanders and many questions remain unanswered by the Government. Those questions should be posed to the Premier and to the other Ministers in the Cabinet. I am pleased to note that the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) is present in the Chamber, because I want to pose a few questions to him. The silence of those Ministers reminded one of the actions of a flock of sheep in staying in line with the farmland rantings and ravings of the Premier.

I am afraid that the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs has many questions to answer, and I shall pose a few to him. Firstly, when was he, as Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, relieved of his responsibilities in the present power dispute, and when did Cabinet transfer those responsibilities wholly and solely to the Premier? In view of the many millions of dollars spent by the Minister's department in obtaining expertise and on the Minister's own lurks and perks—he is ever ready to criticise other workers about their lurks and perks—the people of Queensland deserve an answer to that question.

Why did the Minister not use the expertise that he has at his disposal within the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs to intervene in this dispute? For example, during the debate on the Estimates for the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs, the Minister proudly announced the introduction of an Industrial Affairs Advisory Unit. He said—

“One great step forward has been the introduction of an Industrial Affairs Advisory Unit. The Government recognises the need for the public, employees and the employers to be able to consult with a central organisation on industrial issues and problems. The advisory unit is complementary to the day-to-day industrial relations activities at the work-place and is not intended to supplant the functions of employer and employee organisations. The Government will also ensure that the advisory unit will look at the effect of technology on future industrial relations.”

I ask the Minister why that unit was not used during the present dispute. Could he explain that to the people of Queensland? Why has the dispute been allowed to linger on when it could have been settled in a short period if it had been left to travel the true and correct course of accepted dispute-handling procedures? When did the Minister take initiatives to attempt to get a prompt settlement of the dispute and to minimise pain and suffering to Queenslanders, and what were those initiatives?

What recommendations were made to Cabinet by the Minister as the Minister concerned with this industrial dispute? The Queensland people are paying the Minister to accept his responsibilities, and they expect him to answer those questions.

When did he call the parties together? What concern has he shown to the people of Queensland for the hardship that the Government has caused? Can the Minister honestly justify his silence when he was aware that power could have been restored within a matter of hours if the recommendations of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission had been accepted by the Government?

An article in today's "Telegraph" states—

“The basic peace plan which led to the lights being turned back on in Queensland was presented to the Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, a week before the dispute ended, Government sources said today.”

The Government forced the people of Queensland to go without power for one week to accommodate the mad, wild, anti-union obsession of the Premier. Cabinet allowed the Premier to rule one out, and it stands condemned.

What papers did the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs put forward as the responsible Minister? The Queensland Confederation of Industry, through Siebenhausen who is a card-carrying member of the National Party, has been the chief adviser to the Premier. Its one-sided advice has brought this State to near collapse, without the Minister's department being consulted.

**Mr Underwood:** You have shut him up now. He is not saying anything.

**Mr McLEAN:** That is right.

What is the opinion of the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs about the failure of the Premier to accept the advice of the umpire during this dispute? That advice is clearly stated. I will cover that matter a little later.

Another question that might be asked of the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) is this: What did his industrial advisers, who are paid a very large salary to provide advice, offer as solutions to this dispute? Can the Minister explain to the people of Queensland his very warped opinion on industrial relations? I could go on and ask other questions of not only the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs but also the other Ministers in Cabinet.

Today, the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer spoke the greatest lot of drivel that I have ever heard in the Parliament. Where was he during the dispute? Everyone was asking, "Bill who?" He did not open his mouth once; neither did the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, except when he stated that he had managed to find someone to fix the lifts for the old Premier and Treasurer.

**Mr LESTER:** I rise to a point of order. I find offensive the remark that I did not speak once in this dispute. I appeared on television on four occasions. I could be heard on radio, and my comments frequently appeared in other sections of the media. Because I find it offensive, I ask the honourable member for Bulimba to withdraw his inaccurate statement.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! The Minister finds the remark made by the honourable member for Bulimba offensive. I ask the honourable member to withdraw the remark.

**Mr McLEAN:** Which remark?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The remark that the Minister did not appear once or did not speak once.

**Mr McLEAN:** I withdraw the remark that upsets the Minister.

It has been said that at this stage, the dispute has cost in the vicinity of \$600m. Over 500 000 workers have been stood down. Coal production has been affected drastically, as has meat and milk production. Some Queensland rail services have been brought to a standstill. Imports and exports have been seriously affected, and the effects of human pain and suffering are unknown.

Why has that occurred? One possibility is that the Premier has sought to satisfy his union-bashing obsession. It is obvious that he took control of the dispute from the start and handled it all the way through. That is why the problems have occurred.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Who called the wharfies on strike?

**Mr McLEAN:** The Government did!

Throughout history, unions have been attacked. In the 1800s, attitudes similar to those held by this Government were expressed. However, no attack has succeeded over any length of time, and this attack will not succeed, either.

Another reason for the dispute could be found in the Queensland unemployment figures, which are by far the highest in Australia. There is no possibility of a reduction in unemployment for quite some time.

Another cause of the dispute could be that the Queensland economy is in the bog. Whereas the economies of other States are starting to pick up after the recession, the Queensland economy is still going backwards. The actions of the Queensland Government could be a smoke-screen to attempt to hide the suffering of hundreds of thousands of people in this State.

**Mr Lester:** Do you support the unions every time they cut off people's telephones?

**Mr McLEAN:** I support the right of workers to protest against union-bashing tactics.

A number of factors have emerged indicating why the Premier and Treasurer has singled out the electricity industry on which to employ his union-bashing tactics. The electricity industry provides an essential service, and any problems within the industry create instant public outcry. It provides an ideal political smoke-screen for the Government. Because it is a Government instrumentality, it presents a golden opportunity for the Government to assume complete political control. An honest, hard-working and predictable work-force is employed in the industry. It is the perfect industry in which to work a master plan of organised conflict whenever and however the Government chooses.

I congratulate the Premier and Treasurer and his devious advisers on the way in which they have succeeded with their plan. They have manipulated and schemed in such a way that many people are unaware of the true mischief that has been done. I assure them that they will not be so smart or so lucky for ever. Some of the people can be fooled some of the time, but all of the people cannot be fooled all of the time. The Premier's time is coming.

The dispute has been fabricated. It is a great example of just how far arrogance and obsession can override common sense, honesty, compassion and fair play. The men who work for SEQEB are not militant, revolutionary trouble-makers; they are ordinary, hard-working Australians who desire a chance to live a comfortable, secure life.

**Mr Lester:** Why are the polls in "The Courier-Mail" going right against you?

**Mr McLEAN:** When the Minister speaks in this debate, I ask him to answer some of the questions that I have posed.

The SEQEB workers want a chance to give their children employment in the future; they want to be able to retire with a little security. It is criminal for this Government to use its powers to further the political obsessions of the extreme right-wing mentality of the Premier and Treasurer and the National Party. A number of issues have arisen from the Government's action, issues that the National Party will live to regret.

The Chamber has heard the details of the dispute as related by the Premier and Treasurer and by the Minister for Mines and Energy, and a pathetic effort by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer. The time has come for the points of view of the other side to be put.

If one looks into the facts associated with this dispute, one sees that the blame can be placed fully onto the Government. For over six months, SEQEB has ignored the approaches of the men to negotiate meaningfully on their future security of employment. As the member for Nudgee said, at no stage were the SEQEB negotiators given the opportunity to make a decision. After the talks had dragged on for six months, the men felt very frustrated and something had to give.

On a number of occasions the ETU placed bans on work. On three occasions the Industrial Commission ordered the lifting of those bans. Accordingly, the men agreed and lifted the bans on each of those occasions. On each occasion the Government took further action to provoke disputation. Eventually the men decided not to allow the Government and SEQEB to attack their job security any further and did not obey the next order. The Premier and Treasurer had set the bait and, although he was prepared to allow the commission to do the groundwork, he was not prepared to let it handle the dispute. He was not prepared to allow any of his Ministers to handle the dispute, either.

**Mr Lester** interjected.

**Mr McLEAN** If I were the Minister, I would hide under the chair.

One point of view that has been advanced during this dispute is that the Premier and Treasurer has promised Mr Lang Hancock, his very close friend and fellow extreme right-winger, that the electricity industry in this State will be cleaned up in return for the establishment of a steel-mill in Queensland. That is a big rumour currently circulating

in the industrial sphere. Mr Hancock is known as the Pilbara parasite. I would not put it past the Premier and Treasurer to sell out the welfare of the people of Queensland in order to benefit his friendship with a Western Australian parasite.

When the Premier and Treasurer declared the state of emergency, he also sacked 1 000 workers. That is when all sane, thinking Queenslanders began to see through this devious scheme. From that stage on the Premier and Treasurer showed his true colours. He refused to accept the recommendations of the Industrial Commission, uttered even crazier statements and displayed his obvious disregard for the welfare of Queensland.

Mr Siebenhausen, who was the Premier and Treasurer's main adviser apart from the responsible department, also displayed stupidity towards the people he represented. That fact is common knowledge in the industrial relations arena.

The Government's refusal to come to terms with some issues will eventually lead to its downfall. One issue with which it has refused to come to terms throughout the dispute is general safety. The Government has an obsession about defeating the ETU and any other union that stands in its way, and is not prepared to consider some of the consequences. One serious consequence of the dispute is the failure to maintain the general safety of the public and workers in the electricity industry. The Government has not come to grips with the problem and realised that society will not accept the sacking of 1 000 men in the manner in which they have been sacked. Disharmony and an unstable working environment for many years to come will flow from the dispute.

The large loan repayments, which have nothing to do with the dispute, are the result of mismanagement, bad management and decisions by the South East Queensland Electricity Board. Honourable members have seen the incompetent and inefficient management of SEQEB that has caused most of the problems for a long time.

I turn now to public and worker safety. For a number of reasons the electricity industry can be proud of its good safety record. It has always had a stable and responsible work-force. Over many years, unions and employers have adopted a united front on safety planning and maintenance of job training. Committees have operated on a basis of full participation by all parties. Proper and adequate training provisions and standards have been set out for all workers in the industry. Of course, that situation does not prevail at present and will deteriorate to a great degree if the Government's plans are allowed to proceed.

Safety is furthest from the minds of the perpetrators of the present dispute. Safety seems to run a long last to the political advantages and the right-wing attitude of the Premier and Treasurer.

The electricity industry has established strict safety guide-lines for the public and the worker. Those guide-lines have proved to be worth while. Committees have been established over a period. The Working Procedures Committee and the Electrical Workers Board set standards and issue certificates of competency to workers. The Linesman Training Syllabus Council is made up of employers, employees and the Education Department. It makes recommendations for training based on criteria laid down by the Queensland Electricity Commission.

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr McLEAN:** If the honourable member listens a little longer, he might get a shock.

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr McLEAN:** The honourable member is not concerned about the matter, because he does not care about worker safety. Anyway, he would not have the brains.

To become a linesman, a worker must attend a school for 12 weeks over a number of sessions. The course also entails 45 correspondence papers and 300 hours' work on dead lines. The course is set by the Queensland Electricity Commission.

The Pole Top Rescue and Resuscitation Committee consists of doctors, employers and employees. It oversees the area of safety. Everyone who works on overhead wires must be proficient in overhead pole rescue and resuscitation. A State-wide safety competition is held and all boards throughout the State compete.

If a worker is not trained to the standards that have been established, it is obvious what can happen. It is possible that bad connections can result in the death of workers and also the public as a result of shocks received from taps and electrical appliances. They can also lead to fires and household damage. The consequences are great.

I turn to what is planned for the new workers. Under the old scheme, a linesman did 12 weeks' training as well as 45 correspondence papers and 300 hours' work on dead lines. The SEQEB plans to give new workers three weeks' training and to send them straight into the field. Does the honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) agree with that? Does he agree that they should be given three weeks' training and then sent into the field? I hope that one day someone involved with the honourable member is fried. Maybe then he will come back to——

**Mr FitzGerald:** All those men can come back provided that they sign——

**Mr McLEAN:** I will deal with that in a minute. They cannot come back; it is not as easy as that.

How far can the unions go in obtaining an acceptable solution to this problem? They cannot go any farther. I am told that the men who wish to return to work must first register and then, if required, fill out a statutory declaration to the boss claiming harassment and naming those responsible for the harassment. They would then return to work with the usual conditions and entitlements. Those men who wish to return to work but who will not sign a statutory declaration——

**A Government Member:** They are being harassed.

**Mr McLEAN:** I do not believe that they are being harassed. From what the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer has said, the only harassment would be from the thugs where he lives. He threatened them against going out there, saying that he would give them a hiding.

Those men who wish to return to work but who will not sign a statutory declaration must first fill in the usual job application form and take a chance on whether they are wanted or not. If they are employed, the following conditions apply:

1. No previous work history is acknowledged.
2. A ten day fortnight—a step backwards.
3. Sign a no-strike clause.

Does that mean that the boss will sign a no-sack clause, or is it just one-way?

4. No experience taken into account.
5. No previous superannuation, holidays, industry payment, probation allowance, PIO conditions, no six-hour or eight-hour breaks or other separate agreements to continue and maximum penalty rate reduced to 5.

**Mr Davis:** Did you know that, during the power crisis, the member for Lockyer was irrigating all the time?

**Mr McLEAN:** I would not be surprised.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I rise to a point of order. In case the interjection by the Opposition Whip was recorded in "Hansard", I wish to reply to it. The member for Brisbane Central accused me of irrigating on my farm, using electricity, during the power strike. I assure the honourable member for Brisbane Central that when I put in a 100 hp electric motor, I made provision to put a jackshaft in. I backed a tractor up to it,

and, using that tractor, I irrigated throughout the electricity strike. If the statement by the honourable member for Brisbane Central was recorded, I ask that he withdraw it.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Before the debate continues, I point out that some of the interjections are slightly ridiculous. The continuous cross-fire is making it very difficult to hear the proceedings, and it hardly enhances the reputation of the House.

**Mr McLEAN:** The proposition mentioned in today's "Telegraph" that was put to the Premier some six days previously was eventually accepted by the unions, that is, for power station operators to supply full power. Any fair-minded man who read the submission could only say that the unions acted in an extremely responsible manner in accepting the proposition put to them. It was a big backward step after the industrial action they had taken for such a long time.

Power station operators must restore full power and become staff employees with a no-strike agreement. Thirty days after the staff agreement has been achieved, action will be taken to offer re-employment to SEQEB employees who wish to re-apply for positions. Any re-employment would be under the new no-strike contract conditions now in force for new employees for a 38-hour week or a 10-day fortnight. Such re-employment would be offered provided the dismissed employees have not previously engaged in harassment of existing employees or new employees. If, six months after the employment of any dismissed employee, no harassment occurs of other employees, action will be taken to restore the employee's superannuation and other entitlements. Harassment at any time after the six-months period will be grounds for dismissal.

That is not a fair settlement in anyone's mind. It most certainly is not fair in my mind. I must be honest and say that I was shocked when the unions accepted that. Obviously, they had their reasons for doing so, one of which possibly was their responsible attitude to Queenslanders generally. That says a lot more for them than the Government's attitude says for it. From the commencement of the dispute, the Premier and Treasurer has had an attitude of confrontation. At no stage has he been prepared to have meaningful discussions to solve the problem. For that, he stands condemned. Eventually the people of Queensland will realise that this has been an orchestrated attempt to further the Government's own political ends.

I agree with a couple of statements by the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs), but for reasons different from his. He spoke about "selfish ends" being the cause of the dispute. He blamed the unions. I agree that selfish ends were the cause of the dispute, but I place the total blame on the Government, the selfish ends being the Premier's life-long ambition to smash the unions in this State. He saw this as an opportunity to do so.

The Minister then said that it was the worst example of union manipulation in the State's history. Once again I agree, but on the part of the Premier, who has manipulated the trade union movement in the dispute in an attempt to satisfy his own personal obsession to smash this State's union movement.

**Mr Shaw:** And to cover up his inadequacies.

**Mr McLEAN:** Yes. In addition, there are a couple of side issues such as the worst unemployment record in Australia and the position in which Queensland finds itself—because of the Government's unsound financial management.

**Mr Shaw:** Who is the Treasurer?

**Mr McLEAN:** The Premier!

Another important matter is one raised by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton). I refer to the way in which the electricity distribution system is breaking down. The Government ought to realise the consequences of a major break-down in the city. Many people will suffer. The time has arrived for there to be sensible negotiations.

The Government ought to sit down for meaningful discussions before many Queenslanders are affected seriously.

**Hon. R. J. HINZE** (South Coast—Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing) (4.3 p.m.): As I listen to the debate, I am reminded of "East is east, and west is west, and never the twain shall meet." I am aware of a wide difference of opinion between Government members putting up what they believe to be the argument representing the Government's attitudes and decisions of the last few weeks and the criticism of the Labor Opposition. I wonder whether it will ever be possible for us to understand one another. Unfortunately, the answer appears to be, "No." What a terrible tragedy that is! If we could only resolve our problems, we would have a great State.

**Mr Fouras:** Your Premier sets out to divide this community; that is the problem.

**Mr HINZE:** Our young friend from South Brisbane says that my attitude is to divide the community.

**Mr Fouras:** That is your Premier's attitude.

**Mr HINZE:** The Premier is linked with Ministers and the Government. On this side, we are all one. We do not have four or five different groups.

**Mr Prest:** Do you want me to name them?

**Mr HINZE:** Yes.

**Mr Prest:** Hollingdale, Sparkes, that other mate of yours, Lyons, then the Premier and then you. Who's side are you on?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Booth): Order! I call the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing.

**Mr HINZE:** We have reached a watershed in the history of this great State. Events in the next few days will determine whether the elected Government and Parliament of Queensland govern for the people or whether a self-perpetuating clique of union bosses will continue to hold all of us to ransom by their selfish, arrogant and self-serving rampages. Queensland has witnessed a sad and sorry series of events in the past two weeks and we are not out of the woods yet. The basic right of the employer—in this case the South East Queensland Electricity Board, backed by the Government—to have some role in the determination of who shall be employed and under what conditions has not just been questioned; it has been attacked with a virulence never before seen.

In the process, millions of dollars will have been lost in wages and output. Jobs that had been painfully created by a revived economy have been lost for ever, and innocent men and women have had their lives so severely disrupted that it will take months, or even years, for the harm to be repaired and for the pain to be forgotten.

Today, two categories of workers exist. It is important for honourable members to understand and accept that proposition. There are those who are backed by the industrial muscle of the union bosses and there are those who could be called the battlers. Members of the Opposition will be able to recognise the two categories by looking across the State. Two groups are exactly what can be seen. The battlers are the dairy farmers, the small business people, the self-employed and the independent entrepreneurs. The first category I refer to is made up of the new aristocracy, and its palace is the Trades Hall.

The new aristocracy has inherited all of the traditions of the old aristocracy, that is, the divine right to rule and the "let them eat cake" attitude towards the defenceless. In contrast, the new aristocracy is secure in its privileged state of superannuation, leave loadings and—members of the Opposition should listen to the next one—overtime penalties, holiday loadings, subsidised housing, permanency of employment, and a whole host of other lurks and perks that make the average politician's lot seem a dismal one. Of course, the new aristocracy can afford to thumb its nose at the world.

If the cosy little world is challenged, up go the drawbridges, and the populace is fired on from the battlements. I ask honourable members: Who is to defend the new oppressed? Who is to say, "So far, and no further."? Who is to try to get some perspective into this madness? The answer, of course, is: "The Government." That is the answer, and, because it is the answer, the trade unions have declared all-out war.

If the Government's opponents and their apologists cannot understand the language that I use, let me speak this message in their own language. The Government is the shop steward for the independent battler, the Government is the union secretary for the self-employed, the Government is the Trades and Labor Council for those who, by their wit, daring and enterprise, have created the wealth that provides the very life-blood of the nation.

The new aristocracy, like the old aristocracy, regards the will of the majority as incidental to the life of that aristocracy. It regards the majority as being present only to provide. When I say "provide", I mean that the majority shall have rights wrenched from them by force and intimidation.

Today I have sat in the House and heard accusations of intimidation from the Opposition side. The previous speaker referred to some of my colleagues as thugs. Members of the Opposition seem to think that it is a one-sided phenomenon and that the thugs are only on the Government side of the House.

All I wish to say to the people who are engaged in these industries is that there is no way in the world that intimidation can be permitted and perpetuated. I instance the situation in which workers are standing at their work-places and someone comes up to them and speaks over their shoulder saying, "If you do not agree with us, boy, watch out!"

**Mr Vaughan:** What a lot of rubbish. Do you believe that?

**Mr HINZE:** The honourable member for Nudgee has been a union representative, so he knows what I am talking about. He knows how to apply a bit of muscle and intimidation if needs be. He should not tell me that he would not engage in a little bit of intimidation or, as one of my colleagues said, "Don't tell me you haven't engaged in a little bit of it."

This Government has a duty and a responsibility to stop this madness. It believes in the old and noble tradition of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. It believes in the right of the individual to determine his own destiny. It believes in promoting real creativity in this State.

Much has been made of what the union war-lords call "the workers' rights", including the right to strike. That claim would simply be laughable if it were not so serious. How do the Trades Hall bosses define "workers' rights"?

Does the term mean that an individual can decide as an individual to work or not work? Does it mean the right to a secret vote on proposals to settle disputes? Does it mean the basic human dignity of making up one's own mind? The answer is, of course, "No, no, a thousand times no."

When Cabinet made its comprehensive settlement offer to the union bosses, did they offer to call meetings so that rational debate could precede a secret ballot of members? Of course not!

**Mr Vaughan:** Of course they did.

**Mr HINZE:** Within about three minutes of its becoming public Harry Hauenschild answered it, and the honourable member knows he did.

**Mr Shaw:** Was he right?

Mr HINZE: He said straight away, "Of course, the answer is no, we won't be in it," didn't he? Then, later in the day, for some reason or other—of course, it will come out eventually—somebody somersaulted. But five minutes after the Premier made his speech Harry Hauenschild's reply appeared on the news media—without any debate, without any consideration, without a secret ballot, nothing—"it won't be accepted by the unions."

The ink was hardly dry on the Government's offer when it was rejected out of hand by the so-called defenders of "workers' rights". That outrageous rejection is compounded by the fact that they admitted they had not even seen the offer. It was only later that day, when the Government's determination and resolve became fully known, even to their closed minds, that negotiations could begin and the lights could come back on—at least temporarily. The real cause of that dramatic turn-about last Thursday was the simple, cold, hard fact that the union bosses could see that their own members were rebelling against them. That came to light during the day and they said, "We better watch it now because if we start counting heads we probably won't have the numbers." Those workers who saw that sanity must prevail, that the community could no longer be strangled to death, and that their own positions were secure, were drifting away and their bosses were frantic that the drift could become a flood, and those in their little Trades Hall empires would be washed away for ever.

I salute those workers who put the community first. I commend those workers who preferred to do their duty by their families and fellow-citizens and told their so-called "representatives" that they had minds of their own and did not need to be told what to do, how to do it and when to do it.

This State and this nation will only be great when more and more workers like them stand up and are counted. They are the real Australians—rugged and independent, with the inherited values that built this nation. This Government will defend and protect them against standover intimidation by self-appointed union masters.

I want to say a few words about the Australian Labor Party, whose record in this saga has been particularly disgraceful. I was in this place for more than 10 years before the current Leader of the Opposition was elected as a member, and it was only after I had made some reasonable assessment of his contribution that I fully appreciated why each day begins with a prayer calling for divine guidance.

It has been claimed that the performance of the Leader of the Opposition has been first-grade. That is an insult to the average first grader. Last Thursday night, the Leader of the Opposition took childish pleasure in announcing that his fellow Electrical Trades Union bosses had graciously decided to call a truce in their assault on the community. I challenge him, as a former paid official and continuing public relations manager for the ETU, to exhibit the same glow of self-satisfaction if and when his brothers decide to switch the State off again. Should his union again pull the plug, it does not take a lot of thought to realise that the Leader of the Opposition will not be racing to the nearest television camera to make that announcement.

An article in the "Daily Sun" of Thursday, 21 February 1985, under the heading "Neutral Labor stance", states—

"Opposition Leader Mr Warburton yesterday refused to support or condemn power station operators and distanced himself from unions in the power dispute."

'I'm completely divorced from what is happening; the A.L.P. is totally divorced from this dispute.'

He wanted 20c each way. Last Thursday night I watched him closely when he made his announcement on television. He was smiling like a big silkworm. He had something to say but he did not know how to say it. Of course, somebody had passed the information on to him so that he could score political points in front of the news of Australia. He sat smugly in front of the cameras, with a stupid grin on his face. My colleagues said

to me, "Struth! Just how weak can you get?" He sat there and made a speech. He was like a cat with a big bowl of milk; he did not know how he was going to get it down.

The Leader of the Opposition had the audacity to try to praise his union for its action. That is like the public relations man in Atilla the Hun demanding canonisation from the Pope for his boss because only half of Italy was raped and pillaged. The Leader of the Opposition thought that his feeble posturings had stolen a march on the Government.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr HINZE:** I ask Opposition members to listen to this one. It is a classic, and I know that they will love it.

**Mr Scott** interjected.

**Mr HINZE:** The honourable member for Cook interjects far too much.

I was saying that the Leader of the Opposition thought that his feeble posturings had stolen a march on the Government. The truth is that he could not borrow a walk. By that, of course, I mean that in fact he could not steal a march.

That other former ETU official, the honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan), delights in the title of spokesman on Mines and Energy for the Labor Party. When he was heard from during the dispute, his penny's worth was the classic principled, high-minded, even-handed, unbiased statemanship that we could expect from a former union official! In a word, his advice to the Government and the people was, "Surrender." When pressed for an elaboration, he could be counted upon to say, "I mean cave in to my Trades Hall mates." True to the traditions of union solidarity, he tried to make a pathetic attack on the Government and the people. Being attacked by the member for Nudgee is like being savaged by a dead sheep.

**Mr Wilson:** What would you do with a dead sheep?

**Mr HINZE:** I know what the honourable member would do with a sheep if he could catch one, but he could not catch one.

**An Opposition Member** interjected.

**Mr HINZE:** I know what the honourable member would do with a dead sheep. I know also what he would do with a live sheep, if he could catch one.

The honourable member for Nudgee shares something else with his parliamentary leader apart from his role as a spokesman for the Electrical Trades Union, and that is a passion for lawn bowls. As the tragedy unfolded the week-end before last, I am informed that the honourable member for Nudgee, the poor man's Sir Francis Drake, was blithely playing bowls. If he had faced the armada, we would all be speaking Spanish to this day.

The honourable member's withering broadsides against the Government had all of the noise and impact of a single-shot water-pistol. All that the honourable member could achieve was the dubious distinction of shooting himself in the foot, which at least proves that his foot would have been safer in its usual place—his mouth.

I am of a mind to give the House the benefit of my views on the performance of some personalities during the dispute but, instead, I will make one or two comments about the media and its coverage of events. Queensland has some distinguished journalists who undertake their task with a sense of responsibility and duty. I have been subjected to some strong attacks and some probing questions from them, and I accept that as part of my job and as part of theirs.

However, an insidious tendency is developing within a significant section of the fourth estate. Members of the Printing and Kindred Industries Union refused to handle Government advertising, and I am informed that a large number of journalists expressed

sympathy for this disgraceful censorship. On one day during the dispute, "The Courier-Mail", which proudly displays Jefferson's observation, "Our Liberty depends on freedom of the press and that cannot be limited without being lost," was reduced to producing a severely limited edition because of industrial action. The "Daily Sun", another great Queensland newspaper, did not appear at all. The "Gold Coast Bulletin" did not appear, either.

I am not concerned with what the politics of a journalist might be. In fact, I could not care less; that is his or her own business. However, when professional ethics are swept aside in the tawdry cause of censorship, the community has the right to question the integrity of those who seek to suppress legitimate expressions of view.

Censorship is not the only thing that this Government has had to face from the media. It has had to face also the openly hostile rantings of some journalists whose pens drip with unashamed hatred. It appears that some journalists adhere to the belief that it is no longer sufficient to report the facts. Rather, the facts, which are carefully selected, need to be put into what this group is pleased to call "perspective" Almost uniformly, that is the perspective of the Left.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr HINZE: The honourable member should not interrupt me because my next statement is a classic.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth): Order! I remind the honourable member for Port Curtis that, because the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing is not accepting his interjections, he should desist.

Mr HINZE: I ask you, Mr Deputy Speaker, not to throw him out. I want him to hear what I have to say.

One so-called commentator, who is the standard-bearer for this faction, and who is the self-crowned ayatollah of the socialist scribblers, is Mr Quentin Dempster. On one occasion when he was making a report on television, if he could have spat out of the TV set at the Premier, he would have.

Mr Dempster has made no secret of his opinion of the Government. He despises it. It is a wonder that Opposition members do not stand up and clap. Like Pavlov's dogs, he has an immediate reaction to anything that the Government says or does. Automatically it is wrong, corrupt, confrontationist, divisive and generally bad. Through his columns and on the ABC he has made it his mission in life to spit vitriol.

Last Thursday's "Telegraph" contains a typical performance. His superficial mock-heroic fantasies on the dispute were headed "The Verdict on the Bjelke-Petersen Government: Naive, Foolish, Dangerous and Destructive" These shabby fabrications and conceited and shallow cliches, masquerading as epigrams, were of course his views and not the verdict of anybody else. It is curious that the management of Queensland Newspapers Pty Ltd has such little faith in, or regard for, its own staff writers that it has to hire this person.

I ask this fellow, who seems so determined that no-one else have a contract, to come clean and show his own contracts. He should tell the people of Queensland of the contracts he has with "The Courier-Mail", the "Telegraph" and the ABC. If he is fair dinkum in saying that he does not want anybody in this State to have the benefits of contractual arrangements, let him come out and say that he does not have these contracts. Frankly, I believe that he has. I think that he is a subcontractor. His union brothers would be glad to know the terms and conditions of his contracts. Surely Mr Dempster would be the first to agree that what is good hiring practice for Queensland Newspapers should be good hiring practice for SEQEB, or is there one rule for him and one full-time, award-rate union condition for others? My advice to Queensland Newspapers is

to keep up the bingo, because nobody will ever risk life and limb getting to the newsagent to buy an edition featuring Quentin Dempster.

His coverage—if that series of apologies for the union bosses and the Labor Party can be so dignified—presented the Trades Hall case as a sort of nursery version of “The Pilgrim’s Progress”

The ABC has also retained the services of Mr Dempster, who spits his hatred for this Government from the screens. As a performer who knows that the very death of creative self-expression is accuracy, he reflects the attitude of so many of his ABC colleagues. His commentaries are delivered with a racking spasm of narcissistic coyness.

**An Opposition Member:** What is that?

**Mr HINZE:** That simply means to be in love with oneself.

I imagine that Mr Dempster believes it to be a humble and self-effacing smile. His commentaries are delivered with all of the emotional honesty of a Tom Jones’ ballad. Dempster could not walk up a flight of stairs sincerely. I believe that he is a grub. I have said it privately and I will say it here again—he is a blight on his profession.

His pretentious assumptions about what business might think is the biggest joke of all. Although Mr Dempster has had a career as a union boss, his sole, ill-fated expedition into private enterprise was as president of the Journalists Club. A person would have to be a particular form of failure to run a bar for journalists and have it go broke. On one occasion he said to me, “There is nothing left in the till; do you think you can get me a little bit of dough somewhere?” I was silly enough to try.

I am grateful that the only saving grace and the only tolerable aspect for the Government in his outpourings are the frequent lapses into sheer banal dullness.

The Labor Party at all levels has a curious double standard about industrial disputes. There are what might be called disputes brought on by the good guys, in this instance the Trades and Labor Council and its unions, and the bad guys in another case, the specialist doctors in New South Wales.

The Federal Government lost no time in letting the media know that it would not grant visas to any worker hired overseas by the Queensland Government to fill the place of those who had chosen to withdraw their labour. Did that approach extend to the New South Wales Labor Government’s attempt to recruit foreign doctors? Of course, it did not, because the New South Wales Specialists Association is not a Trades Hall union. This is not the time or the place or debate the dispute between the New South Wales Government and its hospital specialists, but no honest person could deny that the Federal Government was, and in fact still is, prepared to adopt a sickening double standard.

Last Wednesday, the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) issued a statement to the media, which, among other things, stated—

“I call upon all parties to the dispute to accept the recommendations of the State Industrial Commission which will allow an immediate return to work.”

The Prime Minister continued—

“I also call on all of the unions taking action in support of the Electrical Trades Union to return to work and cease any retaliatory action.”

What effect did that statement from the Prime Minister, a former president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, have? It had precisely no effect for Queensland, and it meant further trouble for the Prime Minister. It is somewhat ironic that, when the Prime Minister calls for power to be restored, the only result is that he gets into hot water. The power-brokers in the Labor Party and the Trades Hall very quickly reminded the Prime Minister just who was running the country, and any further suggestion of the Prime Minister urging the union bosses to show some sense was swiftly snuffed out.

The Labor Party of Queensland was part of the immediate knee-jerk campaign to shut the Prime Minister up, and shut him up it did. It is no wonder that the Messiah is now such an isolated, lonely and humiliated shell of his former greatness.

The New South Wales Premier and federal president of the Labor Party (Mr Neville Wran) had some strong words to say recently about industrial relations in this country, and they deserve repeating. He said—

“I think most Australians are waking up to the fact that we cannot compete with other low cost nations if we are going to continually have these brawls which bring the country almost to its knees. What troubles me most about Australia at the present time is that the old mateship things seem to have gone out the window. These days its every man for himself. I believe the rest of the population, while they will moan and groan about strikes, is a bit apathetic about it all. I'd like to see them get a bit more angry. I want to see people get a fair go but that does not mean you get everything you want when you want it.”

Those words came from the New South Wales Premier and federal Labor Party president. He knows the reality of office, but he does not speak from the luxury, self-indulgence and irresponsibility of opposition.

The Labor Party has a curious attitude to many things, but its attitude to the experience of government is nothing but plain duplicity. The Labor Party is making much of the value of experience in government in the Brisbane City Council in its bid to retain City Hall. “Do not trust such an important city to raw inexperience” is the message. “Only years of knowing how things work can ensure sound, sensible and stable city government” is the message.

