

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 1985

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

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Griffith University Course in Family Relationships

From Mr Campbell (22 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will establish an inquiry into the Griffith University course in family relationships.

[A similar petition was received from Mr Borbidge (16 signatories).]

Third-party Insurance Premiums

From Mr Campbell (7 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will revoke recent increases in third-party insurance and that future increases will be determined after public hearing.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Manager, Golden Casket Art Union Office for the year ended 30 June 1985

Gold Coast Waterways Authority for the year ended 30 June 1985

Queensland Film Corporation for the year ended 30 June 1985.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council under—

Explosives Act 1952-1981

Mental Health Services Act 1974-1984

Rural Training Schools Act 1964-1984 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984

Regulations under—

Main Roads Act 1920-1984

Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-1985

Hospitals Act 1936-1984.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Central Queensland Main Line Railway Electrification

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (11.4 a.m.), by leave: Honourable members would be aware that, three weeks ago, in company with members of my parliamentary transport committee and Queensland railway officers, I undertook a 1 100 km tour of the giant central Queensland main line electrification project area to familiarise myself with the work going on and to see what progress has been made to date.

For the information of Parliament, I am pleased to report that major contract works are on schedule and that our target dates for starting the electric locomotive haulage of

coal trains, between Blackwater and Gladstone, in March 1987, and between Peak Downs and Hay Point, in December 1986, will be met.

The inspection tour party saw at first hand the scope of the work being done at the huge Callemondah maintenance sheds and marshalling yards near Gladstone, and was impressed by progress along the line as far west as Blackwater and north west to the Goonyella mines system. The party noted that erection of overhead masts between Gladstone and Rockhampton and in the Mount Larcom area was well advanced, the laying of new fibre optic cable for communications and signalling purposes was under way, and several microwave towers to support the communications system were complete.

It was most gratifying, Mr Speaker, to see so many workers gainfully employed along the lines, no fewer than 1 000 being employed by the major contractors erecting the masts and wiring, and laying the fibre optic cable. More than 2 000 new in-the-field jobs in Queensland have been created on this immense \$700m project, and the entire project will create a staggering total of no fewer than 9 000 man-years of employment. The Labor Party will find that hard to criticise.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mrs HARVEY (Greenslopes) (11.6 a.m.), by leave: Last night, during the Adjournment debate, the member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras) launched into a very personal attack——

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is quoting from an unrevised galley proof of *Hansard*, which I understand is not allowed.

Mrs HARVEY: Mr Speaker, I am not quoting from unrevised galley proofs.

Mr MACKENROTH: Further to the point of order—the member for Greenslopes was referring to an unrevised galley proof of *Hansard*. I understand that, as a result of the report of the Select Committee of Privileges that was presented yesterday, that is not allowed.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is a personal explanation. At the moment, I am not aware that the honourable member is taking it from——

Mr Burns: Well, we have told you about it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Lytton under Standing Order No. 123A. If he continues to debate with the Chair while I am making a statement, he will be sent from the Chamber.

I ask the honourable member for Greenslopes to proceed.

Mrs HARVEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr MACKENROTH: Mr Speaker, I am asking you for a ruling on whether members can quote in this Chamber from unrevised galley proofs. You have not ruled on that point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I point out to the honourable member for Chatsworth that I have just related to him that I am listening, or trying to listen, to a personal explanation. I have not heard more than one word, so I can hardly rule on it yet.

Mrs HARVEY: I can only assume, from the attempts by the member for Chatsworth to gag me, that he also is jealous of the Alexandra House project referred to.

Last night, I took great offence at a member for a neighbouring electorate launching into an attack on a project that is in my electorate. It is absolutely no business of his. Alexandra House is fairly and squarely in the middle of Coorparoo, which is in the middle of my electorate. The project has involved two years of hard work on my part.

It is also a project that is of great benefit to the people in my electorate. I can understand why Opposition members are peeved——

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I direct your attention to Standing Order No. 120, which provides, inter alia, that a member may not comment upon expressions used by another member in a previous debate of the same session. I seek your ruling on this matter.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I bring to the attention of the honourable member for Greenslopes that she must make the point that she has been misrepresented.

Mrs HARVEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I make the point that I have been misrepresented, as I stood up in this Chamber last night to indicate.

Last night, the member for South Brisbane misinformed the House grossly in a number of the claims that he made. Firstly, the honourable member claimed that the project was merely political point-scoring on my part. I resent that statement. Because one-quarter of the population of my electorate is over 60 years of age and because 10 per cent of my electorate comprises sole parents, a great need exists for this type of project, and Alexandra House fulfils that need.

Mr PREST: I rise to a point of order. Last night, in the Adjournment debate, the member for Greenslopes took a point of order, and the occupant of the Chair at that time ruled that there was no point of order. It appears to me that, this morning, the honourable member is disagreeing with the ruling that was made last night.

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

Mrs HARVEY: Secondly, the member for South Brisbane spoke about the horrific effects that will be felt by the technical and further education system when this project takes over Alexandra House. I want to clear that point up, because it is entirely incorrect.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I can no longer permit the honourable member to continue in this vein. She must show that she has been misrepresented or affected personally in some way

Mrs HARVEY: I have been affected, because the member for South Brisbane has told a great number of untruths and is trying to incite the teachers at that institution into being dissatisfied or upset. I ask the member to withdraw the remarks that he made.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has made her point.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice were answered as follows——

1. New Hospital, Dirranbandi

Mr NEAL asked the Minister for Health——

- (1) What progress is being made in the construction of the new Dirranbandi hospital?
- (2) Is there any truth in reports that the pylons were not put down to the correct depth?
- (3) When is it anticipated that the hospital will be completed?

Answer——

- (1) Work is on schedule and in keeping with the construction program.
- (2) When piling was commenced, conditions were found to vary over the site and it was not possible to drive some of the piles to the minimum depth of seven metres as nominated by the subcontractor. However, upon certification by an independent consulting geotechnical and mining engineer, the as-constructed piling was accepted as

adequate. In addition, the consulting structural engineers have provided an appropriate certification to the satisfaction of my department and the Department of Works.

(3) March 1986.

2.

Mr D. Russell

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

With reference to the Government's practice in relation to briefing or seeking the professional services of barristers from the private bar, and to the arrangements between the Government and one Mr David Russell of counsel—

(1) Is the said Mr David Russell, barrister, a member of the Secondary Mortgage Market Board and, if so, what annual fee does he receive as a member?

(2) What are the qualifications of the said David Russell to justify his appointment to the said Secondary Mortgages Market Board?

(3) Did the said David Russell advise the Minister or the Government during the SEQEB dispute on industrial matters and related legal issues?

(4) If the said David Russell did advise the Attorney-General and the Government in relation to industrial and other related legal issues arising out of the SEQEB dispute, was he instructed by a firm of solicitors and, if so, which firm of solicitors and what fees were paid to Mr Russell?

(5) Did the Crown Solicitor brief Mr Russell on any matter arising out of the SEQEB dispute and, if so, on what matter and what fees were paid?

(6) Did the said David Russell also attend a meeting of Cabinet for the purpose of advising the Minister, the Premier or the Cabinet and, if so, by which solicitors was Mr Russell instructed and what fees was he paid in relation to such attendance at Cabinet?

(7) Is the said Mr Russell of counsel a member of the National Party and did he assist in the National Party tally-room during the Redlands by-election?

(8) Is the said David Russell also the son-in-law of the Governor, Sir Walter Campbell?

(9) Did the said David Russell donate \$3,000 to the National Party through National Free Enterprise Limited just prior to the last Federal election?

Answer—

(1) Yes; \$7,000 per annum.

(2) The appointment of members of the board is a matter within the discretion of the Governor in Council.

(3) Yes.

(4 & 5) Mr Russell was briefed by Messrs Morris Fletcher and Cross and the Crown Solicitor on various matters arising out of the SEQEB dispute. Fees of \$22,191 have been paid by Messrs Morris Fletcher and Cross, and fees of \$4,936.30 have been paid by the Crown Solicitor.

(6) As the honourable member is aware, the principle of Cabinet secrecy precludes my divulging details of any Cabinet meeting.

(7 to 9) As the questions relate to the personal activities of Mr Russell and not to the provision of professional legal services by Mr Russell to the Government, I am not prepared to comment on them.

3.

Payments by Government to Small Businesses

Mr BURNS asked the Premier and Treasurer—

(1) Is he aware that many Queensland businesses in the manufacturing and technical service areas are suffering financially because of excessive delays in payment by the

Queensland Government and that some small businesses are still owed money from 30 June and that, prior to 30 June, numerous small businesses were forced to wait six to eight weeks before payment was made by the Department of Works, allegedly because no funds were available?

(2) How much credit is extended to the Queensland Government by the business community over a 30, 60 and 90-day period?

(3) As small business usually has to borrow to cover cash flow and as any excess financial accommodation which is required above normal arrangements attracts a penalty rate of 3 per cent, will he undertake a review of the Government's payment practice so that small businesses are paid on the completion of Government contracts and services and avoid the current situation in which many small businesses are forced to wait three to four months before payment?

Answer—

(1) No payments were delayed prior to 30 June last year by the Department of Works because of shortage of funds, and no delays have occurred since that time.

It is the Government's policy to pay accounts as and when due, in accordance with normal commercial practices, utilising where appropriate, normal credit facilities available to all clients, including the Government, of the business concerned.

(2) The information sought by the honourable member is not readily available in comprehensive form. The amount varies from day to day because of the continuous process of accounts being received and paid and the man-hours necessary to produce information for a particular day cannot be justified.

(3) In view of the comments I have just outlined, a review of the Government's present payment arrangements is not warranted.

4. Traffic near Bray Park Railway Station

Mrs CHAPMAN asked the Minister for Transport—

Will there be any disruption to the streets leading to the new Bray Park Railway Station upon completion of the station or will the traffic in those streets be left to the discretion of the Pine Rivers Shire Council?

Answer—

In answer to the honourable member, I should first congratulate her on the part she has played in obtaining this new station for the people in her electorate. The new station will be a great benefit to the local community and will provide them with greatly improved public transport services.

Access to the new station and major car-park will be from Samsonvale Road via Symphony Avenue and Brahms Street. No road alterations are proposed in the former two, and Brahms Street will be affected only immediately adjacent to the commuter car-park, where the road reserve will be reduced to a minimum of 15 metres to provide sufficient space for car-parking.

Streets will be subject to normal traffic usage in the vicinity of this public facility, which will be serviced by park-and-ride and kiss-and-ride, which provides for a quick pick-up and set-down of passengers to ensure minimum disruption to traffic flow.

Under the provisions of the Traffic Act, the shire council has the responsibility for the management of traffic on roads not designated as declared roads.

5. Operations at Brisbane Airport

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

With reference to the recent submission by TAA to the Independent Review of the Economic Regulation of Domestic Aviation in Australia, requesting approval to operate 24 hours a day to Brisbane and other major airports—

Will the Government lend all possible support to the submission so that tourism in this State can be boosted even further?

Answer—

Yes, the Government would support such a submission for 24 hours a day operation of Brisbane and other major airports within Queensland, taking into consideration certain approach patterns from a seaward direction that aircraft may use between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. each day. With the redevelopment of Brisbane Airport and the use of some of the newer types of jet aircraft which operate at very low noise levels, the operation 24 hours a day of major Queensland airports would be feasible.

Over recent years, the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation has endeavoured to work out charter proposals so as to broaden the use of the operating times of Queensland airports.