I issue a warning to the Labor Party in this Chamber. That logic is so compelling and so appealing that the Queensland Government will be using it at the next State election. If the Brisbane City Council Opposition cannot be seen as a viable alternative to the Labor administration because of inexperience, the Labor Party in this Chamber could not be seen as a first-class Opposition, let alone anything else.

Mr Speaker, this debate today has served an important purpose. It has shown that the Government that has been elected to govern will do just that on behalf of all people. It has shown the Opposition Labor Party to be just what it is—a bumbling, hopelessly ineffective and pathetic collection of Trades Hall hacks put out to pasture to earn their living at the public expense by apologising for and defending their real masters inside the weird faction-ridden world that is modern socialism.

This Government has handled the power dispute with resolve and, for that reason, it commands the support of the vast majority of the people of Queensland. The people know, and the Government knows, that if this matter is not settled once and for all this time, virtually annual re-runs of this saga can be expected. Many millions of dollars of public money has been spent on this State's power generation and distribution industry, and the Government is not going to abdicate its responsibilities by bowing to threats and intimidation. It is prepared to take a strong, yet conciliatory, stand under the law.

I appeal to the rank-and-file of the workers to let their voice be heard above the threatening roar of the mob rule and let the community—all of the community, from the mothers with their babies to industry—have what the Government says they deserve—uninterrupted supply of power.

**Mr FOURAS** (South Brisbane) (4.36 p.m.): Before I contribute to the debate, I shall comment briefly on the remarks of the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing. The Minister's vicious attack on the press, and on Quentin Dempster in particular, is symptomatic of this Government's jackboot approach to governing. It is symptomatic of its jackboot approach to conciliation and getting the people of this State working together. Government members will not countenance one person disagreeing with them. They will not countenance any view that does not accord with their own and kowtow to their so-called wisdom. It was appalling to witness the disgraceful

exhibition by the Minister, who believes that he has a right to say what ought to be printed in the newspapers and to criticise viciously the character and integrity of the press because their comments do not suit his political ends.

Today, I will attempt to analyse the electricity dispute and examine the argument that this Government is trying to sell to the people of Queensland. Presumably, from the hard stand that the Government has taken in relation to the SEQEB employees on the question of contract labour, Government members must believe that all the hardship and economic loss that has been suffered by every man and woman, every businessman and worker who has been laid off in this State has been worth it. The use of contract labour will supposedly reduce the cost of electricity in Queensland. That is absolute nonsense.

Before I state my argument, I point out that it is quite clear that this Government—the honourable members sitting on the benches opposite—knows that it cannot survive politically unless it can use the union movement as a scapegoat. Government members know that they cannot survive politically unless they use unionists as whipping boys. They know that they cannot survive politically unless they divide the community between employer and employee so that hate and bitterness are the norm instead of the co-operation and conciliation about which the Minister spoke so cynically and hypocritically.

Before I move on to my major topic, I will refer to some of the statements made by the Premier in his speech. This morning, the Premier said that he wanted to tell Queenslanders about the callousness of members of the Labor Party. The Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) said that the Labor Party is responsible for the suffering of the sick and the elderly. What an absolutely ludicrous statement! Government members have subverted the rights of the State Industrial Commission. They have declared a state of emergency so that the State Industrial Commission cannot do its job and so that 960 SEQEB workers cannot be reinstated. Queenslanders are continually told by the Premier that the strikers must suffer.

Last Sunday, I attended a barbecue held for these workers at the Gold Coast. My brother is one of the sacked SEQEB employees, and anybody who tells me that my brother is a radical and a danger to society and not a good, hard-working individual will have an argument with me. The SEQEB linesmen are united in a common bond. Those men want what everyone in the community wants, that is, security in the workplace. Without work and the dignity that comes with work, persons have no welfare; they have no well-being. That has been threatened by this system.

As the member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) mentioned, on 29 August 1984, a message was sent to all staff from the general manager of SEQEB (Mr Wayne Gilbert), in which he set out some of the actions he proposed to take. He said that his actions would “ ‘down size’ SEQEB over two years by up to 10% of our workforce” He went on to say—

“To maximise the probability that no large scale forced retrenchments will be required, I am directing as of today that without my prior written consent—

(i) No vacancies be filled

(ii) No transfers or other staffing changes be implemented.”

He went on further to say—

“Given our current separation rate (approximately 3% per annum) and transfers to other Government authorities this freeze should ensure that SEQEB can within a reasonable time frame restructure itself to current competitive standards of efficiency whilst protecting its present workforce.”

What an absolute joke! He was trying to say that contract labour would be able to do the job more cheaply than union labour. If that is so, it will be done at the cost of safety. The Government's propensity for seeking contract labour is based on its desire to look after the interests of contractors that it wants. It wants people to get contracts and profit from them so that they may make contributions to the National Party. That

is the reason for handing out patronage. There is no way in the world that contract labour will prove to be cheaper.

I give the House an example of contract labour being introduced to a hospital in my electorate. The workers were doing a job in three and a quarter hours. When a contractor was brought in, they were told that they had to do the same job in two and a quarter hours and that, if they did not do it properly, that would not matter. The contractor was charging for three and a quarter hours and pocketing the rest. It is absolute nonsense to suggest that there will be a saving of even one cent to the community through the use of contract labour.

The unbelievably high costs that have been borne by electricity consumers are the result of other factors. The domestic consumer in Brisbane pays an average quarterly bill of \$115.65, whereas the Sydney bill is almost \$30 cheaper at \$86.58. We are told by Mr Gilbert that his real reason for doing this is because "the price of electricity is one of the most significant elements affecting the growth of business and industry". Since the 1977 take-over, electricity prices have increased at double the rate of inflation. There is no way in the world that that pattern will not continue. What a furphy that is! The Government is blindly attempting to tell the community that it is acting in the community's interests by attempting to reduce the cost of electricity. That is not the issue of the recent dispute at all. The issue is, as I said before, that the Government is creating the atmosphere for a union-bashing exercise as a camouflage for its inability to cope with Queensland's economy.

It is important to consider the recent propaganda war. A massive advertising campaign, costing millions of dollars, has been indulged in by the Government throughout Queensland in an attempt to justify its actions. I became heartily sick and tired of reading statements by the Confederation of Industry spokesperson (Mr Siebenhausen), who of course is a card-carrying member of the National Party. Daily he made statements about how massive the cost would be to industry, but at the conclusion of each of his statements he urged the Premier and Treasurer to stand firm. It did not matter that it lasted three months or that there was no industry left in the State. It did not matter if there was a total catastrophe. He was prepared to cut off his nose to spite his face.

**Mr Vaughan:** I understand that he has been censured by his own organisation for his outbursts.

**Mr FOURAS:** I would not doubt it. His attitude was politically biased. He referred to the high costs being imposed on electricity consumers. They have been very high indeed.

I draw attention to the comment by the Premier and Treasurer that the aim of the management of the South East Queensland Electricity Board was to contain costs. How can that be the aim when the Premier and Treasurer offers power station operators an additional \$20,000 to \$30,000 in a futile attempt to implement employment contracts that would break the strike? What a marvellous way to effect a saving in costs!

Moreover, it is the same Premier and Treasurer who promoted Tarong as the site for a power station over Millmerran, against indications given by the electricity authority, which showed that the additional cost would amount to \$259m over a 25-year period. By his own action, the Premier and Treasurer has imposed an additional charge of more than \$10m per year on electricity consumers because of his ability to get his way over the faceless men on the Government side. When it is realised that the 10 per cent cost saving to SEQEB would result in a saving of less than \$2m per annum, and that an amount in excess of that would be the value of work given to the contractors, the reasoning behind that kind of action becomes a joke.

I also express my concern about the propaganda that is being spread by the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern), in which he has advertised openly that \$10,000 loans would be available to people who had been adversely affected by the recent strike. The Minister said that the loans would be at 7 per cent interest

imposed during the last two years of the loan, with no interest charged in the first year. I understand that in excess of 2 000 applications have been received, and that the first cheques will be sent in two weeks' time. However, when the fine print is examined, it can be seen that applicants for loans will have had to have been previously rejected not only by a bank but also by a financial institution.

I point out to all honourable members that, if an applicant has been rejected by a financial institution, the applicant is a long way out on a limb and will not qualify under the Minister's arrangements. It must be borne in mind that a financial institution incorporates a high-risk component into its interest rates. What a fraud and sham for the Government to suggest that it is concerned about businesses that will become insolvent!

I now return to the major argument in order to indicate clearly to honourable members why this Government needs a trade-union-bashing issue in order to set itself up for the next election campaign. For many years, the Government has been able to go along happily by suggesting that Queensland is a boom State and that Queensland's economy is doing very well. However, before the last election, Professor Kolsen from the University of Queensland stated in a press release that "Joh's boom" was a myth. Professor Kolsen indicated that the figures that were available on the economy, particularly those which related to the manufacturing and construction industries, were such that they indicated that a large recession was inevitable. Professor Kolsen indicated that employment opportunities would decline and that the coal industry was in trouble. He also indicated that the construction industry was likely to lose 9 000 jobs in Queensland in the near future.

At that time, in September 1983, Queensland had a Government that did not understand the problems and did not have the solutions to the problems. In his statement, Professor Kolsen went on to say, "Heaven help the people of Queensland if the Premier (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) became Premier and Treasurer in 1983." Of course, that did happen. I quote what Professor Kolsen said. The press release reads as follows—

"My serious concern is that he's inspired absolutely no confidence where initiative is needed when growth is subdued or has actually declined. I think we can expect very little from this government in that regard because it has shown very little understanding of the underlying problems of the economy."

During the boom years, when the Premier and Treasurer was talking about how well the economy was faring and taking all the credit for the success of the economy, no concern was being expressed about what was happening to the manufacturing industry. Manufacturing industries are the cushion that resource-based economies have to fall back on when trouble is experienced. Whether honourable members like it or not, the manufacturing industry employs a great number of people. When the greatest problem is that of providing employment for people, it is not of very much use, after the construction phase associated with the mining boom has passed, to employ a few people on drag-lines and employ a few workers on digging coal out of the ground. What the Government has to do is establish labour-intensive industries.

The engine that provided the growth of the economy in Queensland was not the extraction of coal. The engine of growth originated because mining towns had to be built and infrastructural services had to be provided; coal handling facilities, houses and rolling-stock had to be constructed. The difficulty is that all of that building and construction has come to a total standstill and no more construction will be undertaken.

This Government has been trying to respond to criticism of the type levelled by Professor Kolsen as well as that contained in an article in "The Bulletin" which said that Queensland's economy has gone bust.

Earlier this year advertisements were placed in all the newspapers in this State—at tremendous cost to the community—stating, "We're growing stronger every year." It was an absolutely ridiculous advertisement. It stated—

"Queensland's development projects have provided jobs for our people and enabled us to enjoy a lifestyle envied by other Australians. Let's keep Queensland on the move in 1985."

It mentions a number of projects. For instance, it refers to the expenditure of \$1.2 billion on the Tarong Power Station and \$250m on the Wivenhoe Power Station. They were constructed to provide power as part of the infrastructure development to which I have referred. That development has now stopped completely. During the boom years between \$1 billion and \$2 billion was expended in central Queensland. Those funds have now dried up. The advertisement goes on to talk about \$400m for the Curragh mine, which has already been opened. It does not say that no new coal-mine will be opened in Queensland during the next 20 years. I will refer to that later.

**Mr FitzGerald:** They won't be exporting any coal, either.

**Mr FOURAS:** I will take that interjection from the honourable member for Lockyer. I lay the blame for the present problems with coal exports squarely on the shoulders of the Government. If it was to lift the state of emergency and allow the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to deal with the problem as it ought to, the SEQEB workers would be reinstated and would start work immediately.

The Queensland Government is losing \$2.5m in rail freights each day. During the strike it lost about \$8m a week in pay-roll tax, plus millions of dollars in stamp duty. To this point the State Government has lost in excess of \$30m from coal revenues, and the economy of the State has lost hundreds of millions of dollars from other sources. Yet this Government does not realise why the workers are on strike. They are on strike because of their solidarity with the sacked SEQEB workers, and they will not go back until the problem is solved.

But I want to return to the Government advertisement and my argument about the problems in the economy. The advertisement also refers to the spending of \$250m for the Dalrymple Bay coal-handling terminal at Hay Point and \$180m on the Abbot Point coal export terminal. Again, those projects were part of the resource development that took place earlier. Reference is also made to the \$120m spent on the Jackson pipeline. Then right at the end the Government skites about the \$12m spent on the first higher education college of tourism and hospitality at South Brisbane, although it does not point out that that money was provided entirely by the Federal Government.

The truth is that in this State one does not see the advantages as portrayed by the advertisement, of the Government creating jobs and of Queensland being the envy of every other State. That is a myth. The reality is that Queensland's economy has collapsed and Government members do not have any idea of how to turn the economy round. They do not know how to do it, so they confront and divide the community. They are so intellectually bankrupt and so economically incompetent that they have no answers at all. That is why the electricity dispute occurred.

I turn now to a survey conducted by the National Australia Bank and the Australian Chamber of Commerce, the results of which were recently reported in the newspapers. One article stated—

“Queensland has fallen badly behind other states in the economic recovery ”

It then cites facts and figures to support that statement. It continues—

“Queensland's businesses reported the poorest sales and profits results of any state for the final quarter of 1984

The survey also showed the expectations of Queensland businesses for the first quarter this year were dismal compared with other states, and the economic recovery gap between Queensland and the rest of Australia looked set to widen further before the end of March.”

No wonder this dispute occurred. Would any sensible economic managers on the Government side, people who are not economically destructive or socially divisive, create a situation in which workers were sacked, if they knew what would be the response of the power unions, that mammoth losses would occur and that the economy would go further downhill as a result? Would they behave in that manner unless they wished to? Would they be so abysmally inept unless they wished to?

Let us look at the figures in the survey. They are frightening. The survey showed that 74 per cent of all Australian businesses reported good or satisfactory trading in the December quarter. Only 36 per cent of businesses in Queensland made a similar report.

On profits, 64 per cent of Australian businesses reported good or satisfactory results during the quarter, compared with 36 per cent of Queensland businesses. Furthermore, 64 per cent of businesses in Queensland reported poor profits, compared with 17 per cent in New South Wales, 24 per cent in Victoria and 25 per cent in Tasmania. Of all businesses surveyed in Queensland during the March quarter, 60 per cent reported that they would achieve a poor sales figure. That gloomy outlook was shared by none of the businesses surveyed in Tasmania, by 20 per cent of businesses in New South Wales and Victoria and by 30 per cent of businesses in South Australia. Every economic indicator shows that the gap between economic achievement in Queensland and in the other States is widening, and it is widening on a regular basis.

**Mr FitzGerald:** It is because of all the strikes.

**Mr FOURAS:** Those bankrupt members opposite who see everything through ideological blinkers and want to confront society use strikes as their only argument. They blame strikes for something that happened before the strikes occurred.

I shall look at the number of bankruptcies in 1984 compared with 1983. The figure in Queensland rose by 27.1 per cent. New South Wales was the only other State in which there was a rise in the number of bankruptcies, and that rise was only 3.7 per cent. The number of bankruptcies fell by 19.3 per cent in Victoria, 16.2 per cent in South Australia and 24 per cent in Western Australia. The number of bankruptcies in Queensland has risen from 667 in 1982 to 944 in 1984.

**Mr Newton** interjected.

**Mr FOURAS:** The honourable member for Caboolture tells us that, because of strikes, the number of bankruptcies will increase. Does he want the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern) to promise grants of \$10,000 to businesses that will not exist? Is that what he is saying? That is a disgraceful situation.

I shall look at other economic indicators. In 1983-84, new motor vehicle registrations in Queensland totalled 104 300, which was a drop of 3.21 per cent over the previous year. New motor vehicle registrations in Australia totalled 603 700, which was an increase of 2.3 per cent. In December last the number of new motor vehicle registrations in Queensland declined by 5.2 per cent, while there was a 2.1 per cent rise in Australia. For the quarter ending 31 December 1984, the increase was approximately 7 per cent for Queensland, compared with an overall increase of 12 per cent. Government members should not try to argue, as the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn) did recently, that those figures are affected by Queensland's population. That is a ridiculous argument.

Unemployment is mushrooming in Queensland. No longer can the Government skite about creating jobs and providing job security. In January alone, 22 700 jobs were lost in Queensland. During 1984, Queensland was the only State to register an increase in the number of people unemployed. Unemployment is going in the wrong direction in Queensland and in the right direction in the other States. Between December 1983 and December 1984, unemployment in Queensland increased from 9.3 per cent, or 104 000, to 10 per cent, or 111 500. The figure has mushroomed to 11.1 per cent, or 123 000, at the end of January.

Since the end of 1981, fewer people have been employed in the Queensland workforce. Jobs are being lost everywhere, including in the manufacturing industry. What is the answer from the Government? On Sunday night, in a slick advertisement on television, Queenslanders were told that Queensland will become the technology capital of Australia. I shall demolish that proposition. All that the Government has done is buy a couple of

blocks of land on which to establish technology parks. Queensland is miles behind in the technology field.

It is a sick joke that this Government uses public funds to advertise about an ailing economy. Similarly, it was a sick joke for the Government to confront the trade union movement knowing exactly what its response would be. If the Government claims that it did not know what the reaction would be, obviously it knows nothing about industrial relations, and it should be ashamed of itself. Last year in this Chamber, I stated that—

“The industrial relations system which operates in Queensland and, indeed, in all of Australia, has as its central features conciliation and, if necessary, compulsory arbitration.”

In this dispute, conciliation is not possible and the right of arbitration has been taken away.

The sacking of the SEQEB employees must be put into perspective. On three occasions the ETU members put bans on; on three occasions they were ordered back to work by the Industrial Commission. On three occasions the employees accepted the Commission's recommendation. However, no mechanism provided for conciliation. The Government should have known what the response of the trade union movement would be to the sacking of the SEQEB employees. The Government took away the fundamental rights of those employees to job security, long service leave and superannuation, but it expected the labour movement to sit back and wear it. If every one of the faceless men in Cabinet was led by the Premier and claimed that he was not aware of the consequences, he should be ashamed of himself. Every Minister is accountable for the losses that Queensland has suffered.

The statements by the Premier and Treasurer that he does not care whether these unions achieve Federal registration, or whether they are registered in a socialist country or Canada, show how abysmally ignorant he is of the meaning of Federal registration. I am aware that public service unions are concerned about the jackboots approach of the Government and its lack of understanding of the processes of conciliation and arbitration. Those unions also may seek Federal registration, as the power unions are now seeking. That will happen if the unions are pushed much further, and then, the State Government will not be able to negotiate on the terms and working conditions of its employees. It will have no input as to what they are paid or how they operate. Those unions will not appear in a State industrial court because that is the law of this nation. It is time that the Government displayed some common sense in its industrial relations. It must understand the consequences of its actions.

Mr Hinze, in his cynical and hypocritical speech——

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! Because of the nature of the recording of the proceedings of Parliament, it is necessary that Ministers be referred to by their correct titles. I ask the honourable member for South Brisbane to do so.

**Mr FOURAS:** In his cynical and hypocritical speech, the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing suggested that co-operation between both sides of the Chamber is necessary. How can co-operation be expected when the Premier and Treasurer of this State is prepared to be socially divisive and economically destructive? For political gain, he foolishly and naively wants to turn worker against worker and worker against employer. How can a conciliatory approach be successful? How can the people come together to discuss issues?

I have made the point that contract labour will not decrease by one cent the bill of domestic consumers. I will expand on that now. It may be suggested that SEQEB, through efficiency, could save \$1m. Using some figures, I will show the House how minute and how irrelevant such a figure is.

In 1983-84, expenditure on capital works by the different electricity boards amounted to \$193.9m. Of course, that has to be paid by the consumers. That is an increase of

\$40.2m over the expenditure for the previous year. A study of the Auditor-General's report and the report of the State Electricity Commission shows that for the year ended 30 June 1984, out of the Loans Transactions Account, the capital contribution to electricity boards increased from \$41m to \$86m. As mentioned by the member for Nudgee, the size of the debt has increased from \$2,470m to \$2,740.8m. As the boards are paying 11 per cent interest on those funds, the cost of servicing the loans has also increased, from \$248.8m in 1982-83 to \$315.6m in 1983-84, an increase of \$67m.

The Government has brought the State to a standstill, but I do not believe that there will be a saving of even one cent. Even if there were a saving of \$1m, what the State has witnessed is an ideological war being fought against the trade union movement. I do not think that any responsible businessman who watches over his share-holders' money, or even his own money, would buy into that. I am informed that Robert Holmes a' Court regularly picks up the phone and talks to unions. Even the Dirty Digger, the newspaper magnate Sir Rupert Murdoch, is regularly on the hotline trying to hose down disputes such as the one presently occurring in this State.

It has been ridiculous for the Government to allow the dispute to rage on over the right to employ contract labour when the system has, within it, cost structures that are increasing electricity bills at more than double the inflation rate, as has been the case since 1972. As inflation comes down, that figure will increase. In the old days, when inflation was quite high, the electricity boards could get away with increases that were not greatly above the inflation rate but, as inflation drops, the increase in tariffs will be more than twice the the inflation rate.

**Mr Vaughan** interjected.

**Mr FOURAS:** Fifteen per cent will be two and a half times the inflation rate.

I will again turn to the Loans Transactions Account as it is contained in the Auditor-General's report. In 1983-84, the loan account had an excess of payments over receipts, which means that the loan account paid more to the State Electricity Commission than it received—in fact, \$155m more. That is a turn-about. In 1982-83, the excess of receipts over payments was \$162m. So the accounts of the Electricity Commission are worsening. That does not augur well for electricity costs in the future.

The \$507m in Australian currency that has been borrowed from overseas lenders creates another problem. I will put that into perspective. From a question asked last year of the Deputy Premier and the Minister Assisting the Treasurer by the member for Lytton, the House knows that 60 per cent of the overseas borrowings is in American dollars and that 10 per cent is in Japanese yen. The Australian dollar has devalued against the American dollar by in excess of 20 per cent and, against the Japanese yen, by 13 per cent. That leads to an increase of \$74m in the debt that has to be serviced by the Queensland Electricity Commission. As the interest rate is 11 per cent, the commission will have to repay an extra \$8m per year. To suggest that employing contract labour is cheaper and in the interests of consumers is nonsense and nothing more than an ideological war, because it is not an argument that can stand up to any scrutiny at all.

Peter Morley has written in "The Courier-Mail" that, quite clearly, the employment of contract labour will not make a difference of one cent in electricity bills. As a result of that article the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing and the Government have chastised that journalist, who expressed his correctly perceived views quite clearly. The Government simply wants to belt anyone in this society who does not agree with it.

I was appalled at the reaction of the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) to anybody who dared to disagree with him. If a person is a Christian, a unionist or a worker, and he dares to disagree with the Premier and Treasurer, the sad situation is that in Queensland he must be trodden on.

I promised Mr Ahern, who is present in the Chamber, that I would refer to Our Saviour.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I remind the honourable member that he should refer to the Minister by his correct ministerial title.

**Mr FOURAS:** I am not a quick learner, and I apologise. I will refer him to as the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology. Recently, I saw him on a television program. I obtained a transcript of what he said. He stated clearly—

“The State Government realises only too well that unless industry in Queensland is encouraged to transfer new technology into the workplace quickly, industry will find it increasingly difficult to compete at home and abroad and especially in manufacturing. As well as committing itself to getting new technology into existing factories, the State Government hopes to spawn a whole range of new industries, based on the new and vital technology. Currently we are establishing high-tech manufacturing and research parks to develop new ideas and projects for Queensland.”

When more time is available to me, I will debate the matter fully with him.

In “A Complete Guide to Technology in Australia and New Zealand”, it is stated clearly that Queensland has been comparatively slow in formulating and initiating a detailed technology strategy. Until a year or so ago, one was lucky to find \$160,000 allocated in the Budget for technology. Land has now been purchased. Reference is made to the construction of technology parks and incubation centres. However, nothing has come to fruition.

**Mr Ahern:** The Labor council won't rezone it.

**Mr FOURAS:** It is marvellous that other people or Labor councils can always be blamed for Queensland's inability to cope economically! It is appalling.

The press have given the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology a fair go. It is appalling that the Minister has been allowed to go round like a poor imitation of the Federal Minister for Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry, Technology and Commerce (Barry Jones), talking about how Queensland will become the technology capital of Australia. The Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology has done very little. If he were objective about a comparison with the other States, he would see that New South Wales has an advanced technology development assistance fund that has certain goals. Victoria is going out of its way to transfer technology. It is going out of its way to act as an honest broker to get the entrepreneur, the financier, the marketer and the resources together. In Queensland there is a great deal of empty rhetoric.

Like other members on this side of the Chamber, I am totally disgusted with what is happening. Opposition members believe that Queensland cannot sustain its present losses. I refer to the \$100m loss in coal exports, the \$600m loss to industry and the \$30m to \$40m loss to the State Government coffers. When people ask, “Why did the operators strike and why are the coal industry employees still on strike?”, the answer is very simple. I support those workers and state unequivocally that people cannot live in a free society and have their right to strike taken away from them. That right means the difference between being a slave and a free person. The people in this State will not be given a fair chance if the Premier and Treasurer is allowed to sack those workers, take away their benefits and superannuation and wreck their future prosperity. If that is allowed, the trade union movement would be ashamed of itself. It is about time that the Premier and Treasurer accepted the reason why the men are on strike. They are striking because they must stick tight against the oppressive and megalomaniac Premier and Treasurer of Queensland. The men are striking for the fundamental rights for which the unions have worked.

I point out to the member for Cooroora (Mr Simpson) that in the last century workers wanted to work 10 hours a day, six days a week. At that time a conservative

politician said that the democratic right to work was being taken away from those workers and that it was the first step on the road to national ruin.

The Premier and Treasurer has always opposed better conditions for the worker. He opposed the 40-hour week, superannuation, long service leave and every benefit a worker could get. The Premier wants to revert to the Dark Ages. Opposition members join in solidarity with the workers. Members of the Labor Party believe in a fair go for everyone. Government members must learn that they cannot belt people over the head because those people do not agree with their policies. The Government must conciliate and allow the Arbitration Commission to do the job that it was appointed to do.

I challenge the Government, at the next election, when Queensland's economy is shattered, to blame the unions for its own actions. The public are seeing through the actions of the Government. The National Party will perform abysmally, as it did in Rockhampton. The new member for Rockhampton (Mr Braddy) will contribute in the same way as all other Labor members have. What did the Premier and Treasurer say when the Rockhampton people voted the way they did?

**An Opposition Member:** Sour grapes.

**Mr FOURAS:** Yes, his statement was purely sour grapes.

*Time expired.*

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (5.16 p.m.):** The member for South Brisbane claims that his party stands up for the interests and rights of the workers. I wonder what the honourable member thinks about his Federal colleagues and their handling of the public servants who saw fit to withdraw their services. The Federal Government saw fit to stand down those public servants one by one. I mention also the doctors' dispute in New South Wales and the workers in the electricity industry in South Australia.

Members of the ALP really do not know which way to go. They claim to represent the interests of the workers or the people who are their bosses. But their bosses are not workers at all; their bosses are the power moguls of the trade unions. The workers are the last people to be considered in the nexus between the trade union bosses and their representation, or those who jump to their representation in this House. That, of course, causes difficulty for the ALP.

No-one will deny that the electricity industry and the reticulation and generation of power is an essential service. Of course, it is difficult to define those responsibilities that are beyond the usual industrial activity which, even though everyone may not agree with it, is accepted by society. Certainly much industrial activity by way of strikes and discord has taken place and been tolerated by the community, even though people tend to oppose the reasons for that particular withdrawal of labour.

The honourable member for South Brisbane asks, "What is the cause of this strike?" Allegedly, the cause of this particular strike was the employment of private contractors to do some of the work that was usually carried out by SEQEB employees. The Main Roads Department, the Works Department and several other departments let out a great deal of their work to private contractors. It is the same story on the Federal scene. That should be encouraged.

For some reason, SEQEB employees consider that they have a monopoly on all of the work that has to be done. They do not have a monopoly at all. They have no charter and, therefore, no reason to believe that they should hold a monopoly. So, quite rightly, SEQEB gave work to private contractors, who employed union labour under the conditions of the award. SEQEB was not employing non-unionists. It was employing brother members of the union. Right throughout the strike, those people continued to have work and were working under award conditions. They were colleagues of those union members employed by SEQEB.

Really, in this issue, there was not a fundamental problem for the trade union movement or for the ALP. There was, of course, the vested interest of the employees in SEQEB, who considered that they have a monopolistic right to all the work associated with the distribution of power. That is a right which the community does not consider them to have. Certainly, the Parliament should not consider it a right that they should have.

I accuse the union management of allowing the issue to get out of hand. Why should the union bosses suddenly find themselves in such a dilemma? Because their power base was starting to be eroded. They were not concerned about the public or about the union members. They were concerned about their power base in the union movement, which looked like being eroded. They were not worried about the jobs of SEQEB members. They could not care a fig for their security.

**Mr Vaughan:** Why don't you tell us the truth?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I am telling the truth. The member for Nudgee should listen.

**Mr Vaughan:** You are telling lies.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I am not. The member for Nudgee knows that I am not. Of all the people in the House, he knows that I am not, because he was brought up on that power base and he knows how powerful it is. The union leaders, who indicated to their members that they were on their side, got them into a jam—a dead end. When the strike was out of hand and the Industrial Commission ordered the people back to work—

**Mr Vaughan:** When was that?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** That was a week or two ago. The honourable member knows all about it. The Industrial Commission ordered the men back to work, but the union leaders advised their members not to go back to work. That was extremely bad advice. Did those union leaders suffer during the dispute? Not in the slightest! Not one of them! I am told that some of them receive a bonus for running a strike. They receive extra pay and allowances—additional consideration—because they are managing a strike, which apparently entails a little extra work.

**Mr Vaughan:** That's not true. You should know better than that.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Is that not right? We will find out who is right. They did not lose their jobs. They badly advised their men by telling them to stay home instead of returning to work in response to the order of the Industrial Commission. That was a tragic error made by the union leaders.

So much for this strike. Let us look at the history of discord that has been plaguing the electricity supply industry in our State. We are foolish to ignore the history. We are also foolish to ignore the consequences of that history. The Government, in its endeavours to rationalise the electricity service in the State, saw fit to amalgamate a number of interests and to bring together private enterprise and the established electricity generation and distribution in the State. Under that banner, of course, came the local authority electricity undertaking of the Brisbane City Council. That step was supported widely by the House. The aim was to lessen the burden of increasing tariffs in the rural areas and to engage in cross-subsidisation of the costs incurred in the distribution of power. It was not a new idea. It is a system followed throughout Australia, not just in Queensland. The users of large amounts of power—the big manufacturing plants—were able to support the overheads through cross-subsidisation. That is a common practice in Australia. That is not at all unusual. However, Queensland created a monster—a huge undertaking. Many people warned that, by creating such a large monopoly, we would be placing in

the hands of a few people the control of that system. The structure established placed enormous power into the hands of a few.

Three years ago, a strike occurred that almost brought the State to a standstill. After the strike was over, the Government decided that the power workers who were responsible for the generation of power should be taken out of the award and elevated to the status of management. I am sorry to say that the electricity authorities in this State did not implement that decision.

The events that have taken place during the last few weeks would never have occurred if the people to whom I refer had been taken out of the award. Strange as it may seem, although many of the people concerned were not covered by the award when the rationalisation program was undertaken, they were forced to be roped into the award under the agreements that were made during the rationalisation process. Many of the people so affected did not want to join the union, and many did not want to work under an award.

**Mr Vaughan:** To which classifications do you refer?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** The honourable member of Nudgee knows very well. The senior operators employed in the process of power generation in Queensland did not want to work under an award, yet they were forced to do so under the terms of the agreements that had been made. Although steps can be taken to correct that situation, that is the monster that has unwittingly been created.

Let me return to the consequences of the strike. Undoubtedly, great personal distress has been felt throughout the community. Enormous loss of income has occurred, because over 500 000 people were stood down in this State during the course of the strike. Jobs were lost, and individual firms now face bankruptcy. Because of the losses that afflicted individual firms, some of those enterprises will never recover. I point out that all of that loss has occurred over what amounted to a demarcation dispute between members of the union who belonged to two separate categories, that is, those who were employed by SEQEB and those who were employed by private contractors. No loss of union membership occurred as a result of the demarcation dispute.

**Mr Innes:** The unionists were members of one union.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** The unionists were members of one union who were having a fight, and that is what the strike was about.

Queensland was held to ransom over an internal union dispute that amounted to a power struggle within the union itself. The community is not prepared to put up with that sort of nonsense any more. By supporting motions that make it clear that this Assembly is working on the side of the people and not on the side of power moguls in the trade union movement, this Parliament is correct.

The problems associated with this dispute must be resolved; but the problem cannot come to a head while enormous distress is being experienced in the community, because the tolerance of the community is limited. Resolution of this dispute can be effected in a number of ways, and I have publicly suggested one of the ways in which it can be resolved.

I point out that in a number of awards that operate in this country, under State and Federal jurisdictions, there is provision for no-strike clauses. Some of the provisions have come about as a result of agreement or as a result of temporary orders made by industrial tribunals. In Queensland, that has been done before, and I believe that the behaviour of the union leaders—in misleading union members into not returning to work—is sufficient justification for the inclusion of a strike bans clause in awards covering power distribution and reticulation. As I have said, Queensland has experienced the effect of those provisions before, and, with the approval of the public, this State can do so again. I feel quite sure that union members would be happy for that provision to be included, and I am equally sure that union leaders would oppose it.

If the strike bans clause is violated, the penalty provisions will nail union leaders, not union members. If there is any breach of an agreement, the people who are responsible are the organisers, the union leaders and trade union secretaries, and so on. The people who will face prosecution by a tribunal are not the individual members of a union. The union leaders will have to pay the penalties, and it is about time that they were nailed instead of being allowed off the hook.

**Mr Vaughan:** The honourable member for Nundah was the Minister for Industrial Relations at one time, and I ask how many years he held that position?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I held that position for three years.

**Mr Vaughan:** What measures was the honourable member able to effect?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Many steps were taken and many problems were resolved. I suggest that the honourable member for Nudgee need only speak with his colleagues in the trade union movement to confirm that a great many problems were solved very satisfactorily.

I am not one of the people who want to see the unions destroyed, or anything like that. But when one sees irresponsibility, when one sees the community being held to ransom, when one sees people being forced into situations, socially and commercially, that they should not have to tolerate, as a result of union bosses having a fight amongst themselves, then it is time that authority stepped in. The Liberal Party has no apology to make in relation to its position on that issue.

So the predicament facing the people who are unemployed or who were sacked by SEQEB is the result of bad advice by their union leaders, and they are left in limbo for the time being. I hope that some arrangements will be made to re-employ them, but certainly not under the conditions under which they were employed previously.

**Mr Scott:** You're a tough boss, Bill.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Those people created that position for themselves.

The situation now is that the private contractors are prepared to do a lot of the work, and I hope that that idea is encouraged. I hope that it expands.

**Mr Vaughan:** At a price.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** What price? I ask the honourable member to name the price. The efficiency of the private contractors is not doubted. The efficiency of the people they employ is not doubted.

**Mr Innes:** Supervised by SEQEB.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Yes, supervised by SEQEB, employing union labour, technically qualified, members of the union of which the honourable member for Nudgee was an organiser. Is the honourable member trying to tell me that they are less efficient or less competent? Not a bit of it! They are no less efficient or competent than the contractors who do work for the Main Roads Department, the Department of Works, the Railway Department, Telecom, and so on. There is no reason to doubt their competence or efficiency, so there is no problem in regard to using those people.

I hope that the use of contractors will continue and expand. It could go even further. There is no reason why power generation could not be returned to private enterprise. In North America and Europe, private enterprise provides power to the grid. There are now private enterprise institutions in Queensland supplying power to the grid. Mount Isa Mines does it; the sugar mills do it; Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd does it. There is no reason why private enterprise cannot supply power to the grid. The gas reticulation industry is private enterprise. It is controlled and monitored by legislation of this Parliament, and by people who are charged with the responsibility of seeing that the supply is guaranteed.

There is no reason why power generation and reticulation could not, likewise, be provided by private enterprise with the introduction of the necessary legislation and appropriate monitoring and supervision. It is done extensively in Canada, the United States and Europe. Yes, a big capital cost is involved already.

An amortisation and interest bill of enormous proportion has to be met, and it will have to be met by the consumers. It is identifiable; it is known exactly. It is reported to this Parliament by the Auditor-General. The figures are known exactly and could be built into an agreement to make sure that they are covered. But as far as the provision of a service is concerned, that can be properly and efficiently done by private enterprise. It is not too late to start that process, and I recommend it to the Government.

**Mr Scott:** Do you know where private industry does supply electricity?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Yes, I read that list. The honourable member was not listening.

**Mr Scott** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** It is quite efficient; it just happens to be done in a small way. Prior to centralisation, private power stations did provide power to the grid.

It is not too late for the Government to repair some of the damage that has been done by creating this giant statutory authority.

**Mr Vaughan:** You supported it.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** We make no bones about that. As I say, it is not too late to repair some of the damage that has been caused by creating this enormous monopoly. It can be done without causing any damage or without increasing costs to the community. In fact, because of the efficiencies that will be obtained, costs could be reduced.

Yesterday, the Premiers of South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales announced that they would establish the nucleus of a national electricity grid. One can imagine the calamities once this national grid is established under the control of one authority. When a national grid was first proposed, the then Queensland Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr Camm) fought it tooth and nail and said that it was not on with Queensland, and I give him credit for that. A national electricity reticulation scheme could be established, but each State should keep control of its power generation. In that way a State is able to determine whether it will look after a particular industry such as the aluminium industry or the bauxite industry. Those industries require huge quantities of power, and special deals have to be made. If special deals are made, this Parliament must have the authority to make those deals. Once a national authority is established, State Parliaments will lose that control. I am sure that the ALP supports the establishment of a national electricity grid.

**Mr Vaughan:** Yes.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Of course it does.

**Mr Vaughan:** Because of economies of scale.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** The establishment of a national grid will create the greatest overcapitalisation of power in Australia.

As I say, a national electricity reticulation scheme could be established, but the control over the generation of power has to remain with this Parliament. It is to the credit of a former Queensland Minister for Mines and Energy that he fought against the establishment of a national grid, and I hope that the present Queensland Government will continue to adopt that attitude.

At present, electricity is reticulated across the border into New South Wales. On occasions, Queensland draws power, through Goondiwindi, from as far away as the

Snowy Mountains. No technical or physical problem is associated with that. It is a question of who controls the arrangements. I strongly advise the Government to watch that matter closely.

Those three Labor States, with their huge consumer demand, will be able to establish a very influential base. Of course, they are not interested in devolution or in looking after private enterprise. Those three socialist Governments are interested in establishing a power base for themselves.

**Mr Littleproud** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Exactly. Their masters dictate that policy.

A couple of years ago, the Premier of New South Wales (Mr Wran) learnt to his great disadvantage and distress just how much influence the power workers and their bosses have over his Government. He was forced to give in to the strikers in the Hunter Valley and grant greater concessions than they requested. They had him in such a peculiar political position that he could not move. He took the matter away from the industrial tribunals that were sorting out the problems and considered it in his own Cabinet room. As I say, he gave the strikers more than they requested. That is how vulnerable he became concerning the power situation in New South Wales. That State also owns a number of coal mines, and that forms part of a large power base within the ALP.

Queensland must ensure that it does not go any further along this track. It does not need such a huge structure, which may look good on the outside, but which, as has been proven on many occasions, does not produce economies of scale. It gives enormous power to a very small group of people who are not answerable to the public, to the Parliament or to the industrial tribunals that they claim to respect and support. Those people want to assume authority and take it away from elected representatives of Parliament. The ALP actively encourages and supports them.

**Mr Innes:** It incites them.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** It may well do that, too.

What has happened in the last week is significant. A week or so ago, the Premier and Treasurer, on behalf of the Government, indicated that the Government would not shift in its negotiations. Last week the Premier and Treasurer made a major shift on behalf of the Government with regard to the negotiability of the terms and conditions under which power could be restored and people could be re-employed. Because the Industrial Commission is involved, those terms and conditions are still subject to negotiation. I ask the union leaders to show the same degree of understanding and conciliation. They should come to the party so that common ground can be found in order that 500 000 people can be re-employed. Attempts should be made to ensure that those people are guaranteed employment in the future.

**Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (5.42 p.m.):** I can hear Government members groan. They do not want to hear the facts of this issue but are happy to read the briefs that have been prepared for them by the same people who have been preparing statements for the Premier over the last few weeks.

I was interested to listen to the Liberal Party edging its way down the road to Damascus. The leader of the Liberal Party (Sir William Knox) has been grandstanding again. But, as has often happened in recent times, he was playing to a very small grandstand indeed. The issues that he raised this afternoon must be a recent addition to Liberal Party policy because no mention was made of those proposals last year when the power industry in this State was substantially restructured through amendments to the Electricity Act. Those proposals also were not apparent when the honourable gentleman was Minister for Employment and Labour Relations some years ago.

This debate centres on the motion that the Premier and Treasurer moved this morning in the House. The motion illustrates publicly what many people in the community have been saying for a long time. By the motion, the Premier has revealed himself as a paragon of hypocrisy and that hypocrisy has permeated his handling of the current industrial dispute. The severe economic dislocation and public distress that have been widespread in the community can, to a very large extent, be attributed to the actions of a vindictive old man and his conduct of this industrial crisis. I must ask why he chose to inflame an industrial dispute and inflict hundreds of millions of dollars of economic loss on an ailing economy and hours and hours of distress upon the community. Is that a rational response from a responsible Government? It certainly is not a rational response. It is indicative of a Government that is bereft of ideas or of a Government that is concerned about a variety of issues and worried about its standing. It is the sort of tactics that we have come to expect from tinpot, banana republics or little authoritarian regimes that try to distract public attention from their shortcomings by attempting to manufacture another issue to take public attention away from the real issues confronting society. The Government's action in this dispute is an example of irresponsible behaviour and is certainly not the sort of behaviour that the people of Queensland should expect from its Government in 1985.

I will consider the issues. Why has the Government created this diversion? The genesis of this industrial dispute was the issue of contract labour.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Correct.

**Mr HAMILL:** I am pleased that the member for Lockyer recognises that point. I hope he also recognises the fact that that issue has been resolved by negotiation in the Industrial Commission.

The only reason that this dispute is continuing is that the Queensland Government is deliberately prolonging it. The issue is no longer about contract labour; it is now the question of reinstatement and whether the Government's terms are negotiable. The honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) seems to think they are; the Premier and Treasurer says they are not. Surely, for the benefit of the whole of the Queensland public and the industrial tribunal in this State, the Government ought to clarify the matter.

I suggest that the real issue that is fundamental to this dispute is the role of the system of industrial conciliation and arbitration in this State. But why has there been this elaborate and costly smoke-screen? Why is the Government going to such pains to beat up an issue when, as was stated in the press this afternoon, peace proposals that were ultimately adopted by the Government existed but were unable to get through Cabinet because of the intransigence of the Premier and Treasurer?

I will look at the smoke-screen. It was not so long ago that the Premier and Treasurer delivered his Budget Speech in this Chamber. In it he said—

“However, many encouraging signs continue to emerge and key economic indicators are supportive of a long awaited resurgence to full economic strength and stability.”

That was a terrific statement. It appeared that the Premier and Treasurer had some vision of the way the State's economy was moving. One only has to look at the same key economic indicators to see that that statement, which was made as recently as September, was as hollow and as false as a number of the statements that he made during this prolonged industrial dispute.

In referring to unemployment in Queensland, I firstly state that not so long ago the Government boasted about how it was the employment generating centre of Australia.

**Mr McPhie:** Look at what your unions have done to it.

**Mr HAMILL:** No, look at what the honourable member's Government has done to it, because these statistics were released before the industrial disputation. I have no

doubt that the prolongation of the industrial disputation will have worsened the economy of the State.

The most recent figures of the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that Queensland now leads every other State in the rate of unemployment. In fact, 106 300 Queenslanders are looking for full-time work. The level of those searching for full-time employment is 11.4 per cent, which compares with 10.1 per cent in New South Wales, 7.8 per cent in Victoria, which is where the jobs are being generated in Australia at present, 9.1 per cent in Western Australia. If the honourable member for Toowoomba North (Mr McPhie) fails to recognise that, he ought to look very seriously at his future in this House, because obviously he does not give a damn about unemployment in Toowoomba. His electors will get square with him at the next election.

Total unemployment in Queensland is 123 000. However, it is worse among the young. I know the member for Toowoomba North could not give a damn about the young people of Toowoomba who are looking for jobs. In January 1985, 29.3 per cent of young Queenslanders were unemployed. That is an increase on the figure of 26 per cent for January 1984. Every other State has experienced an improvement in employment and a diminution in the number of unemployed. Queensland has not. It is little wonder that the Government is beating up an industrial issue to take public attention away from such damning economic statistics.

The fact is that Queensland is sliding into an abyss. Last year, in the Budget debate I recounted the comments made by Mr Christopher Skase, who pointed out that Queensland was lagging behind in its recovery from the recession.

Recently, one of the new-found industrial relations advisers of the Queensland Government (Mr Siebenhausen) said that Queensland was lagging behind in economic recovery. He has only half the story. Queensland is not only lagging behind in economic recovery but is also leading the way down the economic slide because of the policies that the Queensland Government has perpetrated on the people of Queensland. I am not content to look only at unemployment statistics. A whole range of economic indicators is showing the way for the Queensland economy under the present regime.

The building industry has been widely recognised as a good barometer of economic activities. Between November 1983 and November 1984, building approval growth in Australia as a whole was 12.9 per cent. In New South Wales, the figure was 15.4 per cent; in Victoria, 6.9 per cent; in South Australia, 38.4 per cent; in Western Australia, 16.4 per cent; and in Tasmania, 41.2 per cent. In Queensland, the number of building approvals in November 1984 was fewer than the number in November 1983. Queensland was the only State in Australia that experienced a real decline. The rate of growth in building approvals in Queensland was minus 0.4 per cent. The collapse of the building industry in Queensland is another feather in the cap of the Bjelke-Petersen Government.

Motor vehicle registration is another good indicator of economic activity. When the economy is buoyant, people buy new motor vehicles. If the figures for the last financial year are compared with those for the previous financial year, it can be seen that there was real growth in motor vehicle registration of almost 2½ per cent in Australia. In New South Wales, the rate of growth was 4 per cent and, in South Australia, 4.5 per cent. The figures for all the other States are rosy. Again, poor old Queensland experienced negative growth in the number of new motor vehicle registrations. The rate of growth was minus 3.2 per cent.

It is little wonder that the Queensland Government does not want to talk about those matters. It is also little wonder that all the talk about calling an early election stopped after the Rockhampton debacle experienced by the National Party. The electors of Rockhampton had the good sense to return my friend Mr Braddy as their member. The fact is that the Queensland Government is endeavouring to lay an elaborate smoke-screen to hide its deficiencies from the public.

This afternoon Government members have expressed a wild misconception about the nature of industrial relations. They seem to think that the rank and file members of trade unions have no say in the action taken by trade unions in industrial affairs. In fact, the rank and file trade-unionists have a far greater say in the actions of those who represent them than rank and file members of the National Party have over the National Party Government.

The attitude expressed by so many Government members reflects the Government's method of operation. The Government operates on the principle of bossism. The Premier and Treasurer seems to be able to call the tune in Cabinet and think for everybody, and the other members of Cabinet go along meekly with him. The public of Queensland hoped against hope that Cabinet would accept the recommendations of the State Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission; that, through the time-honoured processes of industrial conciliation and arbitration, the Government would accept the recommendations of the structures that it has established in the arena of industrial affairs to deal with industrial disputes. Those people of Queensland who thought that among the other 17 members of Cabinet there might be found some collective vertabrae to stand up to the Premier and Treasurer were to be bitterly disappointed. Those other members of Cabinet could not stand up to the vindictiveness, the destructiveness and the irresponsibility of the Premier and Treasurer.

The invisible man, the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) still has not participated in the debate. I would have thought that that would be critical to his portfolio. He has swung to and fro, in and out of the doors, just as he has been doing for the last few weeks. The Minister has made no constructive input. The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) has shown that he is more suited to a vaudeville act than to handling important affairs of this State.

Very appropriately, the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) spoke about his part in the dispute. He is another person who ought to have had a higher profile during the dispute. However, the Minister did not act out the role demanded by his portfolio. Of course, the Minister for Mines and Energy obviously had good training for his present portfolio. I understand that before entering Parliament he was the principal of a wrecking business.

I will now deal with the way in which the Queensland Government has handled the electricity dispute. The Government deserves the strongest condemnation from Queenslanders for the way in which it has dealt with the industrial relations aspect of this dispute. As a substitute for the administration of industrial relations, once again the State faces Government by proclamation. The Transport Act has been invoked to make up for the lack of talent of the Government in handling delicate industrial relations.

I have perused the declarations of states of emergency during the post-war period. On 11 occasions a state of emergency has been declared. Four of those occasions were prior to 1957 and under Labor Governments. Two of the occasions were in 1960 and 1964. The Nicklin Government suffered widespread criticism over its invocation of a state of emergency because of the Mount Isa dispute of 1964. On another occasion the Queensland Government declared a state of emergency in relation to the Springbok rugby tour of 1971. That is another example of gross over-reaction.

The Bjelke-Petersen Government has declared a state of emergency on four occasions in four years. Honourable members should ask the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing to change the words on the State's number plates and put in "Queensland—State of Emergency". That would be far more appropriate.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Don't you think that this was serious and an emergency?

**Mr HAMILL:** The honourable member for Lockyer seems to have doubts, and those doubts are well-founded.

The declaration of a state of emergency was a highly provocative action, one designed to prolong the industrial dispute. It is part of the confrontationist approach that has become a hallmark of the Premier and Treasurer's attitude to industrial relations. The result of the Queensland Government's attitude to industrial relations can be found quite clearly in the statistics on industrial disputation in the various States.

In the 12 months to November 1984—before the current industrial strife—Queensland showed a 60 per cent increase in the level of industrial disputation over the previous 12 months; yet across Australia as a whole, the level of industrial disputation had not changed. In fact, in a number of States—significantly, South Australia—the levels of industrial disputation had fallen to a remarkable low.

**Mr McPhie** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** Even the honourable member for Toowoomba North could find those statistics, if he cared to use the Parliamentary Library.

The use of a state of emergency to deal with an industrial dispute is a most inappropriate use of that power. A state of emergency is designed for occasions of great duress. During the current power dispute, a state of emergency was declared and two days later a position to which the parties to the dispute agreed was negotiated in the Industrial Commission, but—surprise, surprise!—the Queensland Government refused to agree to it.

In the past few weeks, Queenslanders have witnessed the prolonging of a dispute, as other Opposition speakers have stated, for purely ideological reasons of the State Government, ideological reasons based not on the peace, order and good government of the State but, rather, on some strange idea of political advantage being gained by the National Party. It will be a Pyrrhic victory, because by the time the National Party has served its own ends, nothing will be left of the economy of the State. I have already pointed out the economic problems of this State. The consequences of weeks and weeks of industrial disputation—both social consequences and economic consequences—show quite clearly that the Queensland Government has totally lost control of the current dispute.

*Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.*

**Mr HAMILL:** Before the dinner recess, I was discussing the implications of a state of emergency upon the current industrial disputation besetting the State of Queensland. I called into question the appropriateness of declaring a state of emergency to deal with the dispute. The Transport Act, which contains the relevant provisions—extreme powers that they are—was first legislated by the Moore Government during the depression years. Of course, that Government was the political and spiritual predecessor of the current administration. I pointed out also that this administration has proclaimed a state of emergency four times in the last four years. Consequently, the Government has abdicated the proper conduct of industrial affairs by resorting to the enormous powers that it has under the Transport Act, thereby substituting government by proclamation for the machinery that successive Queensland Governments have put in place, namely, the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, as the machinery that should solve the present industrial dispute.

The question that arises is this: Is the present state of emergency prolonging the current industrial dispute? Is the declaration of a state of emergency undermining our system of industrial conciliation and arbitration? When I commenced my speech, I pointed out that the key issue in the present industrial wrangle is the future of the industrial conciliation system as we have known it in our State for about 70 years. The State Government is prepared to exercise a declaratory power under a state of emergency that is succeeding in further antagonising the opposing parties in the power dispute. It would appear from the track record of the Government over recent years that the state of emergency has been used indiscriminately to make up for its having no answers to

problems presented to it in the industrial arena. It does not surprise me, therefore, that a state of emergency has been declared on this occasion.

This morning, as I was driving to Parliament House, I heard with some interest the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) on one of the popular talk-back radio programs. The Minister was pathetically explaining why he had not received much publicity about the role he was playing in this dispute. He protested pathetically that he had made four statements to the media. He did not think that that was such a bad job. When one considers the calibre and incompetence of the incumbent of the Industrial Affairs portfolio, it is little wonder that the Government has resorted to declaring a state of emergency to get itself out of the impasse. The Minister is called the invisible man. Little wonder! The public certainly saw through him this morning in his pathetic protestations about the role he was trying to play in the current dispute.

The state of emergency that has been called is objectionable in every way. A state of emergency represents a serious erosion of the civil liberties of citizens in the State of Queensland. Government members might say that it is only an erosion of their civil liberties if they in some way come into conflict with the law; but that begs the question. The Government has enormous powers to order people to do a whole variety of things which they, in other circumstances, would not think of doing had it not been for the declaration of a state of emergency.

The other real danger is that, under section 22 of the Transport Act, the Government is empowered to call for extensions of the state of emergency for periods up to and not exceeding three months at a time. It might be wondered why that is relevant to the present circumstances. In 1981, when the Government was rattling its sabre through the use of emergency powers in the area of industrial relations, it extended its state of emergency. The "Telegraph" editorial on 27 August of that year described the extension for another month as "both unnecessary and provocative"

Those terms seem to have been used quite a deal in connection with the declaration of a state of emergency because of the present power dispute. At that time, the Premier and Treasurer said that the extension of the declaration of the state of emergency provided him with those powers which might be handy. What a pathetic justification for the continued erosion of civil liberties.

At that time, the "Telegraph" printed in its editorial—

"Apart from the blows struck by the state of emergency powers at the basic concept of Parliamentary democracy, they have also proved to be remarkably ineffectual."

The state of emergency powers have proved to be remarkably ineffective again during this dispute because they have failed to prevent continued loss to the Queensland economy. Disputation is continuing throughout a whole variety of industries and workers in Queensland who have very grave fears and concerns because of the manner in which the Queensland Government has miscondacted itself in the field of industrial relations during the recent dispute.

**Mr De Lacy:** I ask the honourable member for Ipswich whether the declaration of the state of emergency has actually created an emergency.

**Mr HAMILL:** Indeed. It is all part of the diversionary tactic that the Government has launched itself on—that grand scheme which has been designed to divert attention away from the real issues that confront the Queensland people and the Queensland economy today.

The concern that I wish to express can be stated simply. In the press this week, the Queensland Premier and Treasurer has said that he does not know when the declaration of the state of emergency will be withdrawn and that he even conceives of the thought that the state of emergency powers may be continued until May. That expression of his opinion was stated in the press only yesterday. Upon what justification

can he make such claims? Is it again that the power to deprive people of civil liberties in this State might be handy? If the justification is that the power might be handy, the Premier and Treasurer is transgressing every principle of parliamentary democracy that the State of Queensland may ever have had.

**Mr Alison:** What rot!

**Mr HAMILL:** "What rot" is the statement from a Government member from the backwoods who would not give a fig about the state of civil liberties in Queensland. The honourable member for Maryborough would not care about the power of a Government that can order people about in a manner which would not be appropriate or justifiable in courts of law under normal circumstances. Moreover, the Transport Act, the legislation under which the Government is acting, provides for the imposition of penalties.

Time and time again, it has been shown that the imposition of penalty in industrial affairs succeeds only in making disputes more prolonged, more bitter and more intractable. It does nothing to bring the disputing parties together, and if this Government were serious about undertaking its responsibilities by the provision of good government for the welfare of the people of Queensland, it would want an early conclusion of the current industrial dispute.

In this evening's "Telegraph" the Government is exposed by the statement that shows quite clearly that peace plans had been placed before the Government after the departments had worked them out but, because of the intractability, or the madness if you like, of the Premier and Treasurer, who would not want to see any resolution of the dispute, the people responsible for the peace plans were fearful of taking them to Cabinet. If that is the case, it gives one the feeling that going to Cabinet meetings would be like looking for a sane man in Bedlam, such was the attitude of the Premier and Treasurer during this dispute.

I now want to examine the role of the police and the other agencies that the Government has employed to be the tools of its political action. The action of the Government is not industrial conciliation and arbitration. The action of the Government is political action and ideologically based action. Last Friday week, I received numerous telephone calls at my home from people who were complaining about the police intimidation and harassment that had been directed at the families of the disputing parties. The police officers were dealing out the summonses. The case of one woman, who was most distressed about the obnoxious and rude behaviour that was dished out to her by an officer who flung a summons in her face, comes to mind. When this occurred, her husband was actually at the power station, putting electricity into the State grid.

**Mr I. J. Gibbs:** Fifty per cent.

**Mr HAMILL:** Yes, 50 per cent. Is that not an example of responsible unionism? The people who were providing that 50 per cent could in fact have walked out of the power station and brought industry to a state of collapse. It was with no thanks to the Minister for Mines and Energy and the Government that this did not occur, because at every available opportunity the Government offered provocation. It would have been quite reasonable for those workers to have pulled the plug, and the Minister must bear the responsibility for the losses and public inconvenience. The public will remember at the next State election.

**Ms Warner** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** The honourable member asked whether the Minister intends to make the power operators sign no-strike clauses. I saw in the press today, contrary to the Government's claims—more erroneous and false claims—that the power operators would not have a bar of the standover tactics of the State Government, and quite rightly so.

They will not stand by and watch this Government erode their rights in what is supposedly a democratic society.

SEQEB officials maintained a campaign of harassment of the families of the striking, and now sacked, linesmen. It was interesting, if Government members think those claims are outrageous and outlandish, that the Queensland Police Union yesterday acknowledged that the police had been used in a manner that was both scandalous and detrimental to the esteem in which the public would hold the force. The Police Union yesterday undertook to make sure that there was a discontinuance of those intimidatory tactics for which the police were used in some areas. Not all police officers were involved; some had the common decency to respect the rights of the people involved in the dispute. The Police Union recognised that the police had been used callously by the Government for its own political ends, and I commend the union for recognising that it is not to be used as a tool of this Government.

**Mr Littleproud:** You are appalled by intimidation?

**Mr HAMILL:** I am appalled by intimidation, and I will tell the honourable member a bit more about it.

I am sure that this Government, which the honourable member has great pleasure in supporting, was responsible for sending Special Branch photographers round to quite peaceful meetings of disputing linesmen. My colleagues the members for Ipswich West (Mr Underwood) and Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs) and I were at a meeting at the Raceview SEQEB depot a few days ago, and the Special Branch photographers were more than in evidence. The cameras kept whirring. The people whose photographs are being taken and placed on file somewhere down at police headquarters are quite within their rights to be engaged in industrial disputation.

In fact, it could be argued from the Government's own point of view that they are no longer in industrial disputation. The Government has gone ahead and sacked them under the proclamations that it has issued under the state of emergency.

Those people feel that their civil liberties are being infringed because the police are putting them on file. The residents of those areas have contacted me complaining most bitterly at the continued police presence, the continued photography and the continued feeling of harassment because they are caught in a dispute between this Government and the unions. It is not fair to those people, and the Government should hang its head in shame.

**Mr Vaughan:** Shades of Nazism.

**Mr HAMILL:** Shades of Nazism? Highly shaded Nazism!

The Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs), in one of his few statements in relation to this dispute—he is not much better than his disappearing mate who has suddenly appeared in the Chamber—

**Mr Lester:** I will get out.

**Mr HAMILL:** I am sorry, he is as bad——

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I said earlier in the debate that I will not accept reference to any member by other than his correct title.

**Mr HAMILL:** I withdraw the term “mate”; it was his parliamentary colleague the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester).

The Minister for Mines and Energy attacked the West Moreton miners because of their continued industrial disputation in relation to the power dispute. I believe that the West Moreton miners are standing up for some very important principles and ought to be commended because they are not prepared to take the standover tactics, the intimidation and the provocation of this Government. All they are asking is that the sacked

linesmen be reinstated. Once that request is acceded to, the whole dispute will be over. But, of course, that does not suit the political ends of this Government. It is into victimisation and vindictiveness, not into industrial conciliation.

I said at the outset that the cornerstone of our industrial relations system is our system of industrial conciliation and arbitration. It was established by Governments to resolve industrial disputes, and it is a sad day when a Government will not stand by the machinery that it has put in place to resolve industrial disputes. It is a sad day when the Government shows its duplicity in the wording of the motion under discussion and when it will attack others for not following directives and recommendations of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. How can Government members in this Chamber condemn others for the same crime that the Government itself has committed? Surely the Government must stand by the machinery that it has put in place to resolve industrial disputes. The Government must set an example. In the future, how can the Government expect disputing parties to abide by the proceedings that it has said it is exempt from? That is a disgrace, and the Government should hang its head in shame.

I shall remind Government members of a little bit of history in industrial relations. It might be lost on most of them, but a few of them might understand the point. In 1929 the Australian Government made a premeditated onslaught upon the industrial conciliation and arbitration system in this country. That was another conservative Government. It was a political antecedent of this Government.

**Mr Wilson:** It was barrelled.

**Mr HAMILL:** Indeed it was barrelled from office. Its leader has gone down in history as the only leader of a Government in Australia to have lost his seat at a general election. What was that Government trying to do? It was trying to remove the industrial conciliation and arbitration system in Australia. That Government stood condemned by the people of Australia and reaped its electoral rewards.

The issue today is what this Government is trying to do in tampering with the State system of industrial conciliation and arbitration. Mr Macken, a barrister and a commentator on industrial law, wrote—

“Only industrial anarchy and chaos would result from scrapping the system altogether. Even in the countries which have adopted collective bargaining systems there seems to be an accelerating trend towards grafting onto such systems an ultimate arbitral tribunal.”

I hope that, on every occasion on which a contract has to be renegotiated, the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern) and the other advocates of the United States system of industrial anarchy recognise the very grave dangers that lie as the end-product of the irresponsible action that this Government has taken over the last few weeks. By thumbing its nose at the Queensland system of industrial conciliation and arbitration, the Government is leading the way towards destroying that very system. It is saying to everyone, “Disregard the commission. It is the law of the jungle in the industrial relations area.” If the Government leads the way on this path of irresponsibility, the industrial, economic and social consequences of this rash move will be on its head.

Honourable members must seriously consider the enormity of this industrial dispute. It is not a game any more. The Government seems to think that it is just a game of political tilting at windmills. It is not a game; it is serious stuff. The motion that has been moved by the Premier does nothing to bring about a resolution of the dispute. I hope that honourable members will think seriously about those issues and support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton).

*Time expired.*

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology) (7.33 p.m.): At the outset, I indicate that, during the currency of this dispute,

the Cabinet of Queensland has remained united, harmonious and co-operative. Its decisions have been completely unanimous.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr AHERN:** That is a statement of simple truth. All 18 Ministers will indicate that that is simply the way that it happened.

The Government has been pursuing a reasonable course that is consistent with international trends today and has community support. What the Government is simply trying to do is isolate the electricity industry from strike action in this State as far as is humanly possible. It is seeking procedures to achieve that end. As Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology, I indicate very definitely that the effect of the strike in this State has been significant. Other people have tried to put numbers on it. I cannot do that. It will take some months to determine that. However, there is no doubt that the business community has offered the Government significant support right down the line. That support has been directed to the Government in daily communications from the Queensland Confederation of Industry, the Small Business Association of Queensland and the Small Business Association of Australia. In case anybody doubts the attitude of those bodies in this regard, I shall quote from communications that they have sent to me.

The Transport Workers Union banned the delivery of this note to me. That happened in our so-called free society in which freedom of speech and communication are permitted. The letter was finally hand delivered to me by its writer. It appears under the letterhead of the Australian Small Business Association (Queensland Branch) and reads as follows—

“The Australian Small Business Association wishes to express its support for the Government’s stand in the current industrial dispute with the Electrical Trade Union. Our members are being severely affected by the lack of power and will suffer severe financial hardship, but believe the Government must not cave in to the Industrial blackmail of the ETU.

The continual disruption to our lives and our business activities due to the never ending industrial stoppages at the whim of one union after another has long since reached crisis point. Small Businesses struggling to establish and grow do not have the financial reserves to weather these never ending shutdowns of power and other essential services. Our patience has long since been exhausted.

The Industrial Arbitration systems available in this country provide the best possible means of negotiating working conditions and rates of pay. The Unions do not accept this fact and continually use the strike weapon to bring industry to a standstill and force a favourable decision. This misuse of strikes is tantamount to blackmail and should have been treated as such long ago.

Since the Unions have misused their power so often it is time that all Governments took a strong stand—as the Queensland Government is doing. Strike weapons have been so abused by the Unions that it is time consideration was given to outlawing organised strikes. This does not prevent any worker from withdrawing his labour and transferring to an alternative employer.”

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I point out to honourable members that sustained and rowdy interjections do not contribute anything to the debate. Because the interjections are not being accepted by the honourable member on his feet, I ask other honourable members to desist from making prolonged interjections that are counter-productive to the debate.

**Mr AHERN:** The letter continues—

“This does not prevent any worker from withdrawing his labour and transferring to an alternative employer—and of course does not prevent the employer from replacing that worker.

Small Business employs 60% of the private business workforce and produces 55% of Australian gross domestic products. These small businesses are hardest hit by the current dispute but we believe it is the duty of the Government to determine who is running the country—the elected Government or the unions.

We also welcome the Governments offer of financial assistance to aid the recovery of small businesses and congratulate you on this initiative.”

Some people say that arbitration is the way to resolve a dispute and that it should be left to the Queensland Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. I have before me a schedule showing the history of recent determinations of the commission and the performance of the ETU in carrying out its recommendations and orders. I will table that document and the correspondence from which I have read so that they are available for all honourable members to read. In recent months orders have been made by the commission that have been totally ignored by the ETU, and the summary in this document clearly demonstrates that fact.

**Mr Vaughan:** I will be interested to read that document.

**Mr AHERN:** The honourable member will be able to do so.

In recent disputes, SEQEB, the Queensland Electricity Generating Board and the Government complied with five orders; none were not complied with. The unions complied with three orders but did not comply with two. The unions also did not accept four out of the last five recommendations of the commission. The unions are continually going before the commission but are not acting upon any recommendations or orders that are made until they get one that suits them. Is it any wonder that the national conference of the Australian Small Business Association advised me of a motion that simply said that small businessmen have had enough of the unions? I lay on the table of the House the documents referred to.

*Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the documents on the table.*

Quite a number of ridiculous claims are being made daily in the Industrial Commission.

**Mr McLean** interjected.

**Mr AHERN:** I am not the Minister responsible for industrial relations. I am not familiar with those matters, nor should I be expected to be. The Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs will soon be on his feet; the honourable member should ask him.

I will shortly lay on the table of the House the latest log of claims of the Electrical Trades Union of Australia National Council. I will read some of these claims into the record. The log reads—

“Dear Sir,

The Electrical Trades Union of Australia demands that you pay and observe each of the rates of wages and conditions of employment contained in the attached Log of Claims in respect of all employees, eligible to be members of the Union, whether members of the Union or not.

Unless within twenty-one days of the date hereof you comply with this demand, the Union will take appropriate steps under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act.”  
I admit that it is a log of claims.