6. Convictions for Possession of Barramundi During Closed Season

Mr PREST asked the Acting Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services—

(1) How many professional fishermen in this State have been convicted of being in possession of barramundi during the closed season since legislation was enacted?

(2) What were the individual fines for these breaches?

(3) How many amateur fishermen have been similarly convicted, and what fines were imposed for these breaches?

Answer—

(1) Four.

(2) \$200, plus \$472 costs, \$200, \$250 and \$400.

(3) Eight. \$200, \$60, \$200, \$150, \$200 plus \$272 costs, \$750, \$400 and \$80. So they were pretty expensive barramundi.

7. Statements by Mr G. Neat and Sir William Knox on Electoral Redistribution

Mr STONEMAN asked the Premier and Treasurer—

With reference to a statement in *The Courier-Mail* of 18 November, in which the State director of the Liberal Party (Mr Gary Neat) when commenting on the recent electoral redistribution said, "The latest gerrymander is probably the worst in the State's history and political parties have to re-think their methods of explaining it's ills to the public"—

Does he agree that this is in direct conflict with statements made by the parliamentary leader of the Liberal Party (Sir William Knox) who, when interviewed on the television program *Today* on 7 November, said that he did not agree that it was the worst redistribution—"No better or worse now than in the past"—and, to further emphasise the point in the same interview, Sir William said—"Propaganda by the Labor Party that this is the worst gerrymander in the world is a lot of nonsense"?

Answer—

The statement by the State director of the Liberal Party as published in *The Courier-Mail* is certainly in direct conflict with the views expressed by the honourable member for Nundah. Once again, we are witnessing the arrogance of the Liberal Party organisation and its contempt for its elected members of Parliament.

Just over two years ago, the honourable member for Nundah, then a senior Minister in a coalition Government, was directed by the Liberal Party organisation, with the same State director playing a leading role, to hand in his commission as a Minister of the Crown. Sir William Knox vehemently opposed the actions of the Liberal Party organisation in breaking up the coalition Government, but Mr Neat and his executive had their way.

Now Sir William has recognised, quite correctly, in my view, that the Australian Labor Party has set out to deceive the people of Queensland over the redistribution

proposals and has said so. Mr Neat, though, will not have a bar of the views of the honourable member for Nundah and once again Sir William Knox will be told what he is to say and do.

The Liberal Party is the same as the Labor Party—divided—as far as the issue of electoral policy is concerned. The honourable member for Lytton supports a zonal system. As State secretary in 1971, he put a submission to the redistribution commission based on zones. The submission was supported by the then parliamentary leader of the Labor Party, Jack Houston.

The real division in the Labor Party about electoral policy occurred in 1979 under the parliamentary leadership of the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey). He resurrected the 1971 zonal proposals and tried to submit them in the form of a private member's Bill.

The honourable member was taken before the Labor Party's disputes tribunal for contravening party policy of one vote, one value. The tribunal threw the complaint out. It was said that the complaint was frivolous. In other words, the tribunal supported a zonal system—not the one vote, one value policy espoused by academics.

It was the Labor Party that complained the most about the recent Federal redistribution based on one vote, one value. The record shows clearly that the Labor Party in Queensland is unhappy with the application of the one vote, one value policy.

It has been very noticeable that the honourable members for the Labor seats of Cairns, Mount Isa, Townsville West, Townsville, Townsville South, Rockhampton and Rockhampton North have been remarkably quiet about the redistribution. Of course, they are happy. They are very happy. They know that, with the ALP one vote, one value policy, their seats would surely disappear off the map.

Under one vote, one value, seven seats would have to disappear from northern and western Queensland and appear in the more populous southern part of the State. I hope that both the ALP and the Liberal Party proceed with the idea of seminars to complain about the redistribution. I can hardly wait for them to go to north Queensland or the west to tell the people that parliamentary representation should be eliminated instead of expanded. It will be very interesting to see how they perform.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: This is absolutely devastating stuff.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I know that the honourable member is devastated. He always has been and always will be.

If Opposition members will not tell the people what one vote, one value means, I will tell the people for them that seven seats would be lost.

Mr BRADDY: I rise to a point of order. I have been misrepresented by what the Premier and Treasurer said. He referred to me as being one of the members of Parliament who has been remarkably quiet about the gerrymander and the electoral boundaries. I have been misrepresented. I have been reported in *Hansard* and by the media as condemning the gerrymander under the Act of Parliament and the boundaries determined by the commission. I have been grossly misrepresented by the Premier because he suggested that I accept the legislation and the gerrymander that he and his party have foisted on the people of Queensland.

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

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I rise to a point of order. I would like to ask the honourable member to come straight out and say, "I am standing four-square for one vote, one value."

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRADDY: I rise to a point of order. I accept the challenge to make that declaration. I stand four-square for one vote, one value. The Premier and Treasurer frequently in this House says, "Why do the people vote for them?" I say to him, "Let the people vote for him on a one vote, one value basis and see how he goes."

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I rise to a point of order. It was very interesting to hear the honourable member say, on behalf of the Labor Party, that he wants to eliminate seven seats in north Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am bound to listen to points of order, but the stage has been reached at which I cannot allow them to be turned into a debate.

8. Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation

Mr SHAW asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) Is he aware of the proposal to increase the fees payable by members to the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation from \$110 per year to \$195 per year?

(2) In view of the difficult times facing those engaged in the fishing industry and the fact that the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation recorded a surplus last year of \$164,000, will he use his influence to prevent this inequitable tax being imposed and will he examine the balance sheet of the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation to satisfy himself as to where large sums, attributed to sundries, are expended and what expenses were incurred by executive officers of the organisation?

(3) Will he also check on the amount of unbudgeted expenditure incurred by this organisation and advise this House of the results of his investigations?

Answer—

(1) The annual report of the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation for the 1984-85 financial year was audited by the Queensland Auditor-General.