**Mr Vaughan:** It is an ambit claim.

**Mr AHERN:** Yes, an ambit claim.

**Mr Scott:** What is the date of it?

**Mr AHERN:** It is undated.

**Mr Scott:** It is about two years old.

**Mr AHERN:** The document is dated 25 January 1985.

The demands in this document relate to: a weekly wage rate of \$1,000 for the base tradesman classification, an additional 15 per cent of the base tradesman's rate of pay for all special class classifications, an additional 15 per cent of the base tradesman's rate of pay for the instrument tradesman's complex systems classification, etc, etc, a rate of \$2,000 a week for all technicians, trades, professional and/or subprofessional, electrical or electronic classifications, etc, extra for electrician's licences, switching allowances, extra payments, site allowances, district and divisional allowances, industry allowance, disability special rates, travelling time and fares, hours, a maximum time of 30 hours per week, shift work, overtime, meal allowances, annual leave, holidays—20 days in each year as paid holidays, one of which shall be a union picnic day, provided the employees shall be paid for such holiday at the rate at which they would normally have been paid, sick leave, rest pauses, living away from home, attendance at hospital, compassionate leave, bereavement leave, jury service, blood donors, holidays, Saturday and Sunday work, contract of employment, payment of wages, motor allowance, tools, introduction of change, termination of employment, redundancy, right of entry, apprentices and juniors, no reduction in wages, preference of employment, study leave, technical study leave, telephone rentals, accident pay, maternity leave, paternity leave and shop stewards.

That is the sort of document that is currently circulating in Queensland.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr AHERN:** Members of the Opposition may laugh about it, but it is the basis of negotiation that is going on all the time. It is the sort of thing that has business pig-sick in this State.

As Minister for Industry, I say that, as a result of this industrial dispute, a new era has commenced in this State. There now has to be a recognition of the problems that face industry not only in this State but right throughout the length and breadth of Australia. On Thursday and Friday of this week I will be attending a conference of Industry Ministers, who, around the country, are addressing these sensitive issues and are realising that industry in Australia has some serious problems on its hands. Those Ministers have realised that the days of multimillion-dollar resource projects going on all over the place have slowed very substantially and, with all of this nonsense, Australians are in danger of killing the goose that laid the golden egg.

Industry on-costs are higher in Australia than in any other country in the world. On average, industry on-costs in this State are 45 per cent on top of wages. In some areas they are as high as 65 per cent. All of those costs must be added to wages. They are leading Queensland to a loss of competitiveness on the international market. If industry is to survive in this country, all Governments—Federal, State and local—of all political colours must take a cold, hard look at these matters, employer and employee alike, and ask whether industry can survive in that type of climate. Australia will not survive for very long unless industry survives. It is as simple as that. Australia cannot sustain its standard of living by people selling each other insurance or taking in each other's washing. Australia needs factories to produce commodities to generate wealth in an economic sense. Export industries must be developed and expanded as technology arrives and productivity increases. Australia must export more. That cannot be done unless Australia is competitive.

In some industries, productivity per employee in Australia is one-third of that generated by the Japanese and west coast Americans. It takes three men on a construction unit in Australia to do the job done by one man on a construction unit on the west coast of America. No-one questions that the work is good, but demarcation disputes and the like are generating a lack of competitiveness. That is a very serious problem that must be addressed by Australian industry.

In private conversation around the country, Labor Ministers are expressing their concern. Members of the Opposition should be concerned, too. Responsible unionists are concerned. For the last 10 years, we have been honeymooning. Because of circumstances beyond the Government's control, problems have arisen in this State. No man in his right mind would tell honourable members that the problems in the sugar industry were caused by the Queensland Government. However, the problems are there. Is the Queensland Government responsible for the huge overhang in the international sugar market at present? Is the Queensland Government responsible for the European Economic Community's policies that have generated the excess sugar supply in the world? No-one in his right mind would say that it is responsible for those problems. However, the sugar industry, which is almost unique to Queensland and which has 7 000 farms and 30 sugar-mills, each of which is a large industrial undertaking, is suffering. In the last six weeks, 2 000 jobs have been lost permanently. That is beyond the Queensland Government's control. However, it has happened and everyone in Queensland is feeling the effect of it at the moment.

As to the resource industry, it is not the Queensland Government's fault that the world requires less coal. Is someone going to suggest that the Queensland Government is responsible for the run-down in the international coal market? Of course no-one would suggest such a thing! The resource industry was spending \$1,000m a year in the State. In one year \$2,500m was spent in this State. However, nothing is being spent at the moment. The infrastructure industry has run down. It is not the fault of the Queensland Government, but it has occurred.

On the world market, copper from socialist countries is an enormous problem for Queensland. Mount Isa Mines has done a great deal for this State and its future. Is that the responsibility of the Queensland Government? Of course, it is not; but the problem has arisen.

**Mr Kruger:** Why aren't you involved?

**Mr AHERN:** The Queensland Government is involved, but the Queensland Government cannot dictate the price of South American copper. That is simply not on. South America has created the problem. If the honourable member for Murrumba studied the problem, he would realise that the plain facts are that the honeymoon is over and that manufacturing industry in this country must be revamped and structural changes made quickly throughout the Australian economy. Manufacturing industry is facing the challenge, and the Government of this State is helping. This Government has a very substantial program of just-in-time technology and improving productivity in existing industry.

**An Opposition Member:** How does that help?

**Mr McElligott:** Why are you stamping out the unions?

**Mr AHERN:** I will answer those questions one at a time.

The inventory costs in Australia are horrendous in contrast to what is happening internationally. The plain fact is that the inventory in Australian manufacturing industry rolls over three times a year. In Japan, the Toyota company rolls over its inventory 100 times per year.

Just-in-time technology is what it is all about. This Government has a program to assist manufacturing industry and the development of new technology industries. In view of the few months that the Government has had in which to do something about it, I believe that it has made spectacular progress.

The Government has a technology research park. The Lord Mayor will not give the Government a road into it. That problem will be overcome. A technology manufacture park has been purchased, and on 18 March the Government will be announcing the biggest computer manufacturing facility in Australia. The Lord Mayor will not rezone

the land. However, I can assure honourable members that the Government will get that done. The Government has a State industry development strategy which will implement structural change in the Queensland economy and ensure that this State's economy performs as it has in the past.

Queensland cannot have saboteurs; it is as simple as that. What is needed is co-operation. The type of sabotage that this Government has endured in recent times is quite intolerable. We have a new economic context in Australia. It is a different ball game. If Queenslanders are to enjoy increased standards of living, as the people have demanded in the past, the Government has to change its tactics. The type of industrial insanity that has prevailed just simply has to cease if Australia is to perform in the future. If not, Australian industry will be permanently crippled.

I turn now to the proposition that employees have an inherent right to withdraw their labour over an industrial issue. It has been cited as a moral right, something which was fought for in all the wars. It is fundamental in Constitutions of Australia and around the world. It has been cited as some holy law, some fundamentum of Australian society. That proposition is not so and it is not accepted as such around the world. In fact, Australia is the exception in this regard when in relation to the electricity industry it is said, "You have the right to withdraw your labour at any time."

Where else in the world is it allowed? Where else is it tolerated? Rights of employees are balanced by the rights of others in this situation, as they must be. Therein lies the moral law. At the present time the total electricity industry in the United States and Canada is completely isolated by contract from strike action. It is simply written into every employee's agreement when he begins work that his industry is an essential industry and it does not carry with it the right to strike. Dispute resolution procedures are automatic and binding on the parties. It is simply heresy to suggest that in North America there could somehow be a strike in the electricity industry. Liberty is enshrined in the North American constitution. No-one suggests that freedoms are curbed in North America. It does not happen. Every public servant employed by the Federal Government in the United States of America signs a no-strike agreement at the point of employment. Compulsory arbitration is applied. It has been challenged in the courts and found to be completely consistent with the American constitution.

Australia is the exception. Somehow or other, here in Australia we say we must have the right to strike. The American dollar increases in value by the day. There are good reasons for that—good reasons we should learn from if we want our dollar to increase in value as well. America has achieved that by promoting productivity in the private sector. Productivity has been generated in the private sector, and the strategy is working. As many as 600 000 new corporations have been developed and floated in America in the last 12 months. There is genuine productivity in the private sector, and the dollar continues to grow by the day. The United States has no strikes in its electricity supply industry. The standard of living rises. The rights and benefits of employees are growing. In a world-wide trend, by the year 1990 nine out of 10 workers in the United States will not belong to an industrial union.

The procedures in this country have been replaced by something which works better in the interests of employees. These are lessons which industry and Governments of all political colours in Australia are saying must be learned here. They will be learned here. Our Government is united, unanimous and resolved on the issue.

**Mr SCOTT (Cook) (7.56 p.m.):** It gives me great pleasure to take part in the debate, which largely has been a shambles with nothing but a tirade of abuse from the Government side directed not only at the union movement but also at honourable members of the Opposition side. I shall not stoop to the Government's level, in spite of what has been very strong provocation from the Government. I will hold my shoulders back and my head up and resist the temptation.

Honourable members are debating a motion and an amendment. I do not intend speaking to the motion, although I will refer to some words in it. I refer to the words

of abuse with which the Premier commenced his speech when he moved that the Parliament—

“Condemns both the Electrical Trades Union and the Municipal Officers Association of Australia for their failure to direct their members to obey the orders of the Industrial Commission to terminate the industrial action . . .”

That set the pattern for the debate from the Government side of the House. The Premier stooped to personal abuse, unparliamentary language and the other actions for which he is noted and to which he cannot resist stooping. There is nothing constructive in his damaging approach to industrial relations in this State. We have just heard quite an incredible speech from the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern), who is now leaving the Chamber. I have matters to refer to in a logical order, and I will leave my remarks about his speech for a little while.

I speak in support of the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) in a very statesmanlike way. I like the words in his amendment, which show that he has a grasp of industrial affairs and a feeling for the workers of this State and our industrial circumstances, which Government members do not have. I deplore that state of affairs. They should learn something. Unfortunately, not enough of them have spent the time to listen to members on the Opposition side, from whom they could learn.

I agree with the way in which the amendment begins by deploring—

“ . . . the ways in which the Premier and his Cabinet of faceless men have deliberately set a course which has promoted hatred and division in our community.”

That is so true. That is what the Premier and Treasurer has tried to do. He has been aided and abetted by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn), in particular. Very few other Ministers have been prepared to show their face—and I will have something to say about that in a moment. The Deputy Premier aided and abetted the Premier, because he hopes to step into his shoes. He is a little understudy who creeps along after the Premier, trying to follow his ways.

The Opposition wants the House to instruct the Government to implement the provisions of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission's recommendation of 17 February 1985, a recommendation that the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission has said was a serious and earnest attempt to resolve the electricity dispute. The Opposition wants the resolution of this matter to remain in the hands of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission so that some sense can emerge. The people of Queensland would undoubtedly respond to that type of approach rather than the destructive approach that has been so prevalent on the Government's side.

The Opposition wants the recommendation implemented free of interference because “the House views with disgust” the way in which the Premier and Treasurer has been prepared to further damage the State's already depressed and lagging economy. Members of the Opposition listened with expectation for the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology to tell us that common sense would prevail and rationality would be brought to bear in the Government's considerations.

**Mrs Chapman** interjected.

**Mr Prest:** Have you an answer for Dolly Parton?

**Mr SCOTT:** I totally ignore interjections by the honourable member for Pine Rivers.

The Minister who spoke previously was so bereft of material that he stooped to reading a document that I saw an honourable member on the Government back benches wave round today. It is a document that regularly rears its head in this House on a three-monthly basis, although it is usually the honourable member for Nundah who brings before the House as a serious interpretation of industrial affairs the ridiculous ambit claim that is presented.

Honourable members witnessed the utterly ridiculous performance by the Minister for Mines and Energy when he read, word for word, the totally nonsensical document which indicates the level of debate that emanates from the Government's side. It is a shame and it is a disgrace to the House. It is also a disgrace to the Government. Not one Minister has emerged from the debate with an ounce of credit attaching to him. The Minister for Health is full of interjections, but does not have very much common sense. Perhaps the Minister for Health could rise to his feet and offer some pearls of wisdom. One can imagine that Minister's views on industrial affairs by recalling his treatment of members of the Queensland Nurses Union. That treatment demonstrated more invective than rationality.

What role has the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs played during this industrial dispute? He has played no role at all, and I notice that his name is right down at the bottom of the list of speakers.

**An Opposition Member** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT:** I understand the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs arranged for the lift to be fixed. What a remarkable achievement!

The people of Australia were edified by his remarks about the poor old man who had to walk up 23 flights of stairs, that same old man who throws down the gauntlet, and who is not on level 23. The Opposition knows who is on level 23, and I do not think that the Minister for Health likes the Premier and Treasurer very much. I will bet that the Minister for Health does not like having his typed letter of resignation waved round at Cabinet meetings—the letter of resignation that he was prepared to sign so that it could be used in the event of his stepping out of line. I am familiar with the style of the Minister for Health. He is not prepared to rise to his feet and debate the matter. Honourable members have to wait until well after 8 o'clock before the words of wisdom from the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs can be heard. For the duration of this dispute, the Minister has not been prepared to speak out, but has hidden——

**Mr LESTER:** I rise to a point of order. I find the remark made by the honourable member for Cook most offensive. I point out that on several occasions I have spoken out, and I ask the honourable member to withdraw that remark.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! The Minister has asked for that remark to be withdrawn.

**Mr SCOTT:** I will withdraw the remark, although I must say that I am not certain which remark the Minister refers to. Was it the remark about the elderly man walking up the steps to level 23?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! No explanations will be made on the point of order. The remark has been withdrawn.

**Mr SCOTT:** Nothing constructive, nothing original, and certainly nothing conciliatory has emanated from the Government side.

It is interesting to notice the rather silent Minister for Mines and Energy. On a serious note, I ask the Minister about an item that I heard on the news this evening. I heard portions of the news that has been broadcast before and after 7 o'clock this evening. The interpretation of the press is that some conciliatory moves have come from the Government side of the House, and I would like to know whether that is so. The interpretation by the press to which I have referred seemed to me to be a rather loose one that has been applied to the debate carried on in the House today. Will the Minister tell me whether it will be necessary for people to sign a no-strike clause before they can receive their jobs back?

**Mr I. J. Gibbs:** I did not hear the news.

**Mr SCOTT:** I ask that the Minister answer my question. It is a serious matter, and, with respect, I ask the Minister to answer my question.

**Mr I. J. Gibbs:** I do not attend the House to answer the questions of the honourable member for Cook.

**Mr SCOTT:** The is exactly what I thought. The Minister for Mines and Energy has no role in this House. I now know that the Minister is following along in the Premier's petticoats. The Minister has nothing original to offer. He will not even say what the role of the Government is to be.

**Mr I. J. Gibbs:** I ask the honourable member for Cook what he thinks the role of the Government should be. I know what the role of the Government is.

**Mr SCOTT:** I also know what the role of Government is.

**Mr McElligott:** The Minister for Mines and Energy is in a similar position to all the other Ministers. All of the Government Ministers are not allowed to comment.

**Mr SCOTT:** Of course, that is true. One thing that must be said is that tight discipline applies in Cabinet. Of course, it is achieved by the Premier's waving those letters round. I do not doubt that they are a fixed part of the furniture, and the moment a Minister shows the slightest bit of spirit or individuality, the Premier simply picks up the letter and looks fairly piercingly at the Minister concerned.

**A Government Member interjected.**

**Mr SCOTT:** The Minister knows; he plays his docile role in the Cabinet-room. The Minister will not answer my sensible and serious question, so I will continue with my sensible and serious speech.

**A Government Member interjected.**

**Mr SCOTT:** Government members love to talk about secret ballots. What about a secret ballot in Cabinet? Then it would all come out. I would like to know why there cannot be a secret ballot in Cabinet; it would give some of the rather spineless Ministers the chance to put something in writing in secret. The result would be very interesting.

One of the few constructive things the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern) said was that the Cabinet was united. We know why it is united; its members are under threat.

I must refer to the speech of the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze). I am very curious to discover who wrote his speech. It began with the usual tirade of abuse against the unions and the Opposition, but it was rather a weak effort. Members are used to fairly strong words from the Minister; he is usually one man who shows a bit of spirit. But, once again, he is under the Premier's thumb. He did not last very long with his invective against Opposition members and the union movement. He embarked on an incredible tirade of abuse against a respected journalist, and I wonder what has caused that.

**Mr Wilson interjected.**

**Mr SCOTT:** Of course he used parliamentary privilege. I imagine that that same journalist is busy sharpening what I thought was his rather soft pencil for his by-line in tomorrow's newspaper.

**A Government Member interjected.**

**Mr SCOTT:** An ALP pencil from that journalist? I do not think so. I think the honourable member is having me on. I know that I am a little naive and that the honourable member can take me on with that nice face, but I do not think I am that stupid.

**An Opposition Member** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT:** It is clear that the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing would never be Premier, anyway, because he just is not consistent. He is all over the place. Members saw today a side of the Minister that they do not often see in this House or outside, that of a vacillating sort of person, and it does not suit him at all.

It is not only that Minister but former Ministers also who have come out of this debate on the industrial situation very poorly. We saw a motion to be moved by the member for Nundah (Sir William Knox). What came of it? He resumed his seat without moving his motion. I am wondering what went wrong. Did he go weak in the knees because of a glare from the Premier? The motion was typed out; it was one of the first documents seen by Opposition members. We thought, "Hello, the Liberal Party has struck from the obscure position it holds in Queensland politics today. Here it is, it has gone into publication." But what happened? The member for Nundah spoke and forgot to move his motion.

**An Opposition Member:** They've all gone home.

**Mr SCOTT:** That is true, just as they did on the night of the debate on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait community services Bills. It is a regular practice. I wonder whether they, too, suffer from petticoat government.

The honourable member for Nundah did come out with one gem. He said that he would allow private enterprise into the power supply industry. His whole speech was aimed at a businessmen's luncheon. Unfortunately, he was not at a businessmen's luncheon when he was addressing this Chamber and discussing the very difficult world of industrial affairs. He would be a very weak operator in that area. He would have absolutely no idea. Instead of having something constructive coming from the Liberal Party—it is interesting to see former Liberals smiling to themselves for whatever reason——

**An Honourable Member** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT:** Members heard a lot of that sort of nonsense from the member for Nundah. He said that contractors were working in all areas of Government responsibility. Everybody knows that. He should tell us something new. But he certainly did not canvass the difficulties of having contractors working in the electricity supply industry. I will get on to that subject later in my speech.

The honourable member for Nundah criticised the idea of a national grid. It was pointed out by the honourable member for Nudgee that Gladstone operators voluntarily ensured the continuity of supply to the Boyne smelter. I thought that was a particularly good point from the shadow Minister for Mines and Energy. Of course, he is an extremely good man who understands the industrial situation and is able to put forward a case very well, just as other Opposition members have already done.

The present dispute is one of the worst industrial situations the State has ever seen. It has been orchestrated by the Premier alone. One has only to look at the Ministers sitting opposite to see how far the Premier will go in his destructive attitude to the industry of this State.

I have listened with great interest to Opposition members talking about the financial chaos that this State finds itself in and the fact that the Premier has tried to take the heat off the Government by exacerbating this industrial dispute. He was very successful in doing that. Of course, in the end, everything will come out and it will be known. His role will be noted very keenly by historians. There is no doubt that it has been a very destructive role.

I was appalled at the way in which the Premier abused parliamentary practice and used unparliamentary language. He was not challenged in that regard by any Government

member. The Premier did not give any explanation of the industrial situation. All he did was direct a tirade of abuse towards the people involved in the dispute, Opposition members and the union representatives who have been constructively trying to find a solution to the dispute.

The Premier was totally beaten by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton), who has adopted a statesmanlike stance throughout this dispute. I am proud of the way in which the Leader of the Opposition has performed. It has been an exceptional performance.

**An Opposition Member:** The next Premier of Queensland.

**Mr SCOTT:** There is no doubt that he will be the next Premier of Queensland. He has been ably aided by the shadow Ministers and the Opposition back-bench members. He stood before the television cameras of the Australian Broadcasting Commission and said, "A solution is about to be reached." I was proud of the Leader of the Opposition at that stage. I was also proud of the union movement, which had adopted a conciliatory attitude and was prepared to go to the negotiating table.

**Mr Lingard** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT:** At least I am proud of what I stand for. I have never changed sides. I have never deserted the union movement or my side of politics. That is more than can be said for many Government members. They should not talk to me about personal pride. I have personal pride, and I am happy about that.

The Premier's nose was completely out of joint with the announcement by the Leader of the Opposition. He was like a little boy who had been beaten and was going to take his marbles home. That attitude was apparent in what the Premier did today. He moved a motion, which I am certain will be rejected by all honourable members.

Many business people are against what the Premier is doing but, because of their own ideology, they have remained silent. They know that if they do not give token support for the stance that the Premier has adopted, they will not get any crumbs from the Government. Big business in this State takes that servile role.

**Mr Miller:** What will these business people get from the unions? Some sort of security in the future?

**Mr SCOTT:** I would not expect the honourable member for Ithaca, with his background, to have the slightest understanding of the matter. He is probably an exploiter of labour and one of those people who have been against the union movement right from the start. We know what business people get from the union movement. They get a stable work situation. The union movement is responsible for the good and adequate conditions that workers enjoy. Benefits flow to the business people, but the honourable member would be too foolish to grasp that idea. It is not worth while taking any interjections from him.

**Mr Lingard:** Has that happened in Victoria?

**Mr SCOTT:** Yes, it has. I am glad that the honourable member mentioned Victoria. The Victorian Labor Government will win the election on Saturday and the honourable member will eat crow next Tuesday. I will be able to remind him of his statements.

The Premier has attempted to destroy the union movement. That point has been well made by the Leader of the Opposition and other Opposition speakers. Unfortunately, it is possible to see a great parallel between the actions of this Government and those of fascist political parties. It is impossible to resile from that conclusion. That is the way in which fascist dictatorships have sprung up.

If certain Government members had their way, this State would be plunged into right-wing totalitarianism. The majority of Queenslanders do not want to see that happen.

Many people know that they benefit directly from the efforts of unions. Other people who are condemnatory of unions simply do not know where their wage rises and improved working conditions come from. I urge those people to sit back and try to work out why they receive the benefits that flow on to them. Of course, those benefits come from the union movement. All honourable members enjoy that same privilege.

The Queensland State Service Union and the Professional Officers Association are among the white collar unions that are concerned with the level of pay of their members in the higher echelons of the public service. Those white collar workers pay their union dues and the unions go in to bat for them in the same way in which the blue collar unions, such as the Electrical Trades Union, the Municipal Officers Association and other active trade unions, go in to bat for their members. Honourable members benefit from the efforts of trade union people. Our own wages and working conditions have a distinct relationship to the salaries and conditions for which union people fight.

**Mr Austin:** That's nonsense.

**Mr SCOTT:** It is perfectly true. I remind the Minister for Health (Mr Austin) that members of Parliament do not get anything from the big-hearted Premier and Treasurer.

**Mr Austin:** How does your pay compare with the pay of members of the MOA?

**Mr SCOTT:** I could not tell the Minister how much a week I receive.

The role of trade unions is to fight for the welfare of their members, and that is what they do in Queensland. The Government is trying to destroy them. I urge those people who voice unfounded criticisms of unions to look a little further than the end of their nose. Those people would learn where the working conditions of Queenslanders come from, and that is despite the efforts of the Government. The last thing that I would like to see is a move towards the American system. In the United States, workers receive as little as \$3.50 an hour and are required to make up their wages by compulsory tipping. That is the sort of thing that this Government would like to force the union movement in Australia and Queensland to accept.

**Mr Milliner:** Penalty rates in the tourist industry are next. The Government would like to get rid of those.

**Mr SCOTT:** Yes, penalty rates and all the conditions that are enjoyed by workers in this State will be under attack if the Premier and Treasurer is able to force the power industry unions to their knees. He will not stop with the power industry unions; he will attack every union in this State. That is because the Premier hates all unionists.

I digress to make the point that his Ministers are not of the same mind. I have heard some remarkable reports about Ministers of the Crown who rang power station operators trying to put pressure on them with a little gentle abuse and telling them what would happen if they did not toe the line. I have been led to believe that, in the last day or so, the wheels have gone full circle and the same Ministers are crawling abjectly to power station operators to get them to change their minds and accept the no-strike clause. Of course, the power station operators will not accept such a clause.

**Mr Casey:** Are those Ministers the group that they are calling the spineless 17?

**Mr SCOTT:** That is right. They get on the telephone, one after the other, and check up on what each one has said so that they can ensure that no-one says the wrong thing.

I turn now to the safety aspects of this dispute. Many honourable members have informed the House that the Government uses contract labour widely. There is no doubt about that, and, in some classes of work, it may not be unreasonable to use contractors. The Opposition does not disagree with that. Members on the Government side cannot say that Opposition members are taking a stupid stance; we know that contract labour

is used. Opposition members know also that the work performed by contractors must be given close scrutiny because often it is only half done or is poorly carried out.

**Mr Miller:** You are talking about ETU members.

**Mr SCOTT:** I am talking about many of the contractors in this State. Their workers do their best to carry out a first-class job; there is no doubt about that.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! I have been very tolerant, but I remind honourable members that persistent interjections are not allowed.

**Mr SCOTT:** Despite my earlier comments, I have allowed Government members to distract me, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I thank you for your guidance.

I am not talking about the workers who work for the contractors. They do as good a job as they are allowed to do. However, their employers lay down the law about how long they may spend on a job and the quality of the work that is performed. That is one of the problems with contract labour. The electricity supply industry is the worst industry in which to allow that to happen. The easiest thing for engineers is to write a contract for the easiest and most profitable work. The Opposition has acknowledged that contractors work in the electricity industry, and those contractors do that work. They do the new construction work and are used quite widely by all regional boards in the State. On many occasions regional board linesmen have to fix up the mistakes and poor workmanship of the contractors, who are the bane of the electricity boards.

Because the boards are not allowed to employ sufficient linesmen, they have to use contractors. That is very bad because faulty work is being carried out by many line work contractors, and linesmen are being required to repair that faulty workmanship. In addition, young trainee linesmen are not getting new work on which to practise. They are being given all the roughest work and all the work for which the engineers cannot be bothered writing out a contract. I see my fellow engineer across the Chamber agreeing with my fairly mild criticism of the engineering fraternity. Those engineers are required by their employers, the regional boards, to follow that line. In fact, I was pleased to learn that the Association of Professional Engineers Australia issued a statement that it would oppose any move to have any of its members act as strike-breakers and scabs by going in to operate the power houses.

**Mr Austin:** I was never a member of that association.

**Mr SCOTT:** No, the Minister for Health would never have been a member of the APEA because he would not have had the guts to pay union dues and to support the people who fought for his wage rises. He is one of the many people in the industry who hang onto the coat-tails of others and accept the working conditions and wage rates that have been fought for by dues-paying unionists. I know the style of the Minister for Health, who worked as a paid engineer for quite a long time. He is one of the gutless people who will not pay union dues.

**Ms Warner:** Would that have been the same wage that he received when he became a member of this Government?

**Mr SCOTT:** Yes. Of course, the evidence has been brought forward in this House on many occasions. However, at the present time I will stick to his role as an engineer.

I would like Government members to tell me who goes out on stormy nights to carry out repairs to power lines. At midnight, when a storm is raging and electricity supply has been cut to a number of consumers for a couple of hours, transformers have been blown hell, west and crooked and poles have been blown over, who carries out the repairs? When do the contractors come in? They start at 8 o'clock in the morning and do the new construction work; they certainly will not do the work resulting from

storms. However, as employers, members of the Government, who must take collective responsibility for the Government, expect working people from the trade union movement to carry out those repairs. I know of the work that the trade union members carry out in the middle of a stormy night. As I said, it is just simply not good enough to bring contractors in on an unrestricted basis.

In the electricity supply industry, safety is going to the wall. I have been told by linesmen, the people who know their jobs, that not enough maintenance work is being carried out on poles, for example, and that the regional boards are prevented from employing enough men to carry out the work. As a result, the standard of the electrical reticulation system in this State has deteriorated greatly. Poles are rotting under ground level and crossarms are rotting. Not enough maintenance work is being carried out. That is what the Government promotes and supports, and it worries conscientious linesmen working for the electricity authorities because an attempt will be made to blame them when disasters occur. What about the circuit-breakers that are being used so frequently during load-shedding? They need maintenance. Such lack of maintenance is dangerous and is being condoned by the Government. Because of the load-shedding that has been occurring, the circuit-breakers need maintenance, which is required after a certain number of operations.

**Mr Price:** They are the circuit-breakers over there.

**Mr SCOTT:** Yes, that is right. They are circuit-breakers which are largely open. They are disconnected from the feelings of the ordinary people of this State.

There is a serious safety worry. I was rather interested to hear the member for Nudgee read the screed that came from the general manager of SEQEB about the way that board intends to cut down on the employment of staff in vital areas. One of the things that will suffer is safety training. When line work is being undertaken, it is essential that the people at the foot of the ladder know as much as the person working at the top of the pole about safety procedures and what has to be done if an accident occurs at the top of the pole. All these things are building up in the electricity supply industry and they are worrying many people. I am not a disaster-monger, but I am worried about the practices that regional boards are forced to adopt and the fact that they are not able to employ adequate staff.

The member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) referred to an accident involving an elevating work platform. If the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) was present in the Chamber, I would ask him whether a man who did not know how to safely operate that apparatus raised a man into live conductors and, as a result, injured him seriously.

Senior officers of the SEQEB should be ashamed of what they have done to employees. I will elaborate on certain matters of serious concern that have been brought to the attention of members of the Opposition by employees of SEQEB. Senior officers of the SEQEB asked employees to inform on other employees who had infringed the electricity rationing order. Employees were moved unwillingly from the country to the city to take up positions that badly needed to be filled in the city.

In Gympie, the board told union members that they could return to work without conditions for which they had fought. If the employees did that, they would then be scabs. A great deal of pressure was put on workers to get them to return to work and to make an apology to the strike-breakers. I know that good unionists would never stoop to that level. That performance would never be obtained from members of the Electrical Trades Union.

Some employees were given a questionnaire. At first, they had to swear allegiance to the SEQEB. The SEQEB tried to force a man with an artificial leg and arthritis to go out with a line gang and climb poles. Some employees without proper qualifications were sent to the Electrical Workers Board to obtain certification.

**Mr Lingard** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT:** That is the sort of thing that the Government requires senior officers on electricity boards to do. The honourable member for Fassifern would not know about that.

Armed security guards were sent to workers' homes to collect issued clothing and to try to intimidate the wives of workers. Supervisors were sent to houses to harass wives by insisting that the supervisors see the employees. SEQEB has a history of refusing to pay benefits such as payments for minimum hours worked and cab fare entitlements when employees have worked for long hours or have ceased duty at times outside normal working hours. Three men were sacked for allegedly attacking a 15-stone foreman. Employees have been bullied over doctors' certificates. I could go on and on about the practices that have been forced onto SEQEB workers.

**Mr Casey:** They tell me that they are taking over the Hamilton Cold Stores to build gas ovens.

**Mr SCOTT:** That would be very interesting.

The time available to honourable members in this debate is likely to be limited. I would like my colleagues to be given an opportunity to speak. However, I point out that, because of the industrial dispute, the Premier and Treasurer did not go to New Guinea to be present at the signing of the Border Treaty Agreement. I will be waiting for the first opportunity to amplify what happened. Once again, he has let down the people of Torres Strait.

The Premier and Treasurer is selling land to all sorts of questionable people. I would like to raise the question of whether or not "Silver Plains" land is being sold to a suspected drug-dealer. The land is certainly being sold to someone who has a drug conviction.

**A Government Member** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT:** It has a great deal to do with this debate. While the Premier and Treasurer is involving himself unnecessarily in an industrial dispute that he has exacerbated, the State is falling apart. Queensland is suffering from the ill-effects of bad government. Ordinary people must put up with that. I would like to deal at great length with those matters. However, I am aware of the need for other Opposition members to speak in this debate.

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs) (8.29 p.m.): It is very clear that today honourable members have heard the ALP support law-breakers and support the rights of the minority, not the rights of the majority. The ALP says that it supports small business. Yet, put to the test, it goes against the subcontractors; it does not support those ETU members who work for subcontractors.

In addition, the ALP has been shown quite clearly to be not humane at all because, on the night of the storm that hit Brisbane, 80 000 people were left without power and Mr Madden argued till 9 o'clock in the Industrial Commission about whether or not power should be restored. Indeed, an order had to be issued against the ETU. These are the type of union barbarians who are trying to lead the union movement today. I say without fear of contradiction that when the ALP goes into a corner, it goes into a corner of the law-breakers, and it wants this Government to allow them to continue breaking the law.

The ETU has rejected a total of five recommendations made on 5 December 1984, 8 January 1985, 6 February 1985, 10 February 1985 and 12 February 1985, and two orders made on 7 February 1985 and 14 February 1985. The Municipal Officers Association, the Amalgamated Metals Foundry and Shipwrights Union, the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers, and the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Union have rejected one recommendation made on 12 February 1985 and one order made on 14 February 1985.

I say again that the evidence is there right from the start as to what those organisations have done. I table a document which lists in chronological order what has happened and what the unions have done.

*Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the document on the table.*

**Mr Casey:** Could the Minister possibly change his tone now and again?

**Mr LESTER:** If the tone of the honourable member for Mackay had been used to try to help to resolve this strike, everybody would have been much better off. I do not think that the honourable member for Mackay should make such inane comments.

The power industry dispute, which was brought on by the unions, has meant a loss to Queensland of approximately \$600m. That amount of money was lost to the general community through wages and lost production and exports. The coal industry is still on strike. These types of losses are non-recoverable. I cite overseas tourists as an example. They have been encouraged to visit Australia. In recent times tourists have been greatly inconvenienced. I have heard of many instances in which tourists will return to their countries and tell everyone not to visit Australia because of the behaviour of the unions.

The unions do not seem to realise that, by their actions, they are causing a serious impediment to future employment prospects. For every 20 tourists who come into this country, one new job is created. Quite clearly, the tourism industry has a great capacity to expand and to help young people to find employment. I say without fear of contradiction that the ALP and the unions are dead against anything that will help anybody.