I confirm that a fee of \$195 has been gazetted for the 1986 year. This I would consider consistent with the services that the organisation provides to its members. The fees for 1985 are \$165, while \$110 was the fee that applied in 1981.

In 1984 the organisation changed its accounting year from January to December to July to June. At 30 June 1984, there was a budgeted surplus of \$164,913.

With regard to income and expenditure for 1984-85, the organisation has reported a \$67,192 operating deficit. This deficit resulted mainly from the organisation's being required to move to new premises at Lytton Road.

(2) I am not able to find, in the financial statements of the organisation, any reference to sundries. In fact, I congratulate the organisation for the degree of dissection that it has provided. I also advise that the salaries and expenses packages of the executive officers of this organisation are in fact established by its State council.

(3) Regarding unbudgeted expenditure by this organisation, I advise the House that a check by departmental staff confirms that the major area of difference from budget relates to the shift into new premises. While this has, I understand, been a consideration for some time, circumstances arose which directed that the shift be made promptly. Unpredicted expenditures, considered with this arrangement, were incurred.

9. Dispute at Mount Isa Mines

Sir WILLIAM KNOX asked the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs—

With reference to the protracted industrial dispute between MIM Holdings Ltd and the Australian Workers Union at Mount Isa—

(1) What is the latest situation in the dispute?

(2) Is the dispute likely to be resolved soon?

(3) Does he plan to intervene in this dispute?

Answer—

(1) At a State Industrial Commission compulsory conference held on Monday, 18 November, Commissioner McDonnell requested that the Chief Inspector of Mines carry out an inspection of the crib-room at level 10 of the Hilton mine. The chief inspector has gone to Mount Isa, and his report will be made available to the disputing parties as soon as possible. The commission has indicated that, on receipt of the report and the return to work of the men at the main mine, the hearing of the dispute will resume.

(2) It is expected that goodwill on both sides will prevail. A little common sense will result in an early end to this strike.

(3) At present, MIM Holdings Ltd has not requested the intervention of the Government. Suffice it to say that the strike is costing the tax-payers of Queensland a great deal of money because of the loss of revenue to the State. It is also damaging Queensland in the international market-place.

In my opinion, the dispute is unnecessary. It is doing nobody any good, and the sooner both sides settle the dispute, the better off this State will be.

10. Capalaba Greyhound Control Board; Mr H. Hillier

Mr R. J. GIBBS asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

With reference to the proprietor of Hilliers' Nursery (Mr Ham Hillier), a member of the National Party and member of the Greyhound Racing Control Board—

(1) Did Mr Hillier recently complete a contract for the Capalaba Greyhound Racing Club for approximately \$3,000 worth of landscaping?

(2) Did Mr Hillier's nursery provide all the trees, shrubs and other supplies used in this project?

(3) Does section 84 (1) (f) (Vacation of Office) of the Racing and Betting Act, which states—

“The office of a member of the Greyhound Board shall become vacant if the member—

. . .

(f) accepts or holds an office of profit under the Greyhound Board or is directly or indirectly concerned with any contract with the Greyhound Board or is entitled to a benefit directly or indirectly from work done or to be done for or goods supplied to or to be supplied to the Greyhound Board.”

now disqualify Mr Hillier from membership of the board on the basis of pecuniary interest?

Answer—

(1) I am advised that Hilliers Nursery Pty Ltd undertook some minor landscaping work for the Capalaba Greyhound Racing Club in association with the construction of a new building at the Capalaba greyhound course.

(2) I am informed that this was the case.

(3) I consider that the work performed by the company for the club would not affect Mr Hillier's position on the Greyhound Racing Control Board.

11. Queensland Cultural Centre; Mr H. Hillier

Mr R. J. GIBBS asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) How many tenders were received for the landscaping of the Queensland Cultural Centre, including the Performing Arts Complex?

(2) What was the quote of each individual tender?

(3) Was the contract or were the contracts awarded to a firm by the name of Hilliers' Nursery and, if so, is this company's principal (Mr Ham Hillier) a member of the National Party and a prominent member of the Queensland Greyhound Racing Control Board?

Answer—

(1) The only tender called by my Department of Works for landscaping at the Queensland Cultural Centre was in December 1981. This was for the landscaping at the Queensland Art Gallery. Three tenders were received.

(2) P. J. & R. S. McBaron—\$20,445.35; Cranes Cribwall & Landscaping—\$20,926.10; Denis Sparrow Constructions—\$33,383.70.

(3) No. The successful tenderer was P. J. & R. S. McBaron.

12. Swabs, Greyhound Racing Control Board

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

(1) Did he, in 1983, give a directive that all swabs taken by the Greyhound Racing Control Board must be sent to the Queensland Turf Club for analysis?

(2) Was this directive totally ignored by the board who directed all their swabs to Queensland Medical Laboratories?

(3) Is Dr Kevin Hobbs, a former member of the Greyhound Racing Control Board, financially involved in Queensland Medical Laboratories?

Answer—

(1 to 3) I cannot recall giving a directive of the nature referred to by the honourable member, and I have also been advised that Dr Hobbs has never had any financial involvement with Queensland Medical Laboratories.

13. Dr D. Danalis

Mr MACKENROTH asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

With reference to the chairman of the Greyhound Racing Control Board (Dr Dion Danalis), a member of the National Party—

(1) What moneys have been paid from the Department of Primary Industries to Dr Danalis for the years 1981, 1982, 1983 and 1984 and the financial year 1985?

(2) For what services were these moneys paid?

(3) Is Dr Danalis employed by the department in any capacity?

Answer—

Craig Dionyses Danalis and James Danalis jointly own and operate the Mitchelton Veterinary Hospital. They are both authorised under section 4 (6) of the Stock Act 1915-1984 to undertake work in relation to the Brucellosis/Tuberculosis Eradication Program (BTEC) on behalf of the Department of Primary Industries. These authorisations were gazetted on 14 July 1979.