The Government has had to take a stand. Quite clearly, the unions are trying to become the de facto leaders of our nation. They think that they can rule this country without having been elected by the people. Governments, not unions, are elected by the people. This Government will put a stop to the so-called efforts of the unions to become the de facto rulers of this country, and hurting so many people in the process. Unions have no right to make innocent people suffer through no fault of their own. For example, I cite the industrial thuggery that has beset this great nation in recent times, resulting in great losses to all. It is important that the Government outline the reasons why it has taken its stand.

Recently the Japanese Prime Minister was in Australia at the invitation of our own Prime Minister (Mr Hawke). We were to demonstrate to the Japanese once and for all that we were a reliable supplier of goods at a competitive price. What happened when the Japanese Prime Minister was in New South Wales? Right before his eyes, the Hunter Valley coal trains were put out of action by a strike. The New South Wales Premier (Mr Wran) had to threaten to sack the striking train-drivers. He could not resolve the dispute. The dispute has been resolved for the time being—but after the Japanese Prime Minister returned home. He has been left with a full realisation of the effect of the unions in Australia.

The Builders Labourers Federation has caused terrible problems in Australia. Recently the employers were bludgeoned into submission over a national superannuation scheme. Employers are to contribute \$11 per week per employee. They were induced into that agreement on the promise of industrial peace for ever. That is the sixth time that industrial peace has been promised in return for improved conditions. Since that time there has been enormous industrial disruption in the building industry, which has been flat on its back in Sydney and Melbourne and, to some extent, in Brisbane.

The Federal Government, too, has had its problems. At about the time the Japanese Prime Minister was in Australia, Federal public servants refused to collect revenue. The Federal Government decided to attack the dispute in a peaceful, conciliatory manner. Where did that get it? The dispute continued for a long time. That Government's revenue has been seriously impaired. Without doubt, that is the reason why the Australian dollar has fallen to its present low levels. People overseas realise that the Government attempting to run the country could not collect its revenue. Is it any wonder that the dollar fell?

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mr LESTER:** Opposition members can laugh and do whatever else they like. The Labor Party is renowned for laughing at serious problems. The loss of revenue to the Federal Government will affect the nation by harming job opportunities. All the ALP can do is laugh about young people being put out of work and not being able to get help. That is an illustration of the mentality of the ALP members, who are showing clearly that they should not be in Opposition and certainly not in Government. They are not responsible. They should not even be in Parliament. The polls taken in relation to the power dispute should convince them of that.

Industrial thuggery exists right across our nation. The losers are the decent families. Employment prospects of bread-winners and their families are hurt immeasurably by what is happening. Since 1963, unions have become more and more militant. During that period, wages have increased seven times, taxation has risen 44 times, unemployment has gone up from 1.5 per cent to over 10 per cent and inflation has risen from 3.5 per cent to 10 per cent. If Australia continues on its present course—a course being sought by the unions—we will find ourselves out the back door. However, members of the ALP in this Parliament support the diminution of job opportunities by sticking to those people who break the law.

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! Persistent interjections and shouting have now reached the stage at which I should intervene.

**Mr LESTER:** I thank you for calling Opposition members to order, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Government had no alternative to intervening in the recent power dispute. It could not sit back while 12 000 homes were without power, some for up to a week. The Government had to take action to ensure that justice was done to those consumers. When the Industrial Commission issued an order and the Electrical Trades Union refused to repair the lines, the Government waited all week-end until the Monday to give the people disobeying the order a chance to think about it and to report for work.

The Government could not let that matter go on any longer, and when the men refused to go back to work, the Government had no alternative to employing people who would work. That surprised the unions, because it could not believe that well over 2 300 people applied for jobs. The unions could not believe that the restoration of power lines would be achieved in a normal fashion.

However, not to be outdone, the power station operators decided that they would get into the act. They then defied the order that had been made by the State Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission providing for full restoration of power. Again, the Government had no option other than to take a tougher stand, and no apologies are made for the fact that Government action has now moved into the court sphere.

I make it very very clear indeed that the Government—

**An Opposition Member:** This is a pathetic speech.

**Mr LESTER:** This is not a pathetic speech.

It is very clear indeed that the Government has taken on the unions for the simple reason that the unions have defied law and order in their endeavour to support a minority view, thereby seeking to go against the great majority of Queenslanders.

I now turn my attention to the striking coal-miners and those who would support them. I say quite categorically to the striking coal-miners that they should go back to work, because they are only penalising themselves, their families and the chances that their children may have to obtain work in future. Because many of the people who are

supporting the coal-miners have already gone back to work, nothing can be achieved by the coal-mining unions having their members remain on strike. It is clear that the strike is absolutely futile and that it will cost Queensland's economy a great deal of money, which will, in turn, affect the families of the striking coal-miners as well.

Moreover, the union leaders who direct the men to remain on strike are still receiving wages. Many of the wives and families of coal-miners who live at Blackwater, Moranbah, Dysart and Tieri are horrified at union attempts to make husbands and fathers stay on strike. The families of the coal-miners who are on strike are not in favour of what is happening, and the unions are certainly misleading the coal-miners.

I point out that industrial strike action will wreck the opportunity for all, and all that opportunity may bring. I wish to comment on the press article that has appeared in today's "Telegraph" I point out how inaccurate and devious that article is. It should be treated with the true contempt with which it is written, and I will not take the matter any further.

Many people have asked me why the Government has taken the unions on at this time, and why has the Government not waited. If the Government waited, probably more strikes would occur in the middle of winter when old people would find conditions very difficult and young mothers with families would experience great difficulty in coping. At least by standing up to the unions now, in the interests of justice, the Government may at least avoid an occurrence that could bring tragedy for so many people in the future.

I comment on the action taken by the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union, which is an example of a Federal union that is attempting to buy into State industrial matters. The refusal of unions to connect telephones and reconnect those that had broken down, thereby preventing access—something that the Opposition claims to uphold—by the people who wish to talk to their member of Parliament and seek assistance, is the type of thing that the ALP condones and supports.

What about the TAB, and those people who have had to be put off work for the moment because the Telecom unions will not service the telephone betting facilities at the TAB? What about the rights of somebody who wants to place a telephone bet on a racehorse? Opposition members talk about the rights of all people, yet they are taking away the rights of TAB employees. Opposition members have been deathly silent as regards standing up to the Telecom unions and at least suggesting that they should give everybody concerned a fair go. I did not believe that in Queensland the day would come when the rights and freedoms of people would be treated in that manner, yet that is what the ALP is doing in supporting the efforts of the Telecom unions.

What have ALP members got to say about the unions not repairing the lifts here at Parliament House? After all, they said it was good for the Premier to walk up 23 flights of stairs. That was not too much trouble for him because he is so fit, but other people, even members of the ALP, were unable to do so. I will not name those people, but they certainly did not appreciate the union's inaction.

**Mr Wilson:** Did you announce on the ABC that you had the lift working in order to get me up the stairs this morning?

**Mr LESTER:** The way the honourable member was puffing and going on, I thought he was going to die. He was in a terrible mess. He was huffing and puffing and blowing, and I got very worried about his safety. I would hate to think that the antics of the unions, supported by the ALP, were responsible for the honourable member's untimely death. After all, he has had a couple of heart attacks. Instead of trying to have a go at me in this Chamber, he had better settle down or he will have another heart attack.

**Mr WILSON:** I rise to a point of order. I understand that the Minister made a statement on the ABC this morning that he had the lifts fixed in order to get me up the stairs last Friday. That is a deliberate fabrication.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! The honourable member has made his point. The Minister did not make that statement here tonight.

**Mr WILSON:** He just repeated it a while ago.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I did not hear the Minister repeat it.

**Mr WILSON:** You read "Hansard" tomorrow. Did you or did you not make that statement?

**Mr Lester:** I suggest that the honourable member——

**Mr WILSON:** Never mind about you, pop——

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I did not hear the Minister make that statement. I am sure that there is no valid point of order.

**Mr WILSON:** I assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that I will get a transcript from the ABC in the morning and we will find out what the Minister has done.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The ABC has nothing to do with this Chamber. The Minister has not made a statement here. I call the Minister.

**Mr Wilson:** He told a lie.

**Mr LESTER:** I did not tell a lie. I made it very clear that several people were having great difficulty in getting up the stairs. Mr Wilson was one of them. He cannot deny that he was having great difficulty in getting up the stairs.

**Mr WILSON:** I rise to a point of order. I ask that the statement that I was the one who had to be helped up the stairs be withdrawn. If you want to know the truth, I met him on the stairs and he was gasping at the window pane and he asked me did I want help.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The debate has become quite ridiculous. I have made a ruling. There is no point of order. I call the Minister.

**Mr LESTER:** I can certainly assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that I was not gasping at the window pane, but I certainly did feel a little concern for Mr Wilson. But I think we will get on with the show.

**Honourable Members interjected.**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Settle down! We cannot have continuous uproar. I call the Minister.

**Mr LESTER:** I ask the ALP and the unions what they think of the rights of the 2.5 million people who were held to ransom by the unions who broke the law? That is what Opposition members have supported today; the holding of 2.5 million people in this State to ransom by people who broke the law. After all, the people have been held to ransom by a small group of union militants who have used industrial blackmail. It is very clear to me that the ALP has placed itself once and for all on the side of those people who break the law and are against humanity and all that is decent.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (8.50 p.m.):** In my seven years as a member of this Assembly, I have not witnessed a worse introduction to a debate than that made today by the Premier of this State or a worse contribution to a debate by people who consider themselves as representing the Government of Queensland.

Many members in this Parliament can look back much further than I can at the Premiers throughout Australia who, regardless of political allegiances, have made a considerable contribution to Australian and State politics. I cannot remember seeing a

more parlous or disgusting performance than that given by the Premier of Queensland during the last couple of weeks.

For example, the Premier said, "You can't whip a dead horse into action." If Government members thought that the horse was down, I point out to them that it is not dead. It is up and running. The Premier spoke about mouldy bread. The only crusty thing in this Parliament is that gentleman whose poses as the Premier of Queensland. He made a joke about scrambling an egg and then putting it back into the shell. I can honestly say that the only comparison that I could make with a scrambled egg in this Parliament is the mentality of the Queensland Premier.

Basically, the Premier has become nothing more than a political eunuch in Queensland. I am beginning to feel a little bit ashamed to be a Queensland. I am becoming sick and tired of listening to the statements from the Premier, who is not present in the Chamber tonight. Last week, he said that each night before he goes to bed he prays on a different page of the Bible and asks for guidance in looking after the interests of his fellow-man. I do not profess to be a reader of the Bible, but if the Premier is making those sorts of prayers each evening he would need a Bible about five times the size of any Bible that I have seen. The man is a hypocrite. He is becoming a laughing-stock in this State and in Australia.

On the international scene, the antics in which the Premier has engaged in the last couple of months are a clear indication that he is a man who, in his later years, is starting to face a very serious problem. On occasions, members make jibes across the Chamber at other members for whom they have some respect. Quite frankly, the antics in which Government members have allowed their leader to engage during the last two weeks are the most disgusting that I have seen from the leader of any political party in Australia. If Government members think that that is not true, I ask them to talk to some of their own colleagues who in the last 10 days, in bars and clubs, have been expressing extreme concern to journalists and other people about the antics of the Premier in the Cabinet.

It is a well-known and conceded fact that the Premier and Treasurer has foisted these problems upon the Government. I have been led to believe that some members of Cabinet have recognised that, because of the problems associated with the Premier, common sense is needed. However, Government members are weak-kneed, Cabinet is weak-kneed and the National Party is bereft of talent.

**Mr GUNN:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Wolston has got away with quite a bit. I draw your attention, Mr Deputy Speaker, to Standing Order No. 120. I resent what the honourable member said about Cabinet and I ask him to withdraw it.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! The Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer has asked for a withdrawal of the references to Cabinet.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I made no reference to the honourable gentleman personally. As you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, a point of order cannot be taken in that instance.

**Mr GUNN:** Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Wolston made reference to Cabinet. I am a member of Cabinet, and I ask that he withdraw the remark.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Because the Minister is a member of Cabinet, he considers the references to Cabinet to be personally offensive. I ask the honourable member for Wolston to withdraw the comment.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I withdraw it. I understand why the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer would be upset about those remarks. One has only to sit in this Chamber today and on other occasions and watch the performance of the Minister—he is supposed to know about the economic problems of this State, but he still thinks that dollars are the money used in Monopoly; he has no intimate knowledge of the State's

unemployment problems and he sits in his place and laughs and smirks and makes no contribution to debates—to know why he is upset by my remarks.

Today, the Government has launched into a deliberate and futile attempt to try to discredit the Opposition, the Australian Labor Party and the trade union movement in Queensland. Every Queenslanders should be ashamed of the performance of the National Party and the Government of this State during the dispute. Indeed, every Australian should be extremely concerned about it.

I refer to the loss of life and to the homes that have burned down. I know of a gentleman from Sunnybank who owned a bakery and who lost so much money through the dispute that he died in his sleep. I make no apology for saying that the responsibility lies directly at the feet of Government members. They have no appreciation of industrial relations. They do not know how to negotiate with the trade union movement and they have no understanding of the role of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in Australia or in this State.

I have not been surprised to learn that members of the National Party have been involved in some of the incidents that have taken place during the dispute. I refer to a person by the name of John Roberts, who was, until a few weeks ago, the president of the Chamber of Commerce in Ipswich. That local boy was a candidate for the National Party at the last State election.

**Mr Hamill:** For Ipswich West.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** As my colleague the honourable member for Ipswich said, Mr Roberts ran as a candidate for the National Party for the seat of Ipswich West. Mr Roberts controls a significant chain of hardware stores in Ipswich, and he charged pensioners, unemployed people and others \$1.35 for a candle when the lights went out. That person seeks political patronage. One week before the dispute he invited the Russian ambassador to address his local Lions or Rotary Club in Ipswich. Two weeks later he invited the ambassador for South Africa. What sort of a mixed up whiz-kid is this fellow? John Roberts will long remain in the memories of the people of Ipswich. They are people who do not forget. I for one dearly hope that he pops up as a candidate for the National Party at the next State election.

No more disgusting a performance of class crassness could be observed than that displayed by one with the name of Gabrielle Horan, a member of the National Party, a woman who poses as the president of the so-called Queensland Houswives Association. What that association has ever done for the women of Queensland, I do not know. It has done nothing; it has contributed nothing. All it has ever been is a political stooge for the party in office.

Recently she went to the city square and shockingly abused Mrs Camp, who is known by many members on this side of the House as a person with very fine principles. Honourable members can either agree with her principles or disagree with them, but she was in the city square to voice her opinion publicly. The shocking, class statements that Mrs Horan rattled off against Mrs Camp certainly tarnished Mrs Horan's image further in the minds of the community. Mrs Horan spoke for 10 minutes in the city square and objected to unions blowing up the country, but five minutes later she was at another meeting to support MX missiles blowing up the country. Where is the consistency? What an amazing charade!

I have been a member of this Assembly for seven years and have attended various functions round Brisbane which have also been attended by Mrs Horan. Quite frankly, people shy away from her; they do not want to know her. She has become an embarrassment to the National Party. I think that the best terminology that I can use to describe her is that she is nothing more than an aged tart who applies pancake make-up with a brick-layer's trowel.

Today in this House many remarks have been made about the role of unions in the community. As one would expect, members from the Government side have attacked

the trade union movement. Some Government members have been the recipients of the many benefits that responsible trade unionism in this country has introduced over the years. Unions have a major role to play and will continue to do so. In this country, trade unions have been responsible for benefits such as sick pay, which the Premier and Treasurer is on record as not supporting, and superannuation, which is the right of every person in this community and which every person would dearly love to have. Trade unions have been responsible for the introduction of holiday pay and the 17½ per cent loading on holiday pay, which is once again opposed by the Premier and Treasurer. They have been responsible for the introduction in their various union organisations of things such as funeral benefit funds to assist people at times of bereavement, and for the introduction into this country of maternity leave. Surely no Government member—I refer particularly to the two female members, the member for Pine Rivers and the member for Greenslopes, on that side of the Chamber—could argue that maternity leave for women, which was won by the trade union movement, is not only deserved but also is needed to keep women in the work-force. Most important of all, the trade union movement was responsible for the introduction of the 40-hour week and will be responsible in the future for the introduction of fewer working hours as the economy declines and as unemployment increases in the State.

**Mrs Chapman** interjected.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I will take the honourable member's interjection. What is it?

**Mrs Chapman:** I am talking about maternity leave. I am saying that it goes against the economy of this country for the simple reason that you and the trade unions, with which you are closely associated, have brought it into Queensland, and as soon as people return from maternity leave, the people who had replaced them are sacked.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I am delighted to take the interjection from the honourable member for Pine Rivers. She has clearly identified herself with that ultra right-wing, ultra conservative movement from the National Party that does not support the rights of women in the community. The honourable member for Pine Rivers is clearly saying that she is a strong supporter of the old hat idea, going back to the Menzies era, of paying women baby bonuses, such as \$10, \$50, or \$100 during marked-up times, for producing children. The honourable member for Pine Rivers is out of her depth and out of time. She does nothing in this Chamber to contribute to the fine cause of women in the community.

During the debate I was disappointed with the contribution made by the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) and anything else that one might want to tack onto the end of his title. During past weeks honourable members have seen clear examples of what can only be described as scabs—I make no apology for using that term—who have tried to break the back of their fellow-trade-unionists at the job level. What a shocking example we saw today. The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing read out a diatribe. It is obvious that his speech was prepared for him by none other than Russell Grenning, his press officer, who is a member of the Australian Journalists Association. What greater act of scabbery could one find than a fellow journalist writing such sludge and slime as that launched against Quentin Dempster in this Chamber this afternoon? It was written by a member of the AJA against his union president. If that is not an act of scabbery, I will go he. The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing delivered that speech written for him. I can only imagine that in past weeks he has got carried away somewhere along the line. He has probably been kicked in the head by Prince Bourbon, his successful racehorse, and he came into this Chamber this afternoon under some pressure, obviously hoping to hold up his sagging and flagging image within the National Party by making such statements.

When he spoke about the rights of trade-unionists, he became very emotional. He spoke about the problems caused in the community by people going on strike. He referred to trade-unionists holding people to ransom. He said that he believed that the National Party should represent the views of the average Joe Blow in the community.

He cannot have it both ways and the Government cannot have it both ways; nor can the National Party. It is significant that at the same time as Government members are bagging respectable and responsible trade-unionsists in Queensland, their hands are in their pockets and they support the surgeons in New South Wales who are holding the public to ransom in their present strike. Government members also support the surgeons in Victoria who are attempting to pull the same trick. Government members obviously support the statement by that Queensland rural representative who appeared on television only two nights ago and said that while the power strike was on it was a great time for people to reflect on the fact that the primary producer is the backbone of this State, and that, if he had his way, all beef-producers should go out on strike and farmers should not provide beef, sugar, wheat or anything else.

It would be very interesting to find out whether people such as rural representatives actually have the guts to put into train what they feel should be done. The Minister for Primary Industries, who administers his portfolio in such a parlous way, has a track record that needs to be examined very closely. I would love to see those primary producers go out. In fact, I will do what the Premier did and challenge them to go out. But they will not go out, because they are lackeys of the National Party. They will not stand up and be counted.

The Minister spoke also about union thuggery. Since 1969 I have been associated with the Labor Party and the trade union movement in this State. I worked for ten months as an organiser with the Miscellaneous Workers Union. Not only did I work for that union, but also I have been closely associated with the trade union movement, as have other members. I can look any member on the Government side in the eye and say that I have never yet seen an instance of, or come into personal contact with, what could be described as union thuggery.

Obviously, Government members have consulted professional advertising agents in trying to develop their current theme, and in talking about union bosses. It sounds fine. It conjures up images that people probably do not like. That is what the Government has been doing, and it is obvious to the most casual observer. In the past the Government has treated the electors of Queensland as casual observers, but on this occasion, people are starting to think. Queenslanders are beginning to wonder about the wisdom and ability of the National Party Government and the direction in which it is taking them.

During the last 10 to 14 days, my colleagues on the Opposition side have not had one phone call abusing the trade union movement.

**Mr Borbidge:** Come down to the Gold Coast.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** What could I expect on the Gold Coast? I know what reaction I could expect from people on the Gold Coast, who have elected such an inept member to represent them in this Parliament.

Gold Coast residents are conservative people, worried about the almighty dollar. Many of them are originally from interstate. They settle in that belt of Queensland, rip the financial guts out of this State and put very little back into it. I make no apology for saying that. However, it would be on the Gold Coast only that that point of view could be found. The honourable member for Surfers Paradise should talk to some of his National Party colleagues. Members on the Opposition side of the Chamber have been told that they have been receiving floods of phone calls in their electorate offices protesting against the actions of the National Party Government. The number of phone calls and telegrams led to a number of Cabinet Ministers trying to take some action in the Cabinet meeting yesterday and the previous Monday to try to steer the Premier and Treasurer off his crazy confrontationist course. Ultimately, they collapsed in a heap. They did not have the intestinal fortitude to stand up to him and speak some common sense.

Government members talk about union thuggery. My colleague the honourable member for Cook (Mr Scott) put his finger on it. How has the Government handled

this dispute? It has hired thugs, inadvertently, from private security firms, particularly in the Brisbane metropolitan area, who have been arriving at people's doorsteps at unholy hours at night, dressed in full uniform with revolver on the hip, which they are licensed to carry. The husband may be away at a union meeting or down on a picket line. Those people have said to the woman of the house, "We want your husband's boots, we want his trousers and we want his shirt." They have been demanding his uniform. That is intimidatory. It is a stand-over, thuggish act. The Government is totally and absolutely responsible for such actions.

I look over my shoulder and I see five members of the Liberal Party in the Chamber. An hour ago there were none. I give credit to the honourable member for Redcliffe (Mr White) for entering the Chamber 50 minutes ago. Tonight, members of the Liberal Party are playing the same role as they have played throughout the dispute, the role of a phantom party. It has been said that the Green Party is standing at the Brisbane City Council election. Liberal members ought to rename themselves the Green Party. They are so far into the wilderness that that name is much more apt. The apologetic leader of that shameful group of six made statements about the trade union movement. He bagged the trade union movement. It is interesting to read statements by the member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) when he was Minister for Employment and Labour Relations. I refer to a media release from him issued on Wednesday, 22 October 1982—

"Employment and Labour Relations Minister Sir William Knox today praised Queensland union chiefs for 'showing good leadership in difficult times'.

'Australian workers have a lot more to gain through sensitive direction by their elected officers rather than through physical attacks on the institution of democracy itself,' Sir William added.

Sir William was referring to a decision announced this week by Queensland Trades and Labor Council president Mr Harry Hauenschild that affiliated unions would continue to seek their wage claims through the State Industrial Commission system."

A very short memory has been displayed by Sir William Knox this evening.

I refer to another statement by Sir William on Tuesday, 20 April 1982—

"Queensland has created 45 per cent of Australia's 76,800 jobs in the latest 12 month period—"

**Mr Hamill:** Times have changed.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** Yes, they have changed. My word they have. That was a statement by the then Employment and Labour Relations Minister (Sir William Knox). The statement continues—

"It's a staggering result which could only have been achieved through a combination of good sense and goodwill by unions and management in this State,' Sir William added.

The Minister added that he 'categorically disassociated himself from claims' —"

**Sir William Knox** interjected.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** That is all right. The statement continues—

"I think Queensland union leaders in recent times have quite properly balanced legitimate demands of their member with the overall needs of the community. Working days lost through disputes are currently at a relatively low level in Queensland."

The lulu of them all is a transcript from the Channel 2 news at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, 10 March 1981, in which Sir William Knox said—

"But the majority of trade unions and trade unionists are working sincerely in the interests of their members and in the public's."

The interviewer then asked—

“Sir William, overall, are you happy with the way trade unions are being run, on the whole?”

Sir William Knox answered—

“Yes, indeed. They’re run extremely well and we have a number of ways of knowing this because of the contact which my department has with the trade unions, and they’re very efficiently run in most cases, and their policies are very outgoing, concerned with the public good as well as the good of their members, and we’re very fortunate to have a very strong and solid trade union movement in this country.”

That statement originated from a bogus member of a non-existent political party in the Parliament who, at least two years ago when he was a Minister, had lauded the trade union movement. The honourable member for Nundah spoke years ago about the fine contributions made by the trade union movement, yet this evening he rose to his feet to slight them, denigrate them, and accuse them of irresponsibility.

The most important contribution made by the honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) to the debate this evening was to prove that the six poor nothings of the Liberal Party have nothing to contribute and are lost souls in the wilderness. When the time comes for the next State election to be held, whether it be in six, 12 or 18 months’ time, the Liberal Party will be decimated even further.

The Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) treated honourable members to one of the worst diatribes and mish-mashes that has ever been heard in the Parliament from a Minister or an acting Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs. I am firmly of the opinion that the Minister thinks that “industrial relations” means nothing more than an affair in the work-place. The great contribution and great role played by the Minister in this debate came to light when he appeared on television and made an open admission that he was responsible for bringing scab labour into the Parliamentary Annexe so that the lifts that take the Premier and Treasurer to the 23rd floor could be fixed.

**Mr LESTER:** I rise to a point of order. I find the remarks made by the honourable member for Wolston very offensive. I have been on television on a number of occasions during the strike and I have been quoted in the newspapers and on the radio. The assertion made by the honourable member for Wolston is totally inaccurate. I find it offensive, and I ask him to withdraw those comments.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I withdraw reference to the Minister appearing once only on television. He assures me that he appeared more than once. However, I certainly cannot withdraw the fact that the Minister appeared on television——

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! The remark is either withdrawn or not, and a conditional withdrawal cannot be made.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I cannot withdraw the remark that conveyed the impression that he appeared on television the other night, because it is a fact that he appeared on television and admitted to employing scab labour to fix the lifts that take the Premier and Treasurer to the 23rd floor. I now ask the Minister whether I am correct in saying that. Did the Minister say that or not? Of course the Minister said it, and he knows that he did.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister does not have to answer questions put by the honourable member for Wolston.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** Of course, that is true. However, it is an admission of the Minister’s guilt.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the honourable member for Wolston. The Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs is not obliged to answer questions. Honourable members will have the opportunity to question the Minister at question-time. I call on the honourable member for Wolston to continue his speech.

**Mr LESTER:** I rise to a point of order——

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** The speech made by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs was the greatest mish-mash of political garbage that has ever been offered to the Parliament. The person who poses as a Minister and who came into the House——

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr LESTER:** I find those remarks offensive. The honourable member for Wolston did not withdraw his remarks properly and furthermore, to be more precise, I point out that I made no comments about scab labour. I ask that those offensive comments be withdrawn in total.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister has outlined specifically what he is asking the honourable member for Wolston to withdraw. The Minister has stated that he finds the words “scab labour” offensive and he says that at no time did he make any admissions. I ask the honourable member for Wolston to make an unconditional withdrawal of those remarks.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I withdraw the remarks I made about scab labour.

The Minister did appear on television one night recently and admit that his major contribution during this entire dispute had been to bring labour into Parliament House to fix the lifts so that the Premier could travel to the twenty-third floor. That was done while other people were out on strike.

**Mr LESTER:** I rise to a point of order. I find those remarks offensive, too, because the honourable member is taking them out of context. I made no comment that my only contribution during the strike was to do that. I did much more than that, in the press and everywhere else. I ask that any inference I find offensive be withdrawn in total.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister finds the remarks offensive. I ask the honourable member to withdraw.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I withdraw the things the Minister finds problems with, but the fact is that he has made absolutely no positive contribution during this dispute. The Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs has sat back and been prepared——

**Mr LESTER:** I rise to a point of order again. The honourable member is not telling the truth. I have made many contributions till all hours of the night. I find those remarks inaccurate and offensive, and I ask that that type of inference be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Before I ask the member for Wolston to withdraw, I would like to say that he has been asked to withdraw and has continued to prosecute a quarrel on this issue. I warn him. I ask him to withdraw and then proceed with his speech.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I find it very hard to come to grips with that ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker. I respect what you are saying, but I am merely making the point that the person who is Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs in this State, somebody who at a time of crisis such as this is responsible for looking after the problem, has not, in the eyes of the public, done so. The person who has been seen up front carrying the can for the Government has been the Premier. I question the role that the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs has played. I will finish on this note so that he can take as many points of order as he likes: he is incompetent, and he does not understand

the role of industrial relations in this State. Anyone listening to his speech this evening would realise that he did nothing that contributed in even a minor way towards settling the problem facing the people of Queensland.

If he wants one final word on his role and the success or otherwise of the Government, he has only to look at the figures published late last week in national newspapers and in "The Courier-Mail" showing that since the Federal Labor Government was elected and since Labor Governments have been elected in other States industrial disputation has fallen dramatically. During the time that industrial disputation has fallen dramatically in other States, under the Minister's stewardship, and with his inept, incompetent and imbecilic approach to this problem, industrial disputation in this State has risen dramatically. The Minister is to blame. He does not know his responsibilities, and he cannot do his job.

**Mr LESTER:** I rise to a point of order. I find the whole tone of those remarks—

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Wolston will cease interjecting. There is no question of my being able to adjudicate on this point of order if the honourable member continues to shout across the Chamber. I call the Minister.

**Mr LESTER:** I find the whole tone offensive. The word "imbecilic" is not correct. Obviously, the honourable member is leaving the Chamber. I will not continue with my point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Mount Gravatt.

**Mr HENDERSON** (Mount Gravatt) (9.29 p.m.): It is not my intention to engage in personal abuse or to cast general slurs on the Opposition, the unions, the Government or anyone else. What I want to do, firstly, is to ask honourable members to reflect on the solution to a dilemma that arises from the speech made by the honourable member for Wolston. If what he said about the Premier and the Government is true, perhaps an explanation is needed of why independent surveys show that 68 per cent of all Australians believe that Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen is the most effective Premier in Australia.

The second matter that needs to be explained is why the Channel 7 poll, the Channel 9 phone-in poll and the Channel 0/"Courier-Mail" poll have shown support for the Government.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr HENDERSON:** Opposition members may care to sit quietly and wait for the results of the Gallup poll that was conducted in Queensland last week-end.

The solution to the dilemma must be that Opposition members are under the impression that the majority of Queenslanders are unmitigated, unintelligent dills. Whilst they continue to hold that political belief, they will continue to sit on the Opposition benches.

The third point that I wish to make is a simple one. There is yet another dilemma to be explained by Opposition members. It has been implied that in some way or other the members of the Electrical Trades Union who are employed by private enterprise are rather incompetent when compared with ETU members employed by SEQEB. That assertion has been made time and time again. I would like the dilemma explained. Private enterprise employs ETU members who have the same skills as ETU members who work for SEQEB. The member for Cook was wrong in criticising the employees of private contractors. They are as competent as SEQEB employees.

I have concluded that two propositions have been advanced consistently by Opposition members tonight. The first proposition would have the electorate believe and conclude that strikes and industrial unrest are unique to Queensland. The second proposition that has been advanced is that the style of Government in Queensland is

responsible for the industrial unrest. If those propositions are true, what honourable members need to do is look at the incidence of industrial unrest in other States in which there are different styles of leadership and different political parties in Government but the same or a higher incidence of strikes. If it can be proved that that is the case, it is logical to argue that the incidence of industrial unrest in this State is not related to the style of Government or to any unique feature in Queensland.

Recently, New South Wales faced a massive and crippling rail strike over demarcation disputes in the railway industry. It is interesting to note that the Premier of that State sacked the railway workers involved. That is an important point to note. Tonight, on television, honourable members heard that the New South Wales Labor Government has sacked a school teacher who has refused to obey an order of his employer, that is, the New South Wales Department of Education. Sacking people who disobey lawful orders is not a feature unique to the Queensland Government. In fact, it has been practised by Governments of all political persuasions. It must be agreed that the Wran Labor Government has prided itself on a so-called consensus approach. The Hawke Labor Government also prides itself on a consensus approach; yet that Government was not able to solve within its own public service ranks a massive dispute which, had it continued, would have brought this nation into a precarious financial position.

A consensus, socialist Government in France, led by President Francois Mitterand, is confronted by massive industrial disruption. Because of that dispute, millions of people—I ask honourable members to notice what I say—have taken to the streets of Paris in protest.

It has been interesting to observe the recent massive strike in the coal industry that the conservative Government of Great Britain faced. That Government stood firm. President Reagan, who heads a conservative regime in America, was faced with a strike by air-traffic controllers. They were dismissed and were replaced.

Others would argue two propositions. It could be argued that in industrial disputes, moderation is a prima facie virtue. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Governments that have fallen in the midst of industrial disruption have been moderate Governments. The classic historical example is the Heath Government of the United Kingdom.

People blame the Premier of this State for the dispute, but they are oddly short-sighted. Are Neville Wran, Robert Hawke, Francois Mitterand, Ronald Reagan, John Cain, Margaret Thatcher and Joh Bjelke-Petersen all to blame? If one is to assume that it is a style of government, one must ask oneself what it is that those people have in common. Is there something that one can put a finger on and say that that is the causal factor? The fact is that nothing exists, because they are as different as chalk and cheese.

Government members admit that, in the midst of industrial disputes, certain actions that are taken may contribute towards a dispute. However, I suspect that, in the final analysis, industrial disruption amounts to nothing more than a power play between two groups of people who feel that they have a vested interest. In those disputes that elicit massive emotion, it is unlikely that compromise and moderation will be a virtue at all.

Mr Deputy Speaker, at the feet of both you and me has to rest some of the blame for the recent dispute in Queensland, because we have been prepared to tolerate things that should never have happened. I place on record and into "Hansard" my disappointment at the actions of many people who have actively encouraged others to break the law of this land. Everyone knows that, under both Commonwealth and State legislation, secondary boycotts are illegal. Yet there are people who champion the cause of the power workers, the seamen and others who are breaking the law.

Has this nation reached a stage at which some people actually encourage others to break the law? I sincerely hope not. Why? Because these acts are clearly illegal. Why are they illegal? Because they are against the law of the land. Who says so? Finally, that must be a deliberation of a court of law. It is not the role of government; it is not the

role of unions and it is not the role of the people to say who is right and who is wrong and what is legal and what is not legal. That is the role of the courts of law. It is the rule of law that is basic to all civilised behaviour. That is what protects others from me and me from others.

Unions are not above the law. The law must apply equally to every citizen, to unions and other organisations. If that is not the case, what does this nation have? What it has is what has been witnessed in the last two weeks: anarchy and chaos.

It is not what people such as the Premier and Treasurer have said that breaks the law, it is what people have done. I am personally of the opinion that the Queensland Government could stand before the highest tribunals of this land and would never be accused of breaking any law, yet I am equally convinced that the Seamen's Union of Australia, the Transport Workers Union, the Municipal Officers Association and the Federated Engine Drivers & Firemen's Association all could stand before a tribunal of this land and be found guilty of breaching laws relating to secondary boycotts. That is not a decision that I make; that is not a decision that others can make. I hope that one day it will be made by a competent court of law.

What is sad about so much of this debate is that there is a basic maxim that can be worked towards in society: do not fix the blame, fix the problem. What have members of the Opposition achieved? What have members of the Government achieved? What has anyone achieved by standing here today and hurling insults at each other? Nothing whatsoever! We have not fixed the problem; we have attempted to fix the blame.

**Mr Casey:** It is in your hands. Fix the problem; get rid of the Premier.

**Mr HENDERSON:** That is a classic example of exactly what I am talking about.

Ultimately the rights and wrongs of people's action will be decided by a court of law. When the dust settles, each of us has to ask himself a basic question: What has been learned from this dispute? If the answer is "nothing" and if the matter goes back to square one, then the next six and a half years, just as the last six and a half years have done, will see another 11 strikes in the power industry, strikes that to date have cost the people of this State more than \$4 billion. After all, if people do not learn from the lessons of the past week, those mistakes are bound to be repeated over and over again. That this should be so is not in the interests of this State and is not in the interests of the Parliament.

What then are the lessons that should be learned? I wish to make several observations that arise from the 450 telephone calls that I have received in the last two weeks. The first observation is that unions are a necessary part of our society. That is the proposition that I am prepared to argue and that I am prepared to stand here and support. Australia has 320 registered unions and, of those, the overwhelming majority have as members decent, upstanding people. However, I cannot say that that applies to all unions, because I could not in all honesty stand here tonight and say that the Builders Labourers Federation, the Federated Ship Painters & Dockers Union, the Transport Workers Union and so on are, by their actions, earning community respect.

My second observation is that, owing to the notorious activities of a small number of unions, the overwhelming majority of Queenslanders and Australians feel that unions, such as the Electrical Trades Union and the Builders Labourers Federation—honourable members will notice that I am very specific in the unions to which I have referred—are too powerful, especially in strategic areas, and that this is not good for Queensland or Australia.

Several major unions, such as the ETU, have wreaked havoc on the general public and on both small and large business. If something is not done, the long-term effect could be a major disaster for this nation.

Australia's overseas trading capabilities are being destroyed and its market-places are becoming limited because of its industrial unreliability. That is a fact, not an opinion.

It is very pleasing to see the support given to the Queensland Government, in both quality and quantity, throughout the various media and polls, from people in this State and the whole of Australia in all walks of life, including members of unions, and from all political persuasions, including the Australian Labor Party. The people made it quite clear that the unions involved in the dispute are not acting in a way in which they expect them to act. Possible irreparable harm is being done to Australia. I ask all honourable members to read and to examine closely the polls that have appeared recently in the newspapers. It will be seen that my propositions are supported.

My third observation is that a small number of unions—I stress the word “small”—blatantly abuse their power and act irresponsibly and, at times, criminally and illegally. Those unions could perhaps be seen as power-seeking unions, because certain of their officials are concerned only with the obtaining of and the unconscionable use of the destructive powers available to them. Such unions would include the Builders Labourers Federation, the Federated Engine Drivers & Firemen’s Association and the painters and dockers union. They use their powers against the small and the weak. On a number of occasions they have used their powers against governments and the people as a whole.

I will reaffirm and keep reaffirming the fact that the majority of unions conduct their affairs in winning wages and conditions for their members in the most proper and honourable of ways by using the system of negotiation and arbitration that exists at both State and Federal levels. They should be commended for their responsible attitudes and actions. Many Government members appreciate that fact. I repeat that the majority of the 320 unions in this nation fall into that category.

For far too long the criminal, uncontrolled, irresponsible and totally destructive power-seeking unions have held Australia and its people to ransom and brought public scorn and discredit to the decent unions. Those power-seeking unions must be made answerable to the laws of the land by the law-makers, the elected Government that represents the people.

My fourth observation is that several unions have endeavoured to usurp the role of the elected Government. Governments are elected; many trade union officials are not. Let us not kid ourselves. The words are on record. The problem is not unique to Australia. If honourable members were to examine the entire history of the Thatcher Government’s confrontation with the coal industry, they would see that Arthur Scargill and members of the coal industry unions have said that their principal aim was the destruction of the democratically elected Government of the United Kingdom. I believe that a number of unions in this country have a similar aim. No group or individual should have power over a Government elected by the people.

Of course, in Canberra the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and his Cabinet are up-front as the real Government of Australia. However, in the eyes of many people, the Government is the unelected ACTU. It is difficult to decide which of the two really is the Government. Tonight, I, along with many people, could ask, “Will the real Government in Canberra please stand up? I want to know who they are and whether the people of Australia voted for them.”

In “Hansard” on page 2864 No. 9 of 1984 in a speech to this Assembly I used the following words—

“We are now at the high point of trade union power in the history of Australia because of an agreement called the prices and incomes accord, which is a formal document of agreement between the Labor Party and its constituent parent, the trade union movement. The trade union movement is running the country. We know that the union movement determined the nature of the Budget. The Government had to consult the unions about tax cuts; but, worse than that, under the accord the union movement is telling the Government what it ought to do in relation to legislation.

It is quite frightening that trade union power in Australia is at its historical high point. The union movement has a written agreement with the Federal

Government, limiting that Government's freedom to act on behalf of all the people of Australia."

I will repeat that—

"The union movement has a written agreement with the Federal Government, limiting that Government's freedom to act on behalf of all the people of Australia. No other country in the Western World is in that position."

My fifth observation is that unions are highly privileged but that those privileges, conferred on them by law, are being abused by a small number of union officials. State branches of federally registered unions have at times consistently refused to abide by the following—

1. International Labour Organization agreements;
2. the Commonwealth Crimes Act;
3. specific Federal Court decisions, the most celebrated of which is the decision by Mr Justice Northrop; and
4. State laws and arbitration Acts.

By consistently challenging State Governments to take any criminal action against them, unions are putting themselves above the law. Unfortunately, last night that was exemplified on television in a most regrettable incident in which the spokesperson for the MOA virtually challenged anyone in Queensland to exercise his legal rights against the union, stating that such action would never succeed. That situation must be changed for the long-term good of the State and its citizens. A number of union officials are holding in contempt the laws of this State, which has granted them a privilege—not a right, but a privilege—to operate within the State's borders. If the unions consistently offend, they should face the consequences of legal action.

My sixth observation is that, despite their protests to the contrary, many unions, such as the ETU, the MOA, the FED&FA, the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union and the Builders Labourers Federation, generally have little but contempt for the general public and are prepared to use them in an effort to blackmail Governments and employers.

Too often, somewhat sadly, history shows that over the years Ministers for Employment and Industrial Relations in Governments have been somewhat irresponsible in failing to exercise their full powers in dealing with union confrontations. In many ways, I suppose the people who have elected them must share the blame. In fact, all of us must share the blame. Consequently, we now have a system which is in need of a total overhaul, a rebuilding. It is not working. In fact, many people claim that the current system is almost unworkable.

No responsible person or union will deny the pressing need in our nation to totally and completely overhaul our industrial laws. The people of Australia want something done to make the unions and their members fully answerable through the law courts for deaths, personal injury and business losses caused by illegal acts committed by the unions or their members. I stress that point. I do not believe that the people of Queensland or Australia want unions banned. I do not believe that for a moment.

**Mr McElligott:** The Premier does.

**Mr HENDERSON:** No. The Premier has never said that.

**Mr McElligott:** Yes, he has. He has said, "We will destroy the union movement."

**Mr HENDERSON:** He has not.

People want something done. They want Governments to make unions responsible to the laws of this land. By being responsible to the laws, they are responsible to the people.

Secondly, because of a distrust that many people have of unions, I believe that the people would be prepared to give broad community support for a Government of any political persuasion which had the courage to attempt to make unions more responsible. To support my statement, I direct attention to not one but to all of the polls taken during the recent dispute.

**Mr Scott:** What about the poll at Rockhampton? What did that tell you?

**Mr HENDERSON:** I am glad that the honourable member for Cook (Mr Scott) has referred to the Rockhampton poll. It is perhaps timely to discuss it. According to the Opposition, the Rockhampton by-election was a major disaster for the Government. Twenty months ago, when the people of Rockhampton last voted, 57.2 per cent voted for K. W. Wright, the Leader of the Opposition and Labor candidate, 24.9 per cent voted for Charles Doblo, the National Party candidate, and 17.03 per cent voted for A. W. Agnew, the Liberal candidate. Opposition members know and I know that the average preference drift from Liberal candidates in the last State election was between 20 and 25 per cent. On a two-party preferred basis in that election the Labor Party could have expected an additional 4 per cent of the vote on Liberal Party preferences. That cannot be denied. Therefore, had preferences been distributed in Rockhampton, the Labor Party should have polled 62 per cent of the vote on a two-party preferred basis.

**Mr Scott:** You are guessing.

**Mr HENDERSON:** I have it all here. Only 0.8 per cent voted for B. T. Dillon, who, I gather, stood as a candidate in protest against the Labor Party candidate. It is reasonable to assume that his preferences may have gone to Labor. To play fair, I will give them all to the National Party, although I hardly suspect that the preferences of an independent Labor candidate would flow to us. In addition, Opposition members know and I know that usually in a by-election there is a swing of between 3 and 4 per cent away from the Government. If that swing is added to the Labor Party vote on a two-party preferred basis, the Labor Party should have polled at least 66 per cent of the vote. Where is this tremendous victory in a 2.5 per cent increase in vote? What happened to all those people who voted for the Liberal Party at the last election and who, it could reasonably be expected, would have given their second preferences to the Labor Party? What happened to the 3 or 4 per cent of people who could be expected in a by-election to vote against my party and for the Labor Party? This great victory, this enormous success, this phoenix rising from the ashes, this rebirth of the Labor Party, seems to me to be a rather Pyrrhic victory indeed. It was not a victory at all.

**Mr Prest:** The National Party can derive no joy from that analysis.

**Mr HENDERSON:** Members of the National Party can in fact derive considerable joy because, according to the Queensland Secretary of the Australian Labor Party (Mr Peter Beattie) the Labor vote increased by 2.5 per cent, and that has been regarded as a great victory. I point out that the National Party vote rose by 16 per cent, and if as an increase, 2.5 per cent is a great victory, what is an increase of 16 per cent? I thank the honourable member for Port Curtis for his interjection.

**Mr Wilson:** An opportunity will present itself later on for the honourable member for Mount Gravatt to delude himself further.

**Mr HENDERSON:** Is it not sad to note that the honourable member for Townsville South cannot appreciate that an ordinary, unknown Labor candidate can attract an increase in votes at a by-election that is 2.5 per cent more than the Leader of the Opposition attracted at the previous State election. I wonder what that proves.

What needs to be done? The first need that must be pointed out is that the Government needs to define at law the legitimate role of unions. With such a definition, lawful and unlawful actions by unions could be differentiated. If lawful and unlawful actions are defined at law a dispute that is conducted between the Government and the

union or the union and the people would not be a dispute per se. An industrial dispute would become a dispute between the union and the courts of law, which is the appropriate venue for a decision to be made.

The second need is for unionism to be made non-compulsory and for non-unionists to be protected against coercion, blackmail and violence. Acts of coercion, blackmail and violence must be defined in the Criminal Code, and I ask honourable members to note that any provisions in the Criminal Code should refer specifically to unions of employees. An amendment to the Criminal Code needs to be made so that it is easier to take breaches of the law into the courts and obtain a judgment from the courts. It must not be forgotten that the power-seeking unions are able to engage top legal people who seem to spend the whole time counselling unions in ways to break the law and not be held answerable for illegal actions.

The third need as I perceive the resolution of industrial conflict is that secret ballots must be provided to determine whether strike action will be undertaken. Secret ballots should be conducted by a specific group of persons who have wide experience in industrial relations, and ballots should be conducted in such a way that will ensure that they cannot be interfered with or rigged. Of course, the subject of secret ballots brings to the fore the criminal actions of the Transport Workers Union of Australia when elections conducted in 1980 were a complete and absolute farce.

The fourth point I make is that unions and/or individual unionists must be held responsible at law for damage, injury and loss incurred by the community if, and only if, a strike or other action taken by a union is deemed to be illegal. I ask honourable members to note what I have said. I do not advocate that the unions be sued willy-nilly. However, if action is deemed to be illegal by a competent court of law, it is the right of every person in the community to seek redress from the people who are breaking the law. That legal provision would apply to all honourable members and to me, and it should apply to the unions.

The fifth need is for the role of the State Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to be reviewed and made more effective. The Standing Orders of this Parliament do not permit criticism of courts of law or legal tribunals, but it must be said that the great loser in the last dispute was the State commission. It lost out not so much because of action taken by the union or the Government, but because it was a victim of the industrial laws that set it up. Having said that, I now return to the point I first made. A complete overhaul must be undertaken in an examination of the role of the Queensland Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.

The sixth need, as I perceive it, is that all international covenants must be approved by the Australian Parliament if specific areas of State responsibility are affected. So I find it absolutely irresponsible for members opposite who preach democracy to want to appeal to a court of law to adjudicate on a covenant and an agreement about which the Australian people have had absolutely no say. An extra territorial and extrajudicial body sitting in Geneva or somewhere else, comprising a group of people, a number of whom were treated with absolute contempt, has drawn up a covenant that has not in any way been addressed to the Australian people for ratification.

It is interesting that, on the one hand, the unions are claiming that the Government must adhere to that covenant, but, on the other hand, in that very same covenant, the United Nations charter also grants freedom from compulsory unionism and gives the right to associations to conduct their own affairs without interference from or intimidation by unions. That part of the covenant is just treated with reckless abandon—"We believe this part of the covenant; we don't want to accept that part of the covenant." That comes back to the proposition that I have argued tonight, that is, the contempt in which some people hold the law.

Finally, I want to address myself to a couple of observations. What did the Queensland Government really seek to do in the recent power dispute? I put it to honourable members that the answer to that question depends on how psychotic one is

as an individual. The fact of the matter is that the Queensland Government set out to do two things: First of all, to ensure that there was a degree of responsibility and a degree of accountability in the industrial laws of this State; secondly, to ensure that in an essential industry such as the power industry the people of Queensland are protected against arbitrary, hurtful, almost insane action by groups of people. I believe they are two extremely worthy goals.

I have spent much time tonight listening to people who claim that such disputes would never happen if Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen was not Premier of this State or if this State had a different Government. That is rubbish. Such strikes would occur in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory or France, and Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen cannot be blamed for all of them. They have nothing whatsoever to do with style of government or type of leadership.

My concluding comment is that I get the impression, when I read the press or hear comments from other people, that the men in the unions are really nice fellows and that, somehow or other, if we all get together and have a little chat about what is going on that that will solve the problem. They have three children, they smile sweetly on television and they are nice people. But I put it to honourable members that within that group of people are criminals, law-breakers and thugs. I do not say that all unionists fall into those categories, but a number of them do. To prove my case, I need cite only one example. I wonder if an Opposition member could tell me what is right about the actions of Norm Gallagher.

I thank members for their attention. I fully support the Premier's motion as, I believe, do the people of Queensland.

**Mr UNDERWOOD** (Ipswich West) (10.9 p.m.): It is clear from the remarks of the member for Mount Gravatt (Mr Henderson) that he has what could be described as a warped and twisted view of what a unionist is. I just remind him that, contrary to his views, a unionist in Australia is an ordinary man or woman. Unionists are the ordinary people whom he meets in the street and who make up his electorate. I suggest that his attitude is very unchristian. In fact, his views quite clearly portray what the National Party is all about in this dispute—politics.

**Mr Casey:** And he has the hide to go to the Christian breakfasts in the morning.

**Mr UNDERWOOD:** The honourable member would need to wash his hands before he attended those breakfasts.

Tonight, I wish to bring to the attention of honourable members information that is relevant to this dispute. It should also have been brought to the attention of the public. An article in "The Courier-Mail" in February 1983 stated—

"The South-East Queensland Electricity Board has called for a police investigation of alleged legal entrapment of board employees as part of its continuing organisational shake-up.

The police internal investigation section will be asked to probe possible police involvement in what has been claimed was a 'set-up' arrest for drink-driving last year.

The move is directly related to the sacking this week of two senior board executives following an Auditor General's probe into alleged fraud.

Board members are believed to have been shocked by the disclosure, in the Auditor General's report, of substantial evidence to back up sections of an internal report believed to have included allegations of entrapment, fraud, abuse of authority and misuse of board equipment.

It is believed the author of the internal report, SEQEB training officer, Anthony Smith, claimed to have been a victim of a 'set-up' drink-driving charge, involving a private detection agency hired by the board.

Board members are also believed to have been deeply disturbed by the death from apparent heart failure last week of an elderly employee who had recently been moved into an area being investigated by the Auditor General.

In other moves: SEQEB has asked the Auditor General to extend his investigation and to report on any further evidence of malpractice.

Several board officers have been interviewed on the background of a series of industrial disputes which repeatedly crippled south-east Queensland in 1981 and which some employees claim could have been avoided."

That article in the press about the sacking of those two gentlemen led to a hearing in the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission before Commissioner Ledlie. The two men were reinstated. I refer to the transcript in case Nos. B42 and B43 of 3 March 1983. At line 40 on page 72, the following question was directed to the witness—

"Are you of your own knowledge aware of a system within S.E.Q.E.B. that was specifically approved by the General Manager, known to the Secretary and known to the Internal Auditor, where S.E.Q.E.B. satisfied certain regular and frequent accounts of a particular firm by making the cheques payable to that firm's alias company?"

The answer was—

"I do."

That leads to a murky network of intrigue, including industrial espionage and sabotage by SEQEB, dirty tricks, abuse of power and victimisation by officers of SEQEB—in fact, undemocratic and un-Australian activities by officers and by SEQEB itself against the people of Queensland and the employees.

It is an accepted fact, since the reorganisation of the power industry and the formation of SEQEB, that the number of industrial problems has increased dramatically in contrast with the number that occurred under the peaceful administration of the Brisbane City Council and the Southern Electric Authority.

It is also an accepted fact that the Premier, together with his naive and destructive Government, must shoulder the blame for this latest and largest dispute. The Bjelke-Petersen Government has been planning and leading up to this dispute for some time.

Who are the advisers? Who are the master-minds behind the Government's moves? Who are the people who are responsible for this catastrophic event and who have ill-advised and are ill-advising the Government? As the problems are of an industrial nature, one must focus attention on the industrial section of SEQEB. By focusing attention there, one finds some alarming events and reports. This information that has not been brought to the public's attention has a direct causal relationship to the madness of this Government.

Geoffrey Allan Newton Brooke of Chapel Hill, who is personal assistant to the general manager of SEQEB and who was formerly, before that promotion, chief of the industrial relations section of SEQEB, has been a chief adviser to the Premier and has been heavily involved in the planning, research and activation of this industrial dispute. He was the man who advised the Premier and Treasurer that, if he sacked the SEQEB workers, they would go back to work. Everyone knows that the workers did not go back and that they still are not back at their jobs. His advice resulted in untold damage and pain to Queenslanders and to the Queensland economy.

Who is Mr Brooke? Geoffrey Brooke trained in accountancy and industrial relations. He was a student of the Mount Eliza College and trained with BHP. After leaving BHP, he went to Tasmania, where he worked in the paper pulp mills. He joined SEQEB from Tasmania. In evidence before the Industrial Commission, he has revealed that he hopes to return to BHP to go further up the career ladder.

Mr Brooke's reign at the SEQEB industrial relations branch has been marked by several large disputes. As a consequence, he has built up an empire within SEQEB. Each

dispute made it clear that he needed more and more staff and resources such as training courses and photocopiers. Such things had never existed before he or even SEQEB appeared on the scene. Mr Brooke has used the additional resources and staff to further his career in industrial relations.

One Friday afternoon at the Rocklea underground depot, Eddie Fabretto, who is a big lad and who was planted there by Geoff Brooke, was involved in an incident at the depot gate. As a result, three SEQEB employees were sacked. Two of those men were innocent. This action provoked a dispute that was deliberately set up by Brooke. The dispute was resolved when the Industrial Commission reinstated the three sacked workers. That particular dispute is a good example of his practices. I will not go into all the details, because time is limited and I have much more to say.

Brooke set up a task force, the purpose of which was to go to SEQEB depots to take away from the men hard-won conditions, such as over-award payments by way of dirt money. That task force was the direct cause of a strike that lasted three months. The deliberately provocative act of taking away dirt money from the cable-jointers caused all underground workers to withdraw their labour to protect their incomes. That action resulted in the workers being better off because the Industrial Commission granted them a more substantial underground allowance instead of the lesser dirt money.

Meanwhile, the Brooke empire grew bigger as his policy of confrontation caused more and more disputes. His policy conflicted with that of the Brisbane City Council of management and the unions sitting down and sorting through the problems as they arose.

After the three-month-long Rocklea underground dispute, SEQEB, through Brooke and others, decided to employ Pinkertons of the USA, which has a Queensland branch. It is basically a professional group or company of strike-breakers of the worst kind. I am sure that all honourable members have seen American TV movies that depict strike-breakers who move into a work-place or break up a picket line using baseball bats to attack the workers. That is what Pinkertons do. The company offers professional strike-breaking services and a private detection agency.

In the latest issue of the Brisbane Yellow Pages, the services offered by Pinkertons are listed. The company, which is entitled "Pinkertons Investigations" claims to have been established for over 30 years in Queensland. The company offers insurance and marine investigations, missing persons investigations, provides process servers, offers commercial, industrial and domestic investigations, and will provide photographic evidence. The company sounds as though it is made up of a not-so-lovely group of ladies and gentlemen. The company's principal is a Reginald A. Standfast, JP, and it is a member of the Institute of Mercantile Agents. I inform any honourable member who may like to check on the company or use its services that its after-hours telephone number is 269 1255. The company is situated at 58 James Street, Fortitude Valley. That firm has radio-controlled vehicles and provides a seven-day service. The advertisement contains other details on how it can be contacted. That agency has a horrific record in industrial relations in the USA and now in Australia.

They are the people who were employed by SEQEB on the advice of Mr Brooke. SEQEB industrial relations officer, Mr Rex Bull, whose brother I believe works for the Special Branch, introduced Geoff Brooke to Hannigan, an officer of Special Branch, who advised Brooke to use Pinkertons.

As a result, the Pinkertons undercover agent, a very amicable bloke who, from all reports, fitted in very well, was employed as a labourer at the underground depot at Rocklea and remained there for nine months, using the name Damien Kearney. He was then moved to underground depot No. 204, which is the Gregory Terrace depot, and remained there for 11 months, being eventually promoted to TA status. His task was to report on anything that happened in the underground depots, including union meetings and union activities. He reported weekly. Some of those reports are in the Anthony

Smith report. SEQEB has the rest. Those reports include very detailed information on the activities of the men and the bosses employed by SEQEB.

In fact, he did his job too well. He reported on too many things that were going on. He reported absolutely every little incident and, as he was a likeable fellow, it was not difficult for him to listen in to the talk going on round him. Those who took a bit of copper home were reported. Bosses who used SEQEB back hoes were reported.

The Special Branch and the Drug Squad became involved. In fact, visits were made to two employees, one of whom lost his job because, instead of drugs being found at his home, a bit of copper was uncovered. The agent reported on such activities as taking extended lunch hours and drinking on the job. He reported on the engineers, the labourers and the foremen. In fact, he reported on the activities of everybody with whom he came in contact.

That is the sort of un-Australian activity that the Government, through the industrial relations policy of SEQEB, has engaged in, to the detriment of the workers and people of Queensland. It is no wonder that people start talking about Hitlerism, jackboots and the nationalist front of the National Party in this State. These sorts of activities are paid for out of the tax-payers' money to subjugate the ordinary, decent, honest people in this State.

When the whistle was finally blown on Brooke's undercover agent by the Smith report, a friendly telephone call caused Damien Kearney to discover suddenly that his wife had left him and shot through to Sydney. As a result, Damien Kearney immediately followed her to Sydney. He left in such a hurry that he did not even bother to collect his pay, in spite of the sincere and earnest urgings of his working partner to do so. Mr Kearney could not wait; he left his pay behind. It is no wonder that his partner was puzzled because, at the time, he did not understand the real reason for Damien Kearney, or whoever he really was, having to leave the depot in such haste.

Pinkertons set up a false business, Suburban Cleaning Company, to launder SEQEB money to pay for the industrial espionage by Pinkertons on behalf of SEQEB. That is discussed in the Smith report and by the Auditor-General.

What is the Smith report? Because of conflicts which arose with Mr Brian Francis Ash of Ferny Hills, the other person sacked by SEQEB, whose case went before the Industrial Commission, Mr Anthony Smith, a SEQEB industrial officer, had been shunted sideways by Mr Brooke and company into the apprenticeship training section.

Those conflicts began after Smith had been promoted to second in charge of industrial relations. Ash, then the second in charge, had been promoted to chief industrial officer. In turn, Brooke had been promoted as executive officer to Waldie, the then general manager of the South East Queensland Electricity Board. The conflict is not terribly relevant, but investigation shows the type of unprincipled and vindictive person Ash is. Smith wrote his report about the problems, both serious and minor, as he saw them in the industrial relations section of SEQEB as protection against Brooke and Ash taking action against him.

The report was a time bomb and it is still ticking away. The full report went to Cabinet. Cabinet discussed it and sent it back to be rewritten to make it into a tidier and more wholesome report. The activities involved were too unwholesome for Cabinet to consider.

**An Opposition Member:** Do you remember that one, Claudie?

**Mr UNDERWOOD:** The Minister for Works and Housing remembers it very well; he was in Cabinet.

To obtain his information, Smith had to enlist the aid of someone who had access to the SEQEB computer as he had lost his high-level access status after being sent to Coventry. He was sent to the apprenticeship training section by Brooke and Ash. He

obtained the support and help of Mr Robin Russell from SEQEB central control. He is the gentleman whom honourable members have seen recently on television.

Mr Lee interjected.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I am not taking anything away from Mr Russell.

Together, Smith and Russell searched SEQEB computer records for proof of the industrial espionage and other financial rackets operated by Brooke and commented upon eventually by the Auditor-General. They looked for Damien Kearney under the name of Damien Gillespie through the accounts of the customers of SEQEB. That search was not authorised. Smith was able to enlist Russell's support as Russell was aware that Brooke wanted to get rid of him because of the role that Russell had played in the district switching officers' dispute—that is, the control-room men. In other words, it related to Robin Russell's boys' disputes over a legitimate log of claims.

Russell had been unwise enough to show support for the DSO's case in the dispute. Brooke, as the chief industrial officer, denied in the court that he was out to get Russell. Hennessy, the second in charge to Robin Russell, under oath in the industrial commission, said that Brooke was out to get Russell. After the DSO dispute, during the audit and electronic bug surveillance or sweep of the industrial relations branch, he suspected information was being leaked. The result of the sweep was that four bugs were found in the industrial relations branch, but they were found in the drawer of a desk. Rex Bull had brought them back on a trip that he had made to America. Although he denied that, the information is contained in the original Smith report. It is believed that they had not been used.

Mr Standfast of Pinkertons is not a nice person. He was involved in the stealing of information from the Commonwealth Department of Social Security. That information was contained in the microfiche records of that department. He was involved in the selling of that information to finance companies—in other words, he was selling information about clients of the Department of Social Security. He was also involved in the selling of addresses of SEQEB customers. Those addresses were contained in the computer records relating to electricity accounts. Such information is of enormous value to finance companies and collection agencies, which are always trying to discover the personal information and whereabouts of their clients, and the whereabouts of others for their clients. That activity has been stopped.

Waldie authorised the use of Pinkertons and the Suburban Cleaning Company front on the advice of Geoff Brooke. Waldie eventually resigned.

In their computer search, Smith and Russell found SEQEB payments to Pinkertons. Brooke, through Hannigan and the police, tried to set up Smith. That takes me back to the original article that I read from "The Courier-Mail"

The scenario for the set-up goes something like this: Mr Smith is a part-time sailor who lives down by the coast. He had a rather large boat for sale. In response to an advertisement, Mr Smith received a phone call from two gentlemen who wanted to meet him to discuss the sale of the boat. The rendezvous was a pub on the south side of Brisbane, a fair distance from the city. The three gentlemen had a fairly lengthy discussion and consumed a reasonable amount of liquor. However, no sale eventuated. After leaving the tavern, Mr Smith was immediately confronted by an officer of the Queensland Police Force. The wording of questions asked by that police officer immediately prompted Smith to believe that he had been set up. The first question that came from the officers' lips was, "Are you Tony Smith? You are not supposed to be driving that particular car."

Anyway, Mr Smith was lumbered and it was claimed that he had a blood alcohol level in breath of .08. Unfortunately for Brooke, Hannigan and company, who arranged the set-up, Smith had taken particular precautions. For a start, he had arranged to take time off from SEQEB, so that he went to the rendezvous in his own time, not in the board's time. Mr Smith also went in his own vehicle, not in the SEQEB vehicle. So, on

those two counts, they missed him. SEQEB could not take any disciplinary action against Mr Smith or sack him. On the third count, he could not be sacked for drinking whilst on the job, because he was in his own time.

**Mr Lee:** He was a bit cunning.

**Mr UNDERWOOD:** He was a bit cunning. Mr Smith is one of the bright boys in SEQEB, put on by the coalition Government. The former Minister who interjected was involved in that SEQEB arrangement.

Mr Brooke introduced his Americanisation of industrial relations, such as the blue book for training foremen and supervisors. As part of their training course, trainees went down to Cedar Lake for swimming and other activities at night-time and during the day. That was a new and expensive innovation for SEQEB. A number of the trainees would stand up in the mornings before breakfast with their hangovers and yell out at the top of their voices, "We work for SEQEB. We feel great." That indicates the change of attitude.

The blue book contained part of the industrial relations training on how to isolate the workers and pick them out from the mob, how to fix up industrial disputes a la Mr Brooke—in other words, the bastardisation of the science of industrial relations. Of course, Cedar Lake and several other things represented an expansion of the empire of Mr Brooke and a furthering of his career in the industrial relations scene of Australian corporate business.

However, the Cedar Lake escapades have stopped because of the Smith report and subsequent events. Of course, after Mr Waldie resigned, it was quite some time before his successor was appointed. That successor was Mr Gilbert. He still holds that position.

Mr Gilbert has a rather catastrophic history in the business world in Australia. He is responsible for the loss of hundreds upon hundreds of Australian jobs and industrial disputation in this country. He is what is called an industrial hatchet man, specifically employed to chop people's jobs, cause industrial disputes and to run them. Mr Gilbert's track record involves his holding positions at Carlton United Breweries in Melbourne and Brisbane and at Tooths in Sydney, where he was responsible for the loss of 400 jobs.

Mr Gilbert has now been involved in the greatest industrial dispute in modern history in Queensland—the SEQEB dispute. I realise that the story sounds rather unusual. However, unfortunately, it is true. Australia has that American disease. Dare I allude to Watergate and the Richard Nixon syndrome?

**Mr De Lacy:** I have it on good authority that one of those 42 members over there is a Pinkerton plant, put there by the Premier to spy on his mates. I just do not know which one it is.

**Mr UNDERWOOD:** I understand that there are many spies, and that the Premier's telephone runs hot night and morning as a result of back-benchers dobbing each other in and Ministers dobbing each other in.

**Mr Casey:** They are scabs, too. They do it without pay.

**Mr UNDERWOOD:** That is right.

Opposition members have clearly exposed the role of the Government in the dispute. It is a sorry tale of contempt towards the interests of the public of Queensland. That is amply illustrated by the conduct of the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) and the Commissioner for Railways (Mr Mendoza). On the Wednesday after the black-outs began, a directive was sent to all heads of department within the railways instructing them to use full power, contrary to the rationing orders. Where is the Government's law and order now? Where is the law-abiding Government? The Minister and Mr Mendoza deliberately sent out that directive. The Minister denied it on three occasions,

although the third time he was forced to admit full power was being used. If he wants to challenge me and bring me before the committees of the House, I am quite happy to oblige. I will produce the people and the evidence to support my contention. He will be forced to resign from his portfolio for his breach of the order. I do not expect to be called before any committee, since the statements I have made are true.

The Opposition sooled the press on to them on the Wednesday afternoon, and the first thing Thursday morning another directive was sent to all department heads in the railways that no power was to be used. I draw to the attention of the House the fact that on the previous Tuesday the railways were already cutting down on their usage of power and observing rationing orders. Of course, Mr Lane, who is well known for his Special Branch activities and his un-Australian and undemocratic history in the matter of industrial relations, deliberately set out, at the behest of his Premier and in accordance with the general thinking of his Premier, to cause further chaos in the community. While the ordinary people of the State were being deprived of power, the Minister for Transport was directly denying them power.

R. T. Edwards & Sons of Ipswich deliberately sent workers up power poles without adequate safety gear, in the damp. They were in shorts and short-sleeved shirts, without proper boots, without helmets and without safety belts. They were climbing power poles on metal ladders, without resuscitation gear and without a person at the bottom of the ladder to help in case of difficulty. There was no rescue gear. The Opposition knows of at least one person whose life was lost on a power pole as a result of that action—directly killed by the Bjelke-Petersen Government.

**Mr Casey:** Was that company you mention in Ipswich associated in some way or other with the former Liberal leader?

**Mr UNDERWOOD:** Yes. He is a share-holder in the company.

**Mr Lee:** Only a share-holder?

**Mr UNDERWOOD:** A director. He is a sleeping partner, as he constantly informs us.

Honourable members do not hear from the Government about the men, after the big storm, working non-stop to restore power to all the people in south-eastern Queensland who had lost it. They put at risk their lives and the futures of their families by venturing out in the dark, the hail, the mess and the chaos in the aftermath of the storm. Some days after the event, there was a belated and grudging thanks from the Premier and Treasurer. We have not heard about that today. We have not heard anything about the workers in Gladstone who, during the dispute and without pay, have maintained power supplies to the smelter. We do not hear about those actions. All we hear is a vicious, twisted attack and lies from this Government, its Ministers and officers about the workers who have been expressing their democratic right.