(1) Payments have been made to the partnership of J. and C. D. Danalis as follows—

Year	\$
1980-81	138.84
1981-82	Nil
1982-83	65.65
1983-84	Nil
1984-85	Nil

(2) These payments were made for blood-sampling of cattle for brucellosis-testing under the BTEC scheme.

(3) Dr Danalis is not employed by the Department of Primary Industries other than as indicated under the BTEC scheme, as is the case with many thousands of veterinarians.

14. Claims Before Small Claims Tribunal

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

(1) How many claims relating to bond moneys were submitted to the Small Claims Tribunal for the period from 1 July 1984 to 30 June 1985?

(2) Of these claims, how many claimants have been totally successful and how many have been partially successful?

(3) Has he given consideration to the establishment of a bond board in Queensland and, if not, what is the reason?

Answer—

(1) 312.

(2) 45 were totally successful, 92 were partially successful and, in addition, 33 were settled prior to an order being made.

(3) Proposals regarding the handling of bond moneys are kept under constant review. When I consider that there is need to make a recommendation to the Government in regard to bond moneys, I shall take the necessary action.

15. Applications for Loans, Queensland Housing Commission

Mr YEWDALÉ asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) How many applications are held by the Queensland Housing Commission in respect to home loans based on the amount of \$37,500?

(2) Of these applications, will he list the areas in which they were submitted, that is, the towns or cities within the State?

(3) How many applications were unsuccessful, based on insufficient funds being available?

(4) Do unsuccessful applicants remain on a waiting-list or do they have to renew their application?

(5) When was the last time that the means test for eligibility for such loans was renewed?

Answer—

(1 & 2) Queensland Housing Commission home-ownership statistics since 1 July 1985 show—

1 960 applications approved; 416 provisional loan offers made; 38 rental houses sold to tenants; and 567 metropolitan applicants listed for appointments to 14 January 1986. Other applications are processed as received.

Approximately two-thirds of all applicants obtain second loans, averaging \$2,800, in addition to an interest subsidy loan of \$37,500.

(3 & 4) Nil.

(5) Means test amount is adjusted annually to the Australian average weekly earnings. It was increased from \$376.20 to \$392.40 on 1 February 1985.

Over 50 per cent of all approved applicants have incomes of less than \$300 per week. Without the innovative interest subsidy scheme introduced by this Government, they would be not home-owners but most probably renters of public housing.

16. Agreement Between Builders Labourers Federation and Costain Australia Pty Ltd

Mr WHITE asked the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs—

With reference to the recently negotiated agreement by Mr Norm Gallagher on behalf of the Builders Labourers Federation for a 35-hour week, commenced on Melbourne Cup day on a South Yarra project with project managers Costain Australia Pty Ltd—

(1) What impact will this agreement have on the Federal Government's prices and incomes accord?

(2) Will this agreement be valid in Queensland or implemented in Queensland to the detriment of the construction industry and employment opportunities?

(3) What action does the Government intend to take to prevent further cost pressures in the construction industry and the consequential loss of jobs for Queenslanders?

Answer—

(1) The continuing campaign by the Builders Labourers Federation for a 35-hour week, which is similar to many other irresponsible actions of some other trade unions, makes a mockery of Federal Government claims that the accord is a success.

The stated aim of Monday's strike by the BLF in Victoria was to break the prices and incomes accord.

One of its members dressed up as a gorilla to lead the way into Nauru House in an attempt to bludgeon the court. When the person who was dressed up as a gorilla was asked why he had done so—

Mr Vaughan: We had the gorilla story yesterday.

Mr LESTER: The person dressed up as a gorilla said, "Normie would like it this way." That is the type of action that members of the BLF are taking. I might add that there are some members of the Australian Labor Party who do not appear to be greatly different from the gorilla on Monday morning.

There are definite signs that the prices and incomes accord between the Federal Government and the unions is breaking down. What the trade unions are trying to do is get side benefits, such as superannuation for which the employer makes the total contribution. The unions are also pressing for a productivity bonus. They seem to have forgotten that, since 1977, the productivity level in Australia decreased by 10 per cent by comparison with that of Japan. The basis for a productivity bonus is a comparison with other countries in the world. The way Australia compares with other countries in the world is important, because that is the basis for international exchange. The Queensland Government is well aware that, for the past month, Australia imported goods to the value of \$1 billion more than those it exported. That does not add up to more jobs. Recently, interest rates have increased dramatically. That does not auger well for the policies of the ALP, which are taking Australia down the drain at an ever increasing rate.

Clearly, the ACTU pays lip-service to its proclaimed commitment to industrial peace because, whenever the unions do not get their own way, they go on strike. In many cases, they use guerilla tactics. People might have forgotten it but, recently, a tax summit was held. Everybody is now suffering the consequences of that summit because of the introduction of capital gains and perks taxes. I believe that 27 members of the ACTU attended the summit, whilst only one representative of small business and only one representative of rural Australia attended.

Answer (continued)—

(2 & 3) No. It is encouraging that, so far, BLF action is confined to southern States, especially Victoria. I am advised that the BLF is having some difficulty in starting its campaign for a shorter working week in other States.

It is good that the union has not been too successful in Queensland. To be fair, perhaps the union's leaders in Queensland are trying to show a little responsibility. I

make it clear that, if they act irresponsibly, this Government will be ready to take whatever action is necessary, in the interests of the people, to generate more jobs.

17. Black-banning of Contractors by Unions

Mr WHITE asked the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs—

With reference to a recent Federal Court case, in which an independent transport contractor stated that the Transport Workers Union had dictated the rates that he should charge to deliver sand and gravel and the wages that he should pay to his drivers, which resulted in the drivers receiving less pay—

(1) Is he aware that unions such as the Transport Workers Union, the Builders Labourers Federation and the Building Workers Industrial Union of Australia are black-banning small business contractors in Queensland?

(2) If so, what action does he recommend that small business, such as contractors, can take to avoid having supplies of materials cut off from their business?

(3) Is it mandatory that small business, such as subcontractors, have to join a union against their will and also join the Building Unions Superannuation Scheme (BUSS)?

Answer—

(1) The militant activities of the TWU, the BLF and the BWIU are frequently being brought to my attention, especially in regard to standover tactics sometimes employed against small business contractors.

(2) Fortunately, owing to the foresight of the Government, adequate legislation currently exists in Queensland. When threats are made to cut off supplies of material, action may be taken under the Industrial (Commercial Practices) Act, which the Government introduced late last year for this very purpose, despite considerable opposition from the ALP.

(3) No. There is no legislation requiring any employee to be a member of a union. If a subcontractor is not an employee, he cannot legally be enrolled to membership of a trade union. A number of union-leaders seem to forget that point when they adopt their blackmail tactics.

Legal action under the Industrial (Commercial Practices) Act may also be instituted if subcontractors are pressured by unions to join a superannuation scheme, such as the BUS Scheme. The position would, of course, be different if the contract between the head contractor and the subcontractor contained specific requirements.

This has been a problem for a considerable period. It is a fact that some employers do make with unions deals that are not always to the benefit of other employers or, indeed, to future job opportunities in this State. I suggest to employers that, before they make specific deals with unions for their own benefit, they think twice and put the economies of Queensland and Australia first.

18. Tarong Power Station

Mr VAUGHAN asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

(1) Is it true that, because of poor quality coal, the boiler of No. 1 unit at the Tarong Power Station, which was only commissioned in May 1984, has to be taken out of service for extensive and costly repairs?

(2) What effect has the quality of the coal had on the boiler?

(3) Is the boiler of No. 2 unit developing similar problems, will it also have to be extensively repaired and will costly modifications have to be carried out to the boilers of No. 3 and No. 4 units?

(4) What are the estimated costs of repairs to No. 1 and No. 2 unit boilers and modifications to No. 3 and No. 4 unit boilers?

(5) What action is being taken to prevent a recurrence of these problems?

(6) Having regard to the problems that occurred at the Gladstone Power Station, why is it that the boilers were not designed to handle the quality of the coal?

Answer—

(1 & 2) No. Coal quality is within the specified limits.

(3 to 6) As part of his obligations under the contract, the contractor is modifying No. 1 and No. 2 boilers to operate within the specified limits. The modifications have been carried out on No. 3 and No. 4 boilers during installation. The costs involved are borne by the contractor.

19. Electricity Charges

Mr VAUGHAN asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

With reference to a statement attributed to a spokesman for him, which appeared on page 14 of *The Courier-Mail* of 7 October 1985 under the heading "Power Rise Soon Says ALP", in which the spokesman was quoted as saying that there would be a normal annual increase in electricity charges in 1986 but that this would not happen early in the year—

(1) Was consideration being given, as recently as 7 October 1985, to a 3.5 per cent to 4 per cent increase in electricity charges from about the middle of February 1986?

(2) If so, has a decision on an increase been made and, if so, what is the extent of the increase and from what date will it apply?

(3) If not, was it not the Government's intention to increase electricity charges in the early part of 1985 but it was decided that, after 1985, electricity charges would be increased in the early part of the year instead of the middle of the year when the impact of increases was felt more because of higher winter electricity consumption?

(4) Does this mean there will be two increases in electricity charges each year from now on?

Answer—

(1 to 4) I can assure the honourable member that, many months ago, as Minister responsible for electricity, I announced a proposed increase to take place in the early part of next year.

The reason for it is that, in the past, the annual increases have occurred at or near the end of the financial year, which meant that the first bill including the new charges coincided with the heaviest use of electricity by consumers, that is, the winter months. However, no firm date has been fixed for the announcement of the proposed increases, nor has there been any firm decision on the increase or the extent of the variations.

I will be advising the Queensland people and, of course, the honourable member at the same time, when a final decision is made.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

State Electricity Commission Foreign Exchange Losses

Mr WARBURTON: In asking the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer a question, I refer him to the financial report on the State Electricity Commission, which revealed that staggering foreign exchange losses of \$48.9m were incurred last financial year. As foreign exchange matters are handled by Treasury, will he explain to the House the reasons for the huge loss of \$48.9m?

Mr Gunn interjected.

Mr WARBURTON: I am only asking the Deputy Premier to explain. It is a reasonable question.

No doubt those losses will have to be passed on to electricity consumers. What measures have been taken by the Government to prevent further losses on overseas borrowings?

Mr GUNN: The answer is quite simple: get rid of the Labor Government in Canberra. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition does not quite understand that since the Australian dollar was floated, it has dropped to a record low of 65c. To give an indication of what other parts of the world think of Australia, I refer to a publication titled the *International Investor*.

A comment having been made from the Public Gallery—

Mr GUNN: Mr Speaker, I hope that that gentleman will be removed.

International Investor refers to Australia, under the present Australian Government, as, "The Argentina of the Pacific?" Mr Keating is referred to in this way: "... the treasurer has to keep running just to stand still." That is the situation in which Australia finds itself. Without doubt, this country is in a deep financial mess, with a trade deficit approaching \$12 billion. In effect, the article sets out just how the Australian Government is regarded on the international scene.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr GUNN: It is nothing to be proud of. When the dollar was floated, it stood at about \$1.20 against the American dollar. Today its value is down to 65c, or maybe 67c. It is likely to go as low as 60c.

Queensland's present position has nothing to do with the State Electricity Commission. In case the honourable member does not know, every State is in a similar situation. No fault lies with the commission. Queensland's predicament was caused by the floating of the dollar and the bad economic management of the present Labor Government in Canberra.