At the same time, as I have pointed out, there has been an undemocratic, un-Australian scenario of espionage, confrontation, sabotage, spying and victimisation by power-hungry members in the industrial relations branch of SEQEB, with advice to and from the Premier of this State. What confidence can the workers and the people of Queensland—and, in particular, the SEQEB workers and their union representatives—have in industrial relations in this State, in the Premier, in his advisers and in Mr Brooke and his empire? What confidence can they have when they know that one dispute after another has been set up to cause trouble in the electricity supply industry for other purposes?

Mr Brooke and Mr Ash, and other people who were involved, can be added to the ever-growing team of crooks and criminals who are paid employees and advisers of the Government. I refer to that criminal Dr Oskar, that convicted criminal Milan Brych and that shyster and criminal Mr Horvath. What about Wiley Fancher? And what about Iwasaki, a man who made his money from the slave trade that operated in Korea during

the Sino-Japanese War and during the period of the American occupation of Korea? Such people give advice, both economic and otherwise, to the Government. Mr Brooke and company will just join that long line of advisers, so let me go through them again: Oskar, Brych, Horvath, Fancher, and now Brooke and company can be included.

**Mr JENNINGS** (Southport) (10.41 p.m.): Honourable members have heard a very interesting Alfred Hitchcock performance from the honourable member for Ipswich West. In my time I have heard some flapdoodle, kitchen gossip and tittle-tattle, and I do not know who could have written that trash for the honourable member, but it was about a Smith, a Brown, a Brooke and a Bull, and it was a great deal of rubbish. One of my colleagues has suggested that the speech could sell quite well.

One of the topics he mentioned did impress me, and it was fascinating that the honourable member complained about security. The honourable member for Ipswich West has discovered that some fellows had been stealing copper, and a man reported the offence. The honourable member for Ipswich West complained about that, and also complained that some fellows had been using a backhoe in their own time—

**Mr HAMILL:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Southport has referred to certain comments made by the honourable member for Ipswich in relation to an incident that arose out of stealing copper. I made no such comment at all.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Row): Order! No point of order has been made out.

**Mr UNDERWOOD:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Southport has said that I was complaining that people had been dobbed in for stealing copper and other things. I made no such remark. I pointed out that these were the things that the spy had been reporting on, and that they had been made the subject of the spy's weekly reports. I am merely elaborating, and the public should draw its own conclusions.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Ipswich West is not entitled to make a personal explanation.

**Mr UNDERWOOD:** Yes, I am.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! If a point of order is taken, then it should be made out. A point of order can be taken if a personal reflection is made upon an honourable member, and I do not think any serious aspersion has been cast. I decline to rule on the point of order.

**Mr UNDERWOOD:** I rise to a further point of order. The honourable member for Southport has said that I condone theft and other things. I object to that remark because it is not true. I find that remark offensive, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Ipswich West objects to any implication that he condones theft. I ask the honourable member for Southport to accept that explanation.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I, not honourable members, am controlling the conduct of the House. I request the honourable member for Southport to indicate whether or not he accepts the explanation of the honourable member for Ipswich West.

**Mr JENNINGS:** I will accept the member's explanation, but I will also repeat what the honourable member said. The honourable member was explaining about a security guard at the South East Queensland Electricity Board's depot. The honourable member complained that the security guard reported certain people for stealing copper. The honourable member also said that certain people had been reported for using a backhoe, and the honourable member complained about that. Anyone can place his own interpretation upon that, but if any other honourable member believes that people should

be able to go to a SEQEB depot and steal copper, I do not. If the honourable member for Ipswich West does, that is up to him.

I point out that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) has not uttered one word of condemnation against the unions who left 12 000 people blacked out in Brisbane; nor have Opposition members. Members of the Opposition have criticised the Premier and Treasurer and the injunction that was issued. As well, they have levelled criticism at every action the Government has taken.

I point out that the Leader of the Opposition has said that the State's power system will break down, and no doubt his statement was an attempt to create more fear in the community. The Leader of the Opposition probably hopes that the power system will break down. He said that the Premier should show some sympathy for the sacked SEQEB men. What about the thousands of people—men, women and children—left for weeks without power? Did he show any sympathy for them? He said, "I wouldn't have a bar of it. I don't want to comment." But he did say that the Premier should have some sympathy for the sacked men.

All that the Leader of the Opposition is doing is preaching imminent disaster. He also said, "The ETU men have done nothing against the law at this stage." Where has he been living—under a rock? What does he think has been going on? The men were ordered to go back to work, but they did not go back. Then he blamed the SEQEB management—

**Mr Borbidge:** Three orders.

**Mr JENNINGS:** That is right. He called it the Premier's dispute. If ever there has been a dispute in this nation that has united the people from Cape York to Hobart and from Sydney to Perth it is this dispute, because they can see that it is the watershed, the be-all and end-all, the most important industrial problem that has occurred in this country since 1945. It is critical because it relates to the Government's emergency legislation, of which Opposition members are so critical. But they are critical of everything.

Not one word was heard about how the Leader of the Opposition would fix the dispute. He did not say a thing. He did not want to have a bar of it a few weeks ago. But as far as most Australians are concerned, this dispute is about the basic rights of the people who vote for Governments and not the fellows at a meeting who put up their hands to have some say about what goes on in this country. They have to put up their hands if they belong to the mob opposite. That is why there should be secret ballots. The associates of members opposite go round and threaten them if they do not put up their hands.

**Mr Hamill** interjected.

**Mr JENNINGS:** I have also had calls from women on exactly the same subject referred to by the member for Ipswich. It seems that certain members opposite think that it is all right for employees to go out and play cards under trucks or go shopping in the board's time. One woman said to me, "Serve them right. It's about time they did work. They haven't been." Yet that is what is going on.

The Government was elected to do a job. Members opposite stood for election. The Government won; they did not. The Government has a job to do, the Opposition does not. Opposition members could not do it, anyway.

The Electrical Trades Union has a record which can only be described as a blatant attempt to subvert law and order in this land. Its leadership uses the old technique of purposely setting out to mislead its members. They go on strike. They will not agree to recommendations of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. They will not obey orders of the commission. They will not go back to work. They left almost 14 000 people in misery. They were warned that they would lose their jobs, but they still would not return to work. Then they lost their jobs and they screamed. They were

not sacked; they sacked themselves. What would members opposite do if they employed someone to do a job and he said, "Oh, no, I'm not going to do it"? If they repeated the order and he repeated his refusal and was then sacked and screamed, what would they do?

**Mr Scott:** You're talking a lot of nonsense.

**Mr JENNINGS:** The honourable member for Cook (Mr Scott) says that I am talking a lot of nonsense. When Warburton and the Trades and Labor Council referred to the Government's provocation, that was complete and unadulterated rubbish, and they know it. This is not the first time such a dispute has occurred, and Opposition members know that. The ETU has been causing similar problems for years and years, and Opposition members know it. They know what those commos want to do.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr JENNINGS:** They may not all be commos, but the results of the dispute are exactly what the commos set out to do. The ETU has a shocking record and Opposition members know it. They have been misled by Madden, Dempsey and all the rest. How good are they? There were disputes in 1971, 1972, early 1978, August 1978, July 1979, October 1979, December 1979, March 1980, July 1981, December 1981, April 1983, September 1984, and, of course, recently. I have here a newspaper of 19 August 1982 headlined, "Black outlook for State as talks fail".

The article stated—

"Who's on strike

All Queensland power station maintenance men from yesterday.

Glassworks employees from yesterday.

All State Government blue and white collar employees from today.

Salaried and clerical railway staff at Ipswich from yesterday.

Ipswich and Collinsville coal miners from yesterday.

Oil industry workers at the Ampol and Amoco oil refineries from yesterday.

All vehicle building and production workers not stood down because of power blackouts from yesterday.

Construction workers at the Sheraton Hotel, new Wintergarden Theatre and Wivenhoe dam from yesterday.

Queensland today staggers into the fourth day of the worst industrial dispute in a decade with the State Government and unions deadlocked over the shorter working week."

Another article is headed "Paralysed State" Opposition members talk about negotiating. What did the Premier do on that dispute? The article states—

"Union leaders refused to meet the Government last night as thousands of workers walked off the job, creating Queensland's worst strike turmoil since 1969.

The unions snubbed the offer for limited talks from the Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, because of the suspension of 3050 rail employees ordered under the Essential Services Act."

The unions would not even go to talk to the Premier.

**Mr Borbidge:** Last week, they would not go to the Full Bench of the Industrial Commission, either.

**Mr JENNINGS:** That is right.

Another article in 1981, headed “Bans threat to \$3m SEQEB contract deal”, stated—

“The South Coast district manager of SEQEB, Mr Max Bond, said yesterday he understood the men’s actions were based on concern over job security.

‘But the latest call for tenders does not pose the slightest risk to their jobs,’ he said.

‘And the decision to go to contract was taken before the stop work meeting.

‘It has never been the board’s policy to jeopardise the employment of its permanent workforce. We have given both written and verbal assurances to this effect.’ ”

That was four years ago. The unions still will not take it, because they do not want to. The Leader of the Opposition knows that. It is part of a scheme to disrupt the economy, and he knows that as well as I do.

Jupiters had to put off 400 men. Do honourable members know what the secretary of the local branch of the Trades and Labor Council said? He said, “It serves them right. They should have known we were going to have strikes. They should have got their generators in early.” That secretary is brilliant. He said, “All you fellows get your generators because we are going to pull on strikes for the next few years.”

**Mr Borbidge:** Jupiters had generators but the men would not connect them.

**Mr JENNINGS:** The trade unions on the Gold Coast are a solid lot.

The Electrical Trades Union is setting out on a course of subversion from within. All members know that if, during a time of stress in this country, the union did what it has done, it could wreck the economy. It could turn off the power in 10 minutes flat. Opposition members know as well as I do that that could happen. If the union is prepared to do that to 12 000 people, it would be prepared to do it to 6 million people.

How did Ben Chifley, who was one of the great Labor Prime Ministers, handle these guys? In 1945, when the communists Thornton and McPhillips organised the great steel strike, what did he do? He got the men to return to work by threatening to bring in the army.

In 1947, Ben Chifley again beat the communists’ black ban at the Woomera Rocket Range by passing the Approved Defence Projects Protection Act. In the winter of 1949, when faced with the great coal strike—and coal was as important in those days as electricity is today—Ben Chifley passed the National Emergency (Coal Strike) Act. He froze union funds and used the army to produce coal. Was Ben Chifley provoking the unions? The unions in Queensland are lucky that they have such a moderate, considerate and conservative Premier in Queensland. If Ben Chifley were here, the unions would know all about it.

When the Government says, “You guys have to get back to work. If you don’t get back to work, we will have to do something about it.”, Opposition members say that the Government is provoking the unions.

What has happened in Sydney with a little fellow named Nevie Wran? Another press article states—

“Striking refinery workers at Kurnell have until 3pm today to return to work or face fines of up to \$1,000 a day each under emergency powers invoked by the State Government last night.”

Was Mr Wran provoking the strikers? I notice that Opposition members are silent now.

It was clear that power supplies in Queensland to a million people would be cut off in early February. The honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) accused the Premier and Treasurer of dictatorship and of destroying the livelihood of SEQEB employees. I have never heard such rubbish. The wives of SEQEB employees and their families have been in touch with the Government. Opposition members should make

no mistake about that. Those SEQEB employees want to work and their wives do not want them to put their hands down at union meetings because they know that if they did, the wives would receive a threatening telephone call before the men got home. I notice that the Leader of the Opposition has a smile on his face. He knows as well as I do that that happens.

**Mr McKechnie:** He used to be one of them.

**Mr JENNINGS:** I realise that. He knows that I am telling the truth, and that is why he is smiling. The Leader of the Opposition knows that many union members want to get away from the Maddens and the Dempseys of the trade union movement. Dempsey gave Trades and Labor Council money to Arthur Scargill's union in England to help it out. Fancy giving good money to it.

**Mr Borbidge:** Colonel Gaddafi gave money to it as well.

**Mr JENNINGS:** That is right.

An Opposition member commented today that the threats that were made concerning the Premier's grandchildren were all part of a publicity stunt. Perhaps the Opposition can say whether it was a publicity stunt when a trade union organiser tried to run down a unionist. That was the wrong sort of publicity.

**Mr Menzel:** Is it true that Mr Gibbs belted Mr D'Arcy up? Was that a publicity stunt?

**Mr JENNINGS:** I do not know about that.

It is obvious that Australia has never had an industrial dispute in which a Government has had such widespread support from men, women and children, and from Labor Party people, too. The National Party Government has recognised the problems while the Labor Party has its own internal problems.

In 1982, the then Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union agreed to a no-strike clause for metal-workers.

**Opposition Members:** Tell us what happened in Rockhampton.

**Mr JENNINGS:** The honourable member for Mount Gravatt made a marvellous assessment of the situation in Rockhampton.

Mr J. Halfpenny, who is a member of the Labor Party, has made a number of comments along these lines—

“Trade union power should be directed at challenging the very basis of society.”

Mr Halfpenny forecast increasing moves by the trade union movement to take power away from the political system in Australia. He has said that the destruction of the capitalist system would be in the interests of a better community with industrial harmony and job satisfaction. He has stated that the trade union movement would take more and more power back from its political wing because of the emerging worker who challenges the value of society.

At Melbourne University he stated that his union and his attitudes are opposed to participation by employers and business in discussions. “We are for interference and interruption.” That is what John Halfpenny had to say.

I turn now to Australia's shipping record. Australia has the worst record of all nations and its strike-club rating for 1983-84 was the highest at 30.82 per cent. That was followed by the Poms with a rating of 28.68 per cent. That is a disgrace.

My colleague the member for Mirani has told me that 11 ships are waiting outside Dalrymple Bay because of this strike. That is costing each ship \$30,000 a day.

**Mr Vaughan** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I remind the honourable member for Nudgee that constant interjections will not be tolerated.

**Mr JENNINGS:** The loss in money terms is one thing. However, what the strike is costing Australia in lack of confidence in the nation's ability to deliver is much more important.

How different things are in Canberra. The big boys in Canberra know how to handle the unions. On 12 January the public service unions said that their ban on revenue collection would be severe and that pension cheques would be threatened. That is how ruthless unions are. What did the Federal Government do? Two days later the Federal Government said that it would act quickly against any major public service work ban campaign. Big Talk! On 22 January the Federal Government said that it would commence standing down thousands of public servants, but it did not have the guts. On 9 February the Federal Government claimed some success in getting Commonwealth public servants to lift work bans by using the threat of stand-downs. The Federal Government could not get the public servants to do anything, so it raided the safes of the Australian Customs Service to recover more than \$200 m in cash held up by the public service bans. That reminds me of the Labor Party. A few years ago, didn't the Labor Party have problems with safes?

When a few of the Federal Labor Party members started mouthing off, they were called fourth-graders. I do not know what grade Labor Party members in this State would be.

The ACTU claimed that it had a secret plan to crush the BLF to avert thousands of stand-downs. Although hundreds of thousands of people were stood down in Queensland because of the actions of the ETU, the ACTU shut up like a book. The ACTU spoke about crushing the BLF in South Australia, but it did not say a word about the ETU in Queensland. The ACTU has curled up in a little cave, like a troglodyte.

Another example of the action of the ETU is what happened when the Victorian State Government tried to settle the Portland dispute. All the parties had agreed to the settlement and were about to start work when the ETU demanded a site allowance of \$26.10. Because of industrial strife, the cost of building the Portland refinery has gone from \$1.6 billion to \$5 billion. That is an absolute disaster.

On television the Leader of the Opposition said that the ETU in Queensland does not want Federal award coverage, that it is happy with the State Industrial Commission. Of course it is happy. The commission told the union to go back to work and the men refused. The men were ordered to go back to work and still they refused. The State Industrial Commission could do nothing about that.

Other things happening in Queensland are refusals by Telecom men to work, Telecom interfering with telephones, trains not running and seamen not bringing in oil.

In 1952, when the housing industry was suffering from big problems, 1 500 employees were sacked from one big job. All the good guys were brought back as subcontractors and, since that day, there has never been a strike in the housing industry.

**Mr Wilson:** There has not been any good building, either.

**Mr JENNINGS:** The buildings look to be in better condition than the honourable member for Townsville South.

A little while ago the allegation was made that the Government is trying to discredit the ALP. The Government does not have to try to do that. Only a little while ago the AWU, the old guard and the new alliance ordered a new plebiscite for the candidate in the ward of Inala. These preselections in the ALP are beauties. One is held and, if it does not produce the right result, another one is held and perhaps yet another one. A few days after that, there was a bid by the factions of the Labor Party to sack the top two members. The party to which I belong has only one top member. My party has a

pyramid construction with a leader, deputy leader and so on. The Opposition must have a construction like a sphinx. The top two—who are they? Who is to be sacked?

**Mr Borbidge:** Ed got sacked last time.

**Mr JENNINGS:** The member for Mackay knows all about it.

The Leader of the Opposition was then reported as saying that the Labor Party intended to resolve its internal problems and stop presenting itself to the public as a brawling mess. He was too embarrassed to say what happened at the meeting. I do not know whether members of the Opposition are fourth or fifth-graders or a brawling mess. Members of the Opposition say that the Government is trying to discredit the ALP. We do not even have to try.

As the Leader of the Opposition said, the Australian Labor Party was completely divorced from the dispute. I do not know who is divorcing whom on the Opposition side of the Chamber. One minute the honourable member is divorcing himself; the next minute he is not.

The Leader of the Opposition accused the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) and his “faceless men” of certain things. I think that all of them have faces. There is a fellow in Canberra who travelled to Belgium. Australia had a great ANZUS pact with the United States of America. We were mighty solid fellows. When he arrived in Brussels, he received a couple of telephone calls from two shadowy characters. Bang! Out the window went Australia’s ANZUS pact! Australia having been committed to assist the Americans with the MX missiles, two shadowy flushed faces in the background made some telephone calls. The Leader of the Opposition referred to “faceless men” Faceless men are one thing; shadowy hoods ringing Belgium from Canberra at night are another. The Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Hayden) was as mad as a rattlesnake with the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke). As one newspaper reported, I wonder whether Australia will ever have the guts to defend itself.

When the Prime Minister reached the United States of America, the Secretary of State (Mr Schultz) bailed him out twice. It was kind of him to do that. If Opposition members have any influence, I say to them, “Please do not let him go away again. Australia has only a little left; it does not want to lose any more.”

The Australian dollar has been floated on the international market and is traded on the stock exchanges of the world every day. Overseas countries look at the value of the Australian dollar, Australia’s exports, imports and what it is doing. Overseas countries look at when Australia can deliver its goods. Australia is not delivering goods. At present, 11 ships are waiting outside Dalrymple Bay. What is the value of the Australian dollar today? What is the value of people’s confidence in this country? Its value has deteriorated and diminished.

**Mr Randell:** It is not accidental; it is a plan.

**Mr JENNINGS:** The member for Mirani (Mr Randell) said that it is a plan, but our exports have declined.

Australia has fallen from 12th to 16th on its exports competitive edge and from 17th to 21st in business confidence, behind such places as Turkey, India, Ireland and Malaysia. Since the Australian dollar was floated, if an Australian company cannot find a good investment in this country, it will invest overseas. That is why the more strikes by the unions, the sooner those companies will close down. Imports will increase. Many manufacturers are manufacturing overseas because they cannot do so in Australia. If the environment created by the unions and the Government appears to be hostile, capital can simply move off shore. Nevertheless, the world business community is giving Australia the thumbs down. Ranking so poorly in the key operating areas shows that Australia is sour with the whole world business community. When Australia deregulated the capital markets and allowed money to flow overseas, the nation was put in full competition with the rest of the world. That will be realised more and more as time passes.

Opposition members are completely devoid of everything. The Government has a responsibility to ensure that every person in this State who is prepared to work can obtain work. The essential industries will remain essential industries. The people of Queensland can rest assured that for the remainder of their lives they will have a job. A number of people have forgotten that the trouble was caused by a calculated and callous act by certain union-leaders who cut off power to more than 12 000 homes in Brisbane for a few weeks because the South East Queensland Electricity Board was going to use contract labour on additional jobs. The union men would not have been affected adversely in any way by the employment of contract labour. However, they persisted with their actions. Having been ordered back to work by the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission and after being warned, they found themselves without a job when they refused to return to work. In my view, they sacked themselves. Even though the power is now back on, the Seamen's Union is refusing to bring oil into Queensland. Certain sections of Telecom are refusing to repair telephones and take telegrams and have interfered with telex lines. The railway members of the Electrical Trades Union are also refusing to work.

To summarise, I fully support the intention of the Government to make the power industry in this State strike-free, on the correct basis that it is an essential service. Queensland would then be able to lead Australia out of this malaise, get the economy going again and leave ALP members out in the backblocks, where they should be.

**Mr WHARTON:** Mr Speaker—

**Ms WARNER:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the House.

**Hon. C. A. WHARTON** (Burnett—Leader of the House) (11.22 p.m.), in reply: I support the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer. The debate has given honourable members an opportunity to voice their opinions—

**Mr DAVIS** (Brisbane Central): I rise to a point of order. I move—

“That the member for Kurilpa be heard.”

Question put; and the House divided—

Ayes, 31		Noes, 48	
Braddy	Warburton	Ahern	Lee
Burns	Warner, A. M.	Alison	Lester
Campbell	Wilson	Austin	Lickiss
Casey	Yewdale	Bjelke-Petersen	Lingard
Comben		Booth	Littleproud
D'Arcy		Borbidge	McKechnie
De Lacy		Cahill	McPhie
Eaton		Chapman	Menzel
Fouras		Cooper	Miller
Gibbs, R. J.		Elliott	Muntz
Goss		FitzGerald	Newton
Hamill		Gibbs, I. J.	Powell
Kruger		Glasson	Randell
Mackenroth		Goleby	Row
McElligott		Gunn	Simpson
McLean		Gygar	Stephan
Milliner		Harper	Stoneman
Palaszczuk		Harvey	Tenni
Prest		Hinze	Turner
Price		Innes	Wharton
Shaw		Jennings	White
Smith		Katter	
Underwood	<i>Tellers—</i>	Kaus	<i>Tellers—</i>
Vaughan	Davis	Knox	Neal
Veivers	Scott	Lane	Henderson

Resolved in the negative.

**Mr WHARTON:** As I was saying, I support the Government motion, ably moved by the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen). The debate has given the House an opportunity to voice its feelings on the damnable and deplorable state of affairs that has been forced on our State because of uncaring and irresponsible unionists. It has given honourable members a chance to voice their disgust at the draconian measures that the unions have taken against the people of Queensland. It has given all members an opportunity to say quite clearly where they stand on the matter—for the people or against the people. I am sure that, when the people of this State go to the ballot-box, they will note the comments that have been made in the House today.

Some unions are making threats against men wanting to return to work. I refute the scurrilous accusations made by members of the Opposition. Cabinet is four-square behind the Premier and Treasurer. The people of Queensland are behind the Premier and Treasurer and this Government in their endeavours to maintain electricity supply to the people. The Government will continue to serve the interests of people throughout the State. I move—

“That the question be now put.”

**Mr MACKENROTH:** I rise to a point of order. I suggest, Mr Speaker, that the Minister, having spoken to the motion, does not have the right to move that the question be put. If you check Standing Orders, you will find that I am right.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The question has been put. The question is that the question be now put.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** Mr Speaker, I rose on a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I do not think that the member can take a point of order.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** I took a point of order, and I ask you to rule on it.

**Mr SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** You cannot just say that. You check the Standing Orders. The Minister spoke to the motion.

**Mr SPEAKER:** No point of order has been made out.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** A point of order has been made out, Mr Speaker, and I ask that you check the provisions of Standing Orders.

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

**Mr Mackenroth** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I have warned the honourable member for Chatsworth under the provisions of Standing Order No. 123A. If any further misconduct occurs, the honourable member will be ejected from the House.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I also warn the honourable member for Lytton under the provisions of Standing Order No. 123A.

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (Mr Warburton's amendment) stand part of the question—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 48		NOES, 31	
Ahern	Lester	Braddy	Warner, A. M.
Alison	Lickiss	Burns	Wilson
Austin	Lingard	Campbell	Yewdale
Bjelke-Petersen	Littleproud	Casey	
Booth	McKechnie	Comben	
Borbidge	McPhie	D'Arcy	
Cahill	Menzel	De Lacy	
Chapman	Miller	Eaton	
Cooper	Muntz	Fouras	
Elliott	Newton	Gibbs, R. J.	
FitzGerald	Powell	Goss	
Gibbs, I. J.	Randell	Hamill	
Glasson	Row	Kruger	
Goleby	Simpson	Mackenroth	
Gunn	Stephan	McElligott	
Gygar	Stoneman	McLean	
Harper	Tenni	Milliner	
Harvey	Turner	Palaszczuk	
Hinze	Wharton	Prest	
Innes	White	Price	
Jennings		Shaw	
Katter		Smith	
Kaus		Underwood	
Knox	<i>Tellers—</i>	Vaughan	<i>Tellers—</i>
Lane	Neal	Veivers	Davis
Lee	Henderson	Warburton	Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

### PAPERS

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

#### Reports—

Net Surplus Profits of the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland) for the year ended 30 June 1984

Department of Commercial and Industrial Development for the year ended 30 June 1984.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Proclamation under the State Transport Act 1938-1981

#### Orders in Council under—

State Transport Act 1938-1981

State Development and Public Works Organization Act 1971-1981

Public Service Act 1922-1978

City of Brisbane Act 1924-1984 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982

Sewerage and Water Supply Act 1949-1982

State Housing Act 1945-1984

State Housing Act 1945-1984 and the Land Act 1962-1984

Industrial Development Act 1963-1981 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982

Small Business Development Corporation Act 1980-1983

Local Government Act 1936-1984

#### Regulations under—

Public Service Act 1922-1978

Casino Control Act 1982  
 Pay-roll Tax Act 1971-1984  
 Stamp Act 1894-1984  
 Local Government Act 1936-1984  
 Law Courts and State Buildings Protective Security Act 1983  
 Retail Shop Leases Act 1984  
 Ordinances under the City of Brisbane Act 1924-1984  
 Report and Financial Statements of the Gladstone Area Water Board for the year ended 30 June 1984.

### BILLS: AMENDMENTS TO YEAR DATE

**Hon. C. A. WHARTON** (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice:  
 I move—

“That all Bills presently before the House brought over from the 1984 part of the present session of Parliament be amended at the table without questions put in Committee so that the year date 1984 will become 1985 in the title, short title, or otherwise, as may be required.”

Motion agreed to.

### MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

#### Electricity Strike

**Mr SPEAKER:** I wish to report that I have received the following brief written statement from the Leader of the Opposition—

“26th February, 1985.

The Hon. J. H. Warner, M.L.A.,  
 Speaker of the Legislative Assembly,  
 Parliament House,  
 Brisbane. 4000.

Dear Mr. Speaker,

In accordance with Standing Order 137, I propose that the following matter of public importance be submitted to the House for urgent discussion, namely,

‘The Government’s mishandling of the present electricity dispute which if allowed to continue will further damage our already depressed economy with the inevitable consequence of a higher rate of unemployment.’

Yours sincerely,

N. G. Warburton, M.L.A.,  
 Leader of the Opposition.”

Honourable members, as the matter has been fully canvassed today, I do not intend to call the Leader of the Opposition to open the discussion.

### ARCHITECTS BILL

**Hon. C. A. WHARTON** (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to the registration and practice of architects and for related purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

### First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Wharton, read a first time.

### Second Reading

**Hon. C. A. WHARTON** (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing) (11.34 p.m.):  
I move—

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

For some time there has been a need to update the provisions of the Architects Act 1962-1971 as there have been certain difficulties in its administration. The main thrust of the Act provides that persons who provide professional services in the field of architecture must be suitably qualified and that the Board of Architects is constituted to administer the legislation. The main concerns of the Act are that there is no specific complaints procedure for the prosecution of offences under the Act, all monetary penalties are out of date, and that architects are restricted in their trading practices by the present requirement that at least two thirds of directors of approved architectural companies must be registered architects.

In considering proposed amendments, a review of the Act has recently been completed. This was the first major review of the legislation for over 20 years, during which time many changes have taken place within the profession and related disciplines, indeed in the community at large, particularly in the area of consumer awareness.

In reviewing the legislation, a study of all State and Territory architects Acts has been undertaken on a clause by clause basis. In addition, a member of the Board of Architects of Queensland has made visits on behalf of the board to all registration boards in Australia and all Royal Australian Institute of Architects chapters and federal offices. Discussions have also been held with the Architects Registration Council of the United Kingdom and the National Council of American Registration Boards.

The Architects Act was previously amended in 1971 when provision was made for the approval of architectural companies and Part IIIA—“Approved Architectural Companies”—was inserted accordingly. This insertion has caused some difficulties in the use of the Act and it was considered that the subdivision and numbering of the Act should be rationalised and the numbering of all sections made sequential throughout.

In doing so, and having regard to the extent and the nature of the proposed amendments, it is considered necessary to enact an entirely new Architects Act to replace the existing legislation. This Bill will give effect to that consideration.

The main thrust of the proposed legislation is similar to that of the previous Act in providing for the keeping of a register of architects; the definition of qualifications of an architect; the approval of architectural companies; disciplinary provisions against architects and architectural companies; a complaints procedure against architects and architectural companies; prohibited practices in the field of architecture; account and audit provisions required by the Auditor-General's Department; and the making of regulations.

There are some specific differences between this Bill and the existing legislation. A complaints procedure, which sets out the procedure for the commencement of disciplinary proceedings and how a hearing is to be conducted, is included.

Some relaxation of the requirements that two thirds of directors of approved architectural companies approved under the Act be registered architects is proposed, which will give architects greater flexibility in their practices. Presently, two thirds of directors of approved architectural companies have to be registered architects. This requirement is to be waived in the case of two director companies where one director must be a registered architect and also the principal executive officer and the other may be a person holding a prescribed qualification, a relative or a public accountant or a legal practitioner.

Presently, the requirement for professional indemnity insurance places the approved architectural companies at a disadvantage in relation to individual or unincorporated practices and as it is commonplace for the majority of architects (whether corporate or unincorporate) to carry such insurance, it has been decided to remove this statutory requirement.

All monetary penalties have been updated. The present penalties were provided for in 1971 and have not been updated since. Reference to other bodies and organisations contained in the Act have also been updated.

The right of appeal has been changed from the Supreme Court to the District Court, which is considered more accessible in terms of time and cost.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Yewdale, adjourned.

### COMMONWEALTH AND STATE HOUSING AGREEMENT BILL

**Hon. C. A. WHARTON** (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to authorize the execution for and on behalf of the State of Queensland of an agreement in relation to housing between the Commonwealth, the several States of the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory.”

Motion agreed to.

#### First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Wharton, read a first time.

#### Second Reading

**Hon. C. A. WHARTON** (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing) (11.39 p.m.): I move—

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

The Bill is a very brief one. It contains only three clauses, which authorise the execution by Queensland of the 1984 Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement. The agreement is contained as a schedule to the Bill.

As honourable members know, the Commonwealth and the States have had housing agreements since World War II. The new agreement supersedes the earlier agreements.

By agreement, or consensus—to use a modern term—between the States and the Commonwealth, the 1981 agreement, which was to run until 30 June 1986, was terminated from 1 July 1984. This allowed for the new 1984 agreement, which commenced from 1 July 1984. The new agreement will run for 10 years with provision for triennial evaluations.

The base financial assistance from the Commonwealth for each of the first three years is prescribed in the agreement. Queensland of course still suffers from the fact that it does not yet receive per capita funding for housing. When introducing the 1981 agreement legislation in the House, I advised honourable members that the 1981 Commonwealth Housing Assistance Act committed the Commonwealth to achieving per capita funding by 1990-91. The Commonwealth Housing Assistance Act of 1984 reiterates this principle. However, Queensland will forego millions of dollars until it eventually achieves per capita funding in 1990-91.

In 1984-85 the base financial assistance to the States is \$530m, of which \$35m is for pensioner rental housing assistance and \$495m for untied assistance. Of these amounts, Queensland's share will be \$6.3m for pensioner housing and \$58.7m for untied funds.

The States are required to match untied funds. However, because wage pause moneys are included in the untied funds, Queensland's matching figure is \$53.4m. Queensland has no difficulty in matching this amount. In addition, \$17m has been made available from the Commonwealth to Queensland for specific housing assistance. The State Government has allotted \$30m from Commonwealth Loan Council borrowings for housing. This is available at a concessional interest rate of 4.5 per cent. Total grant and loan moneys available to Queensland for housing this year amount to \$112m.

The principles and objectives of the agreement are largely unaltered from recent agreements. Put simply, the agreement provides for the Commonwealth to pay advances and grants to the States for home-ownership assistance to people not able to achieve it through the private market and for rental housing assistance for people in need who, for various reasons, are unable to obtain adequate accommodation themselves.

The agreement encourages the introduction of loan subsidy schemes for housing. Queensland, I am proud to say, is a Commonwealth leader in this field.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Yewdale, adjourned.

### DISPOSAL OF UNEXECUTED WARRANTS BILL

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the disposal of unexecuted warrants and for related purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

#### First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Harper, read a first time.

#### Second Reading

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (11.43 p.m.): I move—

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

The purpose of this Bill is to permit the cancellation of warrants which, for various reasons, are unable to be executed.

The Police Department is by law responsible for dealing with warrants that have been lawfully issued for the apprehension of persons alleged to have offended or who have been convicted of offences against Queensland law. This involves the recording and storing of the warrants by the Police Department pending action being taken towards execution of the warrants. This recording and storing takes place at the Warrant Bureau of the Police Department. When warrants are unable to be executed, they are retained in the Warrant Bureau.