Mr WARBURTON: Let's see who you blame for this one.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will ask his second question.

State Electricity Commission Loan Costs

Mr WARBURTON: In asking the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer a question, I refer to the soaring debt of the State Electricity Commission, which now totals \$3,130m, and to the rapidly rising interest payments, which have grown from \$330m in 1983-84 to \$400m in 1984-85, representing about \$400 for every Queensland household. In the light of the downturn in capital construction in the electricity industry in Queensland and the revision downwards in projected demand, are the huge loan costs now the prime reason for soaring electricity costs in Queensland? Secondly, has the Government any projections concerning the future growth of the massive debt of the State Electricity Commission?

Mr GUNN: The Minister for Mines and Energy has explained this matter very well. The fact is that electricity use has been growing at the rate of 9 per cent. I believe that it is estimated to grow at 6 per cent this year. When the Labor Government was in power in Queensland, nothing whatever moved. Down south, Queensland was known as the Cinderella State—a State without any movement. In those days, my home town, with a population of a couple of thousand people, did not have electricity. Massive growth has occurred in that area, much to the credit of the Government. It is a matter of "user pays", and the user is paying. This State's electricity charges compare with electricity charges throughout the nation. There is no earthly doubt about that.

The Government has built new power stations throughout the State. In case the Leader of the Opposition does not know what that means, I inform him that it is a sign of progress. Queensland has progressed well and truly.

Mr Warburton: Can't you tell me? I am just asking you to explain.

Mr GUNN: The Leader of the Opposition does not want to see power stations built or electricity extended throughout Queensland. But that is understandable. That was the policy of his party during the Rip Van Winkle years when it was in Government. Queensland was asleep until 1957, when the National-Liberal Government took over the Treasury benches. I make no apologies.

Microcomputers in Electorate Offices

Mr NEAL: I ask the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer: Will he advise what action has been taken to provide microcomputers in members' electorate offices and how such facilities will be introduced?

Mr GUNN: I thank the honourable member for the question. He will recall that, last August, an investigation was made, and I am very pleased to be able to say that Cabinet has now decided to undertake a six-month pilot program. It will involve four electorates. The electorates are: Albert, which is a mixed urban/rural area, and which will also test liaison with a ministerial office; Greenslopes, which is a metropolitan electorate; Maryborough, which is a provincial city electorate——

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr GUNN: I will give honourable members the biggest laugh. The fourth electorate is Archerfield, which is an Opposition member's electorate.

The State Government Computer Centre will train staff and monitor the progress of the trial. Several computer companies are willing to provide the equipment free for the trial. It will cost nothing.

Mr WARBURTON: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, this is a very serious matter. Do I take it that this decision has been made by the Government without any reference to the Opposition?

Government Members interjected.

Mr WARBURTON: I am serious—very, very serious—about it.

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

Mr GUNN: I knew that the Leader of the Opposition was dumb, but I did not know that he was deaf. As I have said, one of the electorates in which the microcomputers will be installed is an Opposition member's electorate, Archerfield.

Mr Warburton: So you think.

Mr GUNN: Does not the honourable member for Archerfield want it?

This is on the basis that tenders will be called if the pilot scheme is successful. The Under Treasurer will submit a report to Cabinet at the conclusion of the trial.

Youth Training Scheme

Mr NEAL: I ask the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs: Does he agree that the failure of the Federal Government to get its youth training scheme under way, because of union resistance, shows just who is running this country and how little the unions care about overcoming unemployment?

Mr LESTER: A scheme has been launched to give young people training at a slightly lower rate of pay and, at the end of their training—it could be 12 months, two years or three years—to give them a certificate of competence. It is absolutely incredible that the union movement should come in and say, "No, we are not interested. We want the young people on the full rate of pay."

I have always said that if young people can be trained and given a certificate of competence, that is an insurance for their employment in the future. That is what it is all about. One day, our economy will improve and vacancies will exist for young people.

If people are not trained in Australia, obviously, trained people will have to be imported from overseas.

The first traineeship in Australia was launched at Cairns in Queensland and it involved the tourism and hospitality industry. During the first eight months of the two years' training, young people will be paid 65 per cent of the adult rate. For the second eight-month period, they will be paid 75 per cent, and for the third eight-month period, they will be paid 85 per cent. Then they will receive a certificate of competence. They will be able to serve beverages in restaurants. They will be taught middle management so that they can go on and advance their cause in the world. As a result of this training, they will be able to obtain jobs anywhere throughout the world; but, more importantly, their jobs in this country will not be taken by trained people from overseas.

A young adult of 18 who enters the work-force untrained is not acceptable to the average employer. The Government has launched traineeships to give something in return to the young people of this State, and it is about time that the unions got their act together. As was reported in a recent newspaper article, the unions claim that they want no part of these schemes. All that the unions are doing is negotiating against giving young people an equitable and fair chance to be trained and to become employed so that they can make a contribution to their families and to their great country.

Economic Policies of Federal Labor Government

Mr BOOTH: In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to the present difficulties confronting the Commonwealth Government with regard to the balance of payments and the instability of the Australian dollar, which has caused the escalation of interest rates to an exceptionally high level. I now ask: Can the escalation of interest rates and the devastating effect that that is having on home-buyers, primary producers and small business be laid directly at the feet of the Hawke/Keating Government? Has the Commonwealth Government done anything to try to restore confidence in the Australian economy?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I have seen, heard and read nothing to suggest that the Federal Government has done anything to stabilise the economy. On the contrary, the Federal Government has introduced many measures, such as the tax reform package, that have reacted to the detriment of the economy. I have with me today articles from a number of overseas newspapers that Opposition members would not have read. One article suggests that Mr Hawke's policies have placed Australia on the same disastrous level on the world stage as Argentina. That article, which carries a picture of Mr Hawke, claims that Australia is now the Argentina of the Pacific.