Approximately 70 000 warrants are presently held in the Warrant Bureau. The vast majority are unable to be executed. One reason for this is that the warrant is very old (there are instances of warrants held that were issued in 1919). Another reason is the lack of information on the face of the warrant regarding the identity or location of the person named in the warrant.

The law relating to warrants is contained in the Justices Act 1886-1982, but the Act does not make provision for unexecuted warrants to be cancelled. The Police Department has requested the cancellation of unexecuted warrants. The intent of this Bill is to achieve that result.

It is intended that the Commissioner of Police will arrange for the return of warrants issued by the judiciary, the magistracy or justices of the peace to a central point where

unexecuted warrants may be cancelled after a minimum period of two years has elapsed from the date of issue of the warrant. The warrants returned for cancellation are to be destroyed in the presence of an officer of the Department of Justice authorised by me.

Where warrants relate to matters associated with the exercise of summary jurisdiction, provision is made in the Bill to empower the Clerk of the Court, Brisbane, or a justice of the peace authorised by him in that behalf, to re-issue any cancelled warrant. This re-issued warrant will take the place of the cancelled warrant in every respect.

Where a bench warrant has been issued by the judiciary and it is not intended to continue proceedings against the person named in the warrant, it is proposed that the bench warrant will expire on the discontinuance of those proceedings. Where a bench warrant is not executed it may be forwarded for cancellation two years after the date of its issue. Fresh warrants may again be sought if required.

The proposals set out in the Bill will assist the administration of justice in this State by the removal of the excessive number of warrants presently stored in the Warrant Bureau of the Police Department, together with future unexecuted warrants.

The provisions of the Bill have been discussed with my Cabinet colleague the Honourable the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Burns, adjourned.

### **CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION (EXTRA-TERRITORIAL OFFENCES) BILL**

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the issue of search warrants for the investigation in this State of certain offences against the law of other States or Territories of the Commonwealth and for other purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Harper, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (11.46 p.m.): I move—

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

This Bill is to permit the issue of search warrants in Queensland for the criminal investigation in Queensland of certain offences against the law of other States or Territories of the Commonwealth. Difficulties have been experienced in all States in the area of criminal investigations because a search warrant issued in one State cannot be executed in another State.

The purpose of this Bill is to permit the issue of search warrants in Queensland for the search of premises in Queensland to enable the seizure of anything that might be related to the commission or suspected commission of an indictable offence in another State or Territory of the Commonwealth where, if the offence were committed in Queensland, it would attract criminal liability.

It is not possible, in one State, to obtain a search warrant authorising a search to be conducted outside the territorial limits of that State. In order to conduct a search outside Queensland it is necessary to establish that grounds exist for the issuing of a search warrant in that other State in which the premises are situated.

Where an offence is committed or suspected of having been committed in a jurisdiction other than Queensland, there is presently no power in Queensland law to

issue a search warrant for the search of premises in Queensland for the seizure of objects connected with the investigation of that offence. If an offence has been committed in Queensland, a difficulty in obtaining a search warrant in another State is that no offence has taken place in that other State.

At the request of the Queensland Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police, the whole problem was brought before the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General. The Attorneys-General agreed with the principles presently contained in the Bill, and the Bill is therefore a reciprocal measure with the result that, should the Queensland police request assistance in the investigation of offences interstate, the provisions, when enacted in those jurisdictions, will be of assistance.

The Attorneys-General considered the various facets of the problem and a uniform Bill has now been prepared by the Parliamentary Counsel's Committee, which comprises Parliamentary Counsel from the various States and the Commonwealth. The Bill before the House mainly follows the basic uniform Bill, although some variations have been made to suit Queensland conditions.

Provision exists in the Bill for the issue of search warrants by a stipendiary magistrate only upon his being satisfied that there are reasonable grounds to believe—

- (a) that an offence to which this Act applies has been, or is intended to be, committed; and
- (b) that there is at any premises an object relevant to the investigation of that offence.

The stipendiary magistrate may then issue a search warrant in respect of those premises.

Provision is made for the issue of a warrant upon application by a member of the police force either personally or by telephone, although stringent conditions apply when a warrant is sought to be issued by telephone. Where a warrant is sought to be issued by telephone, the Bill requires particulars of the member of the Queensland Police Force seeking the warrant to be given to the stipendiary magistrate, the grounds on which he seeks the warrant and an undertaking from the complainant that, if the warrant is issued, a complaint in writing verifying the facts will be made on oath.

Following the giving of the undertaking, the search warrant can be issued by the stipendiary magistrate and it comes into force when signed by him.

The stipendiary magistrate shall inform the applicant of the terms of the warrant, and a copy of the warrant shall be prepared there and then by the Queensland police officer.

The search will take place by executing the copy warrant.

A further condition is that the written complaint is to be forwarded to the stipendiary magistrate as soon as possible. Whether a warrant is issued in person or by telephone, the relevant documentation is to be lodged with the Clerk of the Court, Brisbane, in every case.

The law relating to the issue of search warrants in Queensland is generally contained in the Criminal Code, and the provisions of the Bill will complement those provisions.

The execution of a search warrant is to take place in accordance with certain conditions. For example, unless it is suitably endorsed, it shall not be executed at night.

A police officer is required to produce, upon demand, particulars of the warrant to the occupier of any premises, and the officer is required to give written notice of his name and rank, the name of the stipendiary magistrate who issued the warrant, the date and time of its issue and a description of any objects that are seized and removed from the premises. The notice is to be given to the occupier of the premises as soon as possible or left for him in a prominent place.

The search warrant remains in existence for a period of one month, and a person who obstructs a police officer in the execution of his duty commits an offence.

This Bill, being a reciprocal one, provides for arrangements to be made to enable objects seized in other jurisdictions on behalf of Queensland or seized in Queensland on behalf of other jurisdictions to be dealt with in the appropriate manner.

It is considered that the provisions of the Bill will assist in the investigation of criminal offences, and because of its reciprocity the Queensland police will benefit from legislation of a similar nature when enacted in other jurisdictions.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr R. J. Gibbs, adjourned.

### ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH LANDS BILL

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to divest certain estates and interests in certain freehold and leasehold land and the improvements thereon from certain registered proprietors and lessees and, according to the location of the land, to vest estates and interests in the land in The Corporation of the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane, the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Townsville or The Corporation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba in each case freed and discharged from any trusts upon which the land is held, to provide for the similar divesting and vesting of other land and for related purposes; and that so much of the Standing Orders relating to private Bills be suspended so as to enable the said Bill to be presented and passed through all its stages as if it were a public Bill.”

Motion agreed to.

#### First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Harper, read a first time.

#### Second Reading

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (11.53 p.m.): I move—

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

The purpose of this Bill is to enable the vesting of Roman Catholic Church lands, presently vested in deceased church officials, in appropriate Roman Catholic Church corporations in Queensland.

Following representations from the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, His Grace Archbishop Rush, requesting that action be taken to overcome existing legal difficulties, it was decided to introduce legislation enabling the vesting of those church lands.

His Grace the Archbishop of Brisbane has pointed out that in the latter part of the last century and the earlier part of this century several parcels of land were acquired on its behalf by persons associated with the church.

From the early 1930s to 1941 the church progressively established corporate bodies to facilitate the operation of the Archdiocese of Brisbane and the Dioceses of Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Townsville and Cairns. Most of the land registered in the names of church officials was transferred to the corporate bodies. However, not all lands were transferred and several parcels are still registered in the names of the original church officials, although these people have been deceased for many years.

Archbishop Rush said that the Roman Catholic Church had experienced difficulties when dealing with Government bodies, local authorities and private citizens in relation

to these lands. Any action by the church to secure clear title in the Supreme Court would be both costly and time-consuming.

In most cases, the parcels of land involved have churches, schools, presbyteries or other ecclesiastical buildings erected on them. Because of the legal problems involved, legislation is necessary to give the church legal title to the land, and there are precedents for this type of action.

The Presbyterian Church Property Act 1909, the Roman Catholic Church (Northern Lands) Vesting Act 1981 and the Brisbane Roman Catholic Cathedral Act 1981 overcame similar problems. For instance, the Presbyterian Church Property Act 1909 provided that the Registrar of Titles could transfer lands into the name of the church's corporation after being presented with a certificate under the seal of the corporation that a resolution had been passed by the general assembly of the church requesting such registration. Archbishop Rush asked that similar provisions be incorporated in the Bill.

I am appreciative of the difficulties faced by the church in dealing with its own property, and the Bill before the House has been drafted to allow dealings with the church lands to proceed.

The provisions of the Bill allow the vesting of the various church lands described in the schedules to the Bill in the appropriate church corporations depending upon the actual location of the church lands whether in the archdiocese of Brisbane or in the dioceses of Townsville and Toowoomba. Provision is made to enable additional land to be included in the schedules should it be discovered from time to time by the church authorities that other church lands are not vested in the appropriate church corporations.

Provision is also made in the Bill for the Registrar of Titles and other persons authorised by law to register dealings to give effect to the vesting of the church lands in accordance with the requirements set out in the Bill.

It is considered that the provisions of this Bill will enable the church authorities to deal with the church lands in an orderly and progressive manner.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr R. J. Gibbs, adjourned.

### SAVE THE STEAM CAR FUND BILL

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the disposition of funds resulting from appeals commenced in the year 1980 in respect of a project for the development of a steam car known as ‘the Pritchard steam car’ and for related purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

#### First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Harper, read a first time.

#### Second Reading

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (11.57 p.m.), I move—

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

As a result of publicity in 1980, a fund entitled “Save the Steam Car Fund” was established. Mr Pritchard, a director of a company incorporated in Victoria, was endeavouring to develop a steam car. The company was said to have liquidity problems and the appeal was to the public to contribute or donate moneys to prevent the sale of the prototype to overseas interests.

The legal basis of this fund and the purpose for which it was created remain unclear to this day. However, it seems to have been generally assumed that the community was being encouraged to make donations to the fund in order to prevent the development going overseas, and to encourage the steam car's further development and manufacture in Queensland.

Three members of the Parliament at the time, namely, Mr V. P. Lester, MLA, now the Honourable the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, Mr K. W. Wright, MHR, previously Leader of the Opposition, and Dr J. A. R. Lockwood, then member for Toowoomba North, established themselves as trustees of this fund. What purported to be a trust document was drawn up by a firm of solicitors, and under this trust document the Queensland Consumers Association was declared to be the beneficiary of the trust. The Queensland Consumers Association seems to have been only a means to an end, in that it was an existing organisation. There never was any intention that the association benefit from the moneys which were paid into the fund.

The copy declaration of trust clearly shows that the Queensland Consumers Association is the beneficiary thereof, which is contrary to the purpose for which the fund was established. While the beneficiary of the mortgaged debenture is the Queensland Consumers Association, that body has really no claim to any benefits which have been or may be derived from the existence of the fund.

The position is further complicated by the fact that a number of donations may apparently have been made by persons expecting to receive shares in a public company to be formed, or possibly in the existing company. It would also appear probable that many of the early donations may have been intended as outright gifts to the company to help it in its financial difficulties.

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Some time after the launching of the appeal, the trustees of the original fund sought to have themselves removed from the position of trustee. In order to assist in the resolution of the problem, on 18 May 1983 the Public Trustee was appointed as trustee of the fund to replace the existing trustees. Since his appointment, the Public Trustee has attempted to enter into discussions with the Pritchards in an endeavour to resolve the problem, but has been unsuccessful.

Consequently, it is considered that the only way in which this matter can be satisfactorily resolved is to introduce legislation to create a means whereby the balance of the funds raised by the appeal can be disposed of by the Public Trustee to those persons who can establish a bona fide claim against the fund.

It is considered that neither the company, Pritchard Steam Power Pty Limited nor Mr and Mrs Pritchard, referred to in the legislation as the "donees", should have any entitlement to claim any further funds now held by the Public Trustee. In addition, it is also desirable to make provision to validate the advance already made by the original trustees to Pritchard Steam Power Pty Limited.

Following the launching of the appeal it would seem that a sum of more than \$120,000 was raised. A sum of \$80,000 was initially paid to Mr and Mrs Pritchard by the original trustees, in return for which it was alleged that certain obligations were to be undertaken by the Pritchards and their company, Pritchard Steam Power Pty Limited. The basis for the advance of these funds is unclear, particularly in light of the inability to strictly identify the purpose for which the funds were raised in the first place. As a result, the validity of the action of the trustees in advancing these funds is questionable.

When the fund was transferred to the Public Trustee on 30 June 1983, the amount in the fund was \$54,573.41. As at 1 February 1985, the balance, including accumulated interest thereon, was \$64,452.07. Although it may be possible to ascertain the legal position by way of litigation, this would certainly exhaust a major part of the balance of the funds which were raised. The only publicly acceptable solution would seem to be

for the legislation to provide for the Public Trustee to advertise, requesting that persons who desire a refund of their payment lodge a claim with supporting evidence by a date to be specified in such advertisements, and then to proceed to distribute the funds as far as they would go, after deduction of all outstanding legal and administrative costs.

Having regard to the volume of work to be carried out by the Public Trustee in performing his duties in accordance with such legislation, it is considered that the sum of \$100 be the minimum amount of donation for which donees are eligible to apply for refund. Furthermore, it is felt more equitable, having regard to all matters relating to the fund, that, after discharging all bona fide claims and expenses, the Public Trustee should pay the balance, if any, to the University of Queensland to be applied, as decided by the Senate of the University, towards research in automobile propulsion.

I also point out to honourable members that the Public Trustee, in administering the fund, is not making any charge for his legal expenses, except for actual expenses incurred by him. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr R. J. Gibbs, adjourned.

### ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. C. A. WHARTON** (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

### Government Intrusion into Local Authority Affairs

**Mr McELLIGOTT** (Townsville) (12.4 a.m.): Recently, a meeting took place of the mayors of eight provincial cities in Queensland. They expressed grave concern about increased intrusion by the State Government into the affairs of local authorities. I understand that similar concern has been expressed by the executive committee of the Queensland Local Government Association. The example of intrusion that I wish to refer to tonight is the use by the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing of section 33 (6) of the Local Government Act. Pioneer Concrete (Qld) Pty Ltd made application to the Townsville City Council for a town-planning permit to engage in Extractive Industry—Extension of Existing Quarry.

Because the proposed extension of the existing quarry straddled the boundary between the city of Townsville and the shire of Thuringowa, an application, similar to the application that had been made to the Townsville City Council, was lodged with the Thuringowa Shire Council. The major part of the extensions, together with the proposed access road, are included in the local authority area of the Thuringowa Shire Council. By letter dated 26 October 1984, the Thuringowa Shire Council refused approval of the application that had been made by Pioneer Concrete (Qld) Pty Ltd. By letter dated 7 November 1984 the Townsville City Council similarly refused the application made to it.

Pioneer Concrete (Qld) Pty Ltd lodged appeals in the Local Government Court against the refusals of both councils. The applications were vigorously opposed by residents in the vicinity of the subject land, and 17 persons elected to become respondents to both appeals. All that has transpired since the filing of the appeals is the notice from the appellant to the Townsville City Council requiring discovery and, it is assumed, to the Thuringowa Shire Council, in response to which the required affidavit of documents was prepared and served. However, by letter dated 3 January 1985 the Director of Local Government advised that, as a result of representations made to the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing by Pioneer Concrete (Qld) Pty Ltd, Cabinet had directed that the Minister initiate rezoning procedures to amend both the town-planning schemes for both local authority areas pursuant to section 33 (6) of the Local Government Act to include the land in the special facilities (extractive industry purposes) zone.

In the letter from the Director of Local Government to the Townsville City Council, he says—

“The company claims that the site is the only available known source of material which meets the specifications for asphaltic concrete and for high strength and precast concrete work in the Townsville area. This claim is supported by the Mines Department and the Department of Main Roads.”

That claim is not in accordance with the recent survey conducted by officers of the geological survey of Queensland. It found adequate reserves of quarry rock suitable for both the manufacture of concrete and road-making purposes such as bituminous concrete within reasonable range of the Townsville market.

Pioneer Concrete (Qld) Pty Ltd has, I mentioned earlier, exercised its right of appeal against the councils' decisions, and that matter is listed for hearing in the Local Government Court. The action taken by Cabinet will abort the court proceedings and will do much to undermine the confidence that the citizens of Australia have had in the judicial system of this country.

Cabinet has resorted to the little-used section 33 (6) of the Local Government Act to reverse the councils' decision, and has justified its action of accepting the claim made by Pioneer Concrete that the site is the only available known source of material in the Townsville area that meets specifications for asphaltic concrete and for high-strength and pre-cast concrete work. As I indicated earlier, that is at variance with a recent geological survey of the area.

Cabinet's action means that the people who live in the vicinity of the quarry and who fear the intrusion into their way of life and the amenity of their area by the extension of this quarry reserve have now lost their right of appeal. Had the matter been able to go through the proper appeal process, as was initiated by the company, all parties to the application would have had the ability to exercise their rights and state their opinions before the Local Government Court.

As I said, the mayors of the eight major cities in Queensland are very concerned about what they see as an increased intrusion by the State Government into the affairs of local government, and I am sure that all members recognise that one of the fundamental aims and responsibilities of local government is to express the interests and the aspirations of the local community.

I believe that the Minister erred in applying section 33 (6) of the Local Government Act to overturn a decision on a town-planning application made by two local authorities and therefore deprive residents of the opportunity, after having raised their objections through the normal town-planning applications, of exercising their right of appeal.

*Time expired.*

#### **Union Action in Support of Electrical Trades Union**

**Mr BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise) (12.9 a.m.): For a considerable period today the House debated the present dispute in the electricity industry, but I would like to raise—

**Mr Scott** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I can understand the sensitivity of the honourable member for Cook (Mr Scott), because members heard a tirade of apologies from Labor Party members, in particular from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton), who is a former assistant State secretary of the Electrical Trades Union, the spokesman on Mines and Energy, the honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan), who also held that rank, and the honourable member for Bulimba (Mr McLean), who used to organise the strikes on the waterfront in Brisbane. As I said, I can understand the sensitivity of those members.

The matter that I wish to raise tonight, and which should concern all honourable members, is the action taken in support of the Electrical Trades Union, particularly by the Australian Telecommunications Employees Association. Efforts are being made to disrupt Government services in the State. It is a fact of life that the plugs have been pulled on the TAB telephones. An article in the "Daily Sun" of 18 February 1985 states—

"Queensland's telephone system was last night facing collapse as unions prepared to escalate the seven-day power dispute.

The Australian Telecommunications Employees' Association is threatening to pull the plug on State Government and business phones.

Association State secretary Mr Ian McLean said the action would cripple Queensland's communications network."

Again we find how vulnerable the Opposition is. Mr McLean is the State president of the Australian Labour Party. He is the person who has been pulling the plugs on Government telephone services in this State. Quite sinister implications can be drawn from what Mr McLean has said. Further on, the article states—

"Mr McLean, who is also A.L.P. State president, said the union was also determined to hit allies of the Premier.

He said subscribers to the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation would be prime targets for bans on computer and trunk links."

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I am interested to know whether Opposition members support the imposition of such political censorship upon the elected Government of the State by the leader of their party in this State.

**Mr Campbell** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I am interested to know where the honourable members for Bundaberg and Brisbane Central stand on this matter. I hope that the Government is looking very closely at the attempt by the ATEA to sabotage communications to the Government.

This afternoon, the Labor Party's position was made quite clear. Very strong support is permeating the ranks of the Opposition in this Parliament for that sort of disruption. I believe that the majority of people in this State will condemn it.

At this time, I think that it is relevant to express concern at what happened last week when certain members of the Australian Journalists Association, in support of the members of the Printing and Kindred Industries Union, sought also to impose political censorship on Queensland.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The honourable member for Brisbane Central interjects. I should have thought that all members would have defended the freedom of the press. As the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) said this afternoon, we read every day in "The Courier-Mail" that our liberty depends upon the freedom of the press and that that cannot be limited without being lost. That freedom was limited last week when some journalists, under instructions from the AJA, walked off the afternoon shift at Queensland Newspapers Pty. Ltd. That is a disturbing development. To their credit, most journalists did the right thing, but a few did not. I hope that the people of Queensland will watch such developments very closely. If we reach the stage—

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The honourable member for Brisbane Central may well laugh, but it will be a sorry day if we reach the stage at which the elected Government of the day cannot print an advertisement without journalists going on strike because they do not agree with what the Government is doing.

*Time expired.*

### Charity Collections

**Mr COMBEN (Windsor) (12.14 a.m.):** A year ago almost to the day the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General (Mr Harper)—and I am pleased to see that, for a change, he is present in the Chamber this evening—made a ministerial statement in which he warned the public to be aware of the practices of an organisation called Rag Salvage. The specific concern expressed by the Minister on that date was that—

“Rag Salvage, by using a bin almost identical to that used by Life Line and by placing its bins alongside Life Line bins, has confused the donating public and as a result may have affected Life Line collections.”

A year after that statement, the problem referred to by the Minister has grown to gigantic proportions and the present rip-off of Lifeline and the Society of St Vincent de Paul amounts to hundred of thousands of dollars. However, the Government and the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—who is sitting in the Chamber grinning like a Cheshire cat—have not acted.

Another group of bins marked “Mission Clothing of Australia”, which are painted in the same light-blue paint as those belonging to Lifeline, are being placed alongside Lifeline bins. The telephone number and address on these new bins is the same as that of Paddy’s Markets of Brisbane Pty Ltd, 120 Commercial Road, Fortitude Valley.

Not only have the misleading and fraudulent practices not been reduced, but they have expanded considerably. In my electorate and right across the north side of Brisbane these bogus bins are appearing like Dr Who’s telephone box. My colleague the member for Ipswich informs me that a similar situation is occurring in his electorate. There is hardly a vacant service station in south-east Queensland at which at least one of these bins cannot be seen. Often the Lifeline bin has been stuck at the back of the service station and I wonder whether they may have been deliberately moved by those who are perpetrating this fraud. Wherever one goes, one sees people putting their clothing into bins marked “Mission Clothing of Australia”

**Mr Harper:** You are about six months late, you know.

**Mr COMBEN:** I am coming to that.

**An Opposition Member:** What is he doing about it?

**Mr COMBEN:** As my colleague said, what is the Minister doing? That is why I am on my feet.

**Mr Harper:** We acted in accordance with the wishes of the charities concerned.

**Mr COMBEN:** If that is the case, why, on television a fortnight ago, did the charities appeal to the Government to do something? In my personal correspondence with the charities I am asked why the Minister has done nothing. They claim that, although he sounds sympathetic and makes the right noises, he is doing absolutely nothing. The Minister would have been interested to hear the fairly intemperate language used by a church leader recently about the Minister’s mismanagement of the issue and the fact that the Government was not concerned.

**Mr Harper:** Perhaps you should make representations for them.

**Mr COMBEN:** I am doing so at this moment.

The Minister has done nothing to date, and the only way to draw attention to the issue is to raise it in this place when reporters are in the press gallery. At some stage they will make a report exposing the fraudulent practices of a couple of my electors. I do not want them voting for me if they are carrying out such practices. The Minister is not interested in moving against them, and I suspect that they are members of the National Party.

**Mr Davis:** Perhaps they are members of the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation.

**Mr COMBEN:** That would be the only way that they could get away with the practice. To put it mildly, it is horrendous.

I notice that the four members of the Government who are sitting on the ministerial benches all claim to be committed church people. However, at this moment, the biggest rip-off of a church charity that this State has ever seen is being carried out. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are being lost, and not one of those honourable members is doing anything. I do not think that any honourable member, regardless of his religious denomination, would say that anything is wrong with Lifeline. This year, Lifeline will lose approximately \$200,000. A good bin brings in about \$24,000 a year gross. Because Lifeline is not getting much used clothing in, a good deal of money is being lost.

**Mr I. J. Gibbs:** I bet you didn't know before you came into this place that Lifeline existed.

**Mr COMBEN:** Because my wife was for many years a Methodist missionary in the islands, I know a great deal about Lifeline. The way the Minister for Mines and Energy has been handling the power dispute, perhaps one of his colleagues could send him a lifeline.

I bring to the attention of the House the activities of Paddy John Stephens and his wife, Heather Mary Stephens, of 23 Rupert Street, Windsor. They are share-holders in Paddy's Markets of Brisbane Pty Ltd.

**Mr Harper:** Do you say that the Industrial Institution for the Blind does not have a right to a share in that market?

**Mr COMBEN:** According to the Minister, the Institution for the Blind gets \$7,500. According to the amount made from the bins, the institution receives \$6,600. At this moment, Paddy's Markets is probably getting almost \$150,000 net profit a year. If the Minister thinks that that is proper, he should resign.

The Minister for Justice and Attorney-General has wide powers under the various statutes and should be protecting that charity, not letting it be totally ripped off. The present situation is like allowing a little old lady to receive \$2,000 for a house that is worth \$20,000.

**Mr Harper:** Do you want me to interfere in the rights of the Industrial Institution for the Blind?

**Mr COMBEN:** Yes, I do. It is the blind people who should be benefiting. At the moment the general public is being ripped of and does not really know what is going on.

*Time expired.*

### Professionalism of Journalists

**Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine) (12.20 a.m.):** For quite some time I have been aware of the attitude in my electorate to the even-handedness of the press, particularly the metropolitan press. This evening in the House the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing spoke at length about one journalist. Recently the honourable member for Surfers Paradise raised the same point. I wish to take the matter further.

In case members of the Opposition think that the comments have been rather biased, I wish to quote from an article written by a member of the Australian Journalists Association, Mr David McNicoll. In fact, he is a member of the Australian Press Council.

**Mr Borbidge:** He is a very distinguished journalist.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Yes, he is. The article, which is headed "The Degradation of freedom into licence" appeared in "The Bulletin" of 22 January this year. Mr McNicoll wrote—

"I have been a member of the Australian Press Council since its foundation, eight years ago, and latterly a member of its sub-committee handling freedom of the press. This has meant that over the years, I have had the opportunity to read dozens of complaints about the media—and also to note the many occasions when there have been attempts to stifle (or at least muffle) freedom of the press

Sadly, I am starting to have increasing sympathy for the complainants and less sympathy for the media. As for protecting the freedom of the press, I incline to the view that the press confuses freedom with licence in a remarkable number of instances"

**Mr De Lacy:** I did not think we would ever be reduced in this House to having McNicoll quoted. He is an utter fascist.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** The man was elected to the Australian Press Council.

Later in the same article he wrote—

"Another source of worry is the increasing tendency of political journalists to allow their feelings and even affiliations to show up in what they write. It does not apply to the elder statesmen of the craft—it is the young turks, bedazzled by bylines and flattered by being known to politicians by their first names, who are inclined to allow personal feelings to show up in print. There is something to be said for rotating political journalists at fairly regular intervals before they start regarding themselves seriously as kingmakers.

But things are happening in journalism which set the alarm bells ringing. It is not the frequency with which one hears 'You can't believe what you read in the papers' it is not the solemn measured criticism of the professional press watcher. For me, that alarm bell rings because I have a gut feeling that our profession is not as honourable as it was or should be. After a lifetime in the Fourth Estate, I am beset every now and then with feelings of shame at what is happening in my profession."

Those are the words of a journalist, but members of the Opposition seem to take exception to them.

**Mr Mackenroth:** If ever you got a run in the press for something you said in this House, it would be by a favour from the press.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I do not play up to the press as the member for Chatsworth does. He continually looks at the press gallery.

I am trying to make a constructive contribution. I ask the AJA to take a good, hard look at itself. As a result of that article, I will cite some examples of recent history and refer to the 1983 Queensland State election. Some members of the AJA in this State came up with what might be termed bogus press results and wild cartoons. They predicted that the National Party would be wiped off the floor of the House. Of course, the result was quite the opposite. People became suspicious that some journalists were misusing their profession.

In the 1984 Federal election campaign, some journalists belittled Andrew Peacock for approximately 18 months. Many headlines declared that the election result would

be a walk-over for the ALP. Then the people of the nation had the advantage of watching the big debate. However, a day after that some journalists once again said that the ALP would win in a walk-over. The results showed differently.

I put it to members of the Australian Journalists Association that the public has a strong feeling that they are losing credibility. I hope that that association has a good, hard look at its ethics.

#### **National Party; Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen**

**Mr BURNS** (Lytton) (12.25 a.m.): Earlier honourable members saw an example of National Party crawling and snivelling that is unparalleled in the history of parliamentary government in Queensland. The National Party members of the Legislative Assembly have displayed clearly not only that boot-licking is a requirement for National Party selection but also that the removal of a candidate's backbone and its replacement by "I love Joh" stickers is a prerequisite to National Party preselection.

Who is the subject of this unparalleled snivelling? It is the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen), the man who recommended himself for a knighthood for his services to this State, the Christian who defies all Christian principles, the man who refused to help those in real need and opposes aid to starving children throughout the world. He is a real Christian gentleman! He is the old man who the multimillion-dollar publicity machine says fights for Queensland. One wonders whether the Premier and Treasurer, with his interest in foreign affairs and defence, did not fight for this country when the Japanese were bombing Darwin and submarines were in Sydney Harbour during World War II.

This 74-year-old man who boasts of piloting a jet home from the Middle East and who is fit enough to learn to fly a helicopter would not fight for his country when it was in peril and when murderous invaders were on its doorstep. The Premier and Treasurer ought to sanction the release of defence and security records so that honourable members can obtain the facts about his war record. Was he in fact interned at Grovely or at Gaythorne? Or was he restricted to a limited area at Kingaroy because he was a danger to the nation's security?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Lytton is beside himself with rage and contempt. He has departed completely from the truth. He ought to know that what he said is not true.

**Mr Burns:** Release the defence records if it is not true.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** It has nothing to do with me.

**Mr Burns:** I don't believe you.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Menzel): Order! The Premier and Treasurer has risen to a point of order.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I have said again and again that I was called up by the army. I did exactly what the army directed me to do. I do not know how long it will take the honourable member for Lytton to get that into his thick skull. I was not kept under security surveillance, as was suggested by the honourable member. He is beside himself with rage.

The honourable member for Lytton knows that what he said is completely untrue. It is utter nonsense. I was not confined to any particular area. I did exactly what the army directed me to do. Like 40 other persons in Kingaroy, I was called up.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I think that the Premier and Treasurer has made his point. I call the honourable member for Lytton.

**Mr BURNS:** I do not want to hear the Premier and Treasurer's excuses, because I do not believe him. I want proof that he was not a traitor, a quisling, or a suspected fifth-columnist. I think that the Premier and Treasurer was on the other side.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I rise to a further point of order. I demand that the honourable member for Lytton withdraw the remark that I was a traitor. It is not true, and the honourable member knows that it is not true. I ask that that statement be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier and Treasurer has asked the honourable member for Lytton to withdraw the statement that he finds offensive.

**Mr BURNS:** I will not.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the honourable member.

**Mr BURNS:** Warn me under Standing Order No. 123A and throw me out.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I again warn the honourable member for Lytton under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr BURNS:** I am still not withdrawing it.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the honourable member for Lytton to leave the Chamber.

*Whereupon the honourable member for Lytton withdrew from the Chamber.*

#### **ALP Actions during Electricity Industry Dispute**

**Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (12.29 a.m.):** It is appropriate that the matter to which I refer is given emphasis as a result of the behaviour of the honourable member for Lytton, who has just been asked to withdraw from the Chamber. I bring to the notice of this Assembly the lack of support received during the last couple of weeks by the people of north Queensland from the elected members of the Australian Labor Party. It was particularly noticeable that not one single, solitary word of support was given to those persons who suffered and who were deprived physically, financially and in so many other ways.

The whole community of north Queensland was saying, "We do not want dictation by unions. We want to get back to work. We want to go on and live our lives." Those people were not supported by members of the ALP in this House, in the Federal House or in the Senate.

People were ringing me on the telephone to ask me to pass the message on to the Premier and Treasurer that he should stick in there and not give in. The attitude of people throughout the Burdekin was the same. Honourable members might well expect that my supporters would say that. People placed huge one-page advertisements in newspapers stating that they considered that the actions of the unions were deplorable.

The lack of comment and community support by members of the ALP is nothing short of appalling. In fact, I issued a challenge to ALP members, and I will repeat it. Where were ALP members? Where are ALP members? Why are you not saying anything? Whom do members of the ALP support?

I draw to the attention of the House a letter written on 22 February 1985 that was published in "The Advocate". Honourable members opposite should listen to the contents of the letter. It reads as follows—

"Sir, I have decided to deliver a cold analysis of the present power dispute for the edification of Advocate readers.

Initially, the E.T.U. officials acted contrary to the accepted canons of industrial law.

If they had a grievance, the correct procedure was to announce a 24-hour stoppage in protest, as distinct from going on strike.

They could have informed the Industrial Commission of the existence of a dispute and returned to work, whereupon the Commission would have evaluated the situation, and drew the parties together in an air of conciliation."

I will not read the whole letter, but it goes on to say—

"Now having said that, I will conclude by saying the Electricity Board is a Government instrumentality, and as such, belongs to the people of the State.

It is my opinion, unleavened by prejudice or emotion, that no person, or group of persons, may claim by way of legal right, the authority to deprive the people of Queensland of the use of electricity.

On at least one point, without belabouring the others, I agree with the premier. The 'power' belongs to the people."

That letter was written by a man who stood, endorsed by the ALP, in the 1974 State elections against Mr Val Bird. I have the greatest respect for that gentleman. I do not suggest that he has changed his vote. However, he certainly has a great deal of common sense, indicated by the way in which he put the real issue to the people, without blindly following the destructive attitudes of the ALP.

Undoubtedly, the Labor Party is anti progress, anti profit and, in fact, anti almost everything. It is pro a couple of things. The ALP is pro union militancy, pro disruption and pro industrial anarchy. Approximately 70 000 to 80 000 people in the Townsville area, plus another 20 000—and I am talking about adults, not children; a huge voting block of people—sadly and deplorably were let down. The mayor of Townsville said nothing. The Senator for Townsville said nothing. The member for the Federal House of Representatives said nothing. They were all like frightened mice, because they knew that their power base was out there in the militant unions. They ran for cover and were not game to speak.

*Time expired.*

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.34 a.m. (Wednesday).