Mr Yewdale: Who said that?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Very important and responsible people have written the article.

Today's *Australian Financial Review* carries the heading "Prime interest rates hit record 19.25pc". It is unbelievable that, in this lucky country, that has occurred. It will be a lucky day when Australia gets rid of the Federal Labor Government, and, of course, that is the direction in which the nation is heading. It is a day of great sorrow when we in this House have to answer questions of this nature about this one-time great nation. It is a tragedy that the economy is at such a low level, that the general trend of unemployment is poor and that interest rates are going even higher. One solution to these problems is to get rid of the Labor Government at the next election.

Staffing Levels, Department of Children's Services

Mr FOURAS: In directing a question to the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs, I refer to a submission from the Department of Children's Services, which is currently before the Public Service Board, for 136 additional staff, and ask: Will the Minister give this submission his unequivocal support? Does he realise that such an increase is vital to lift staff morale, which is currently at rock-bottom? If the

submission for the 136 additional staff is rejected, from which sections of the Department of Children's Services will staff be relocated to meet the Minister's recently stated objective of substantially increasing staffing levels for child abuse programs?

Mr MUNTZ: I am aware of the submission that has been made, but the matter of staffing is for Cabinet to decide. I will certainly consider any submissions put forward by any of my departments, and they will be discussed at the appropriate level, which is in Cabinet. A decision will be made in Cabinet as to whether staffing will be increased on a departmental or a State-wide basis within the public service.

With regard to the matter of priorities in the staffing of the Department of Children's Services—I have said that the matter of child abuse, which is of concern to me as it is to all people, should be addressed, and the redirection of staffing priorities is under consideration at this very time.

Mr Fouras: I thank the Minister for the non-answer.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I think I should bring to your attention that if you are asking a question without notice that has many parts—the honourable member for South Brisbane just asked one with three parts—and if you want an answer, the question should be very precise and to the point.

Ministers cannot answer every part of some questions. This sort of thing is happening all the time. The fact is that members are requiring answers of some magnitude——

Mr FOURAS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr FOURAS: I rise to a point of order. My question was a very simple one. Anybody who possessed an average IQ could understand it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I was bringing this fact to the attention of all honourable members, not particularly the member for South Brisbane. I ask honourable members to put their questions as clearly as they possibly can.

Youth Affairs Council

Mr FOURAS: I will direct my second question to the same Minister.

Mr Prest: Read it slowly for him, too!

Mr FOURAS: Yes, I will read it slowly for him.

Is the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs aware that every State other than Queensland has a Youth Affairs Council? In this International Youth Year, will he set up a youth affairs council in Queensland and, if not, why not? Is that simple enough?

Mr MUNTZ: I am quite aware of what the honourable member is saying. I have no intention of establishing a youth affairs council in Queensland. I have a youth advisory committee, which meets and reports to me regularly. I am in touch with the needs of young people and I see no need to establish a youth affairs council.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for South Brisbane. That is his final warning.

Government Assistance to Mr J. Pendarvis

Mr CASEY: In asking a question of the Premier and Treasurer, I refer him to his speech at the Northern Australian Development Commission conference held in Darwin recently. Whilst acting like a visiting guest clown, amongst other things he made the comment that his Government was supporting Mr J. Pendarvis in his court action over

the Mudginberri dispute. I also refer to a later comment by Mr Pendarvis, who thanked the Queensland Government for its financial support. I now ask: How much of Queensland tax-payers' funds have been given to Mr Pendarvis, a resident of the Northern Territory, towards his legal and other costs or has any other support been given to him in kind by the Queensland Government and on whose authority?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I can assure the honourable member that Mr Pendarvis did not receive any money from the poker-machine racket in which the honourable member was involved.

Mr Casey: You might have got some of that from the Northern Territory Government.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Everybody knows that the honourable member is a hypocrite.

The fact is that not one cent of Government money has been paid directly or indirectly to this man or towards helping him with his recent problems. We have asked our legal people to confirm or not confirm the actions he has taken. I do not know what the cost of that would be, but we would gladly do it again.

Mr Casey: Have your Crown law officers been advising him?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: No, they have not.

Mr Casey interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mackay has asked his question. He should listen to the answer.

Mr Casey: I am trying to get a specific answer, and that would be a change.

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

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: If the honourable member could contain himself for a while, I would be able to give him the answer.

It has nothing to do with the Crown law office. We in the National Party have other legal advisers who are well known and highly respected. They have led and guided us on the attitude that we have taken towards unions. They have given legal advice on the action that we have taken. These people have been consulted and they have willingly given us their services in relation to checking and rechecking the procedure that he should follow.

Yes, we have supported the raising of money. He will be here shortly. If the honourable member wishes to contribute some of his poker-machine profits——

Mr Casey: Not likely, not to him.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes, it would be unlikely. The honourable member has used the money already. He has admitted that he got it.

I am encouraging business people to support this man, and I have had considerable success in getting people to support him. He will be here very shortly and I will again be assisting him to raise money to help him battle the Federal Government, which will not give him an export permit.

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Federal Government; Australian Economy

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (12 noon): I believe that it is important to impress upon all Queenslanders, through the formal communicative channels of this Parliament, that this country is once again facing economic ruin at the hands of a Labor-led Government in Canberra.

It has been 10 years since Australians, either through fear or wisdom, ended the financial excesses of the disastrous Whitlam Government and gave our nation back to a Liberal-National Party coalition to restore responsible economic and social growth. I am the first one to concede that, unfortunately, the man chosen to lead the national recovery, Malcolm Fraser, was a disappointment to most Australians. The wealthy grazier from Victoria's western districts was a man with whom the ordinary working men and women of Australia had little in common, and the social chasm between him and the people who gave him the opportunity to lead them from Whitlam's amoral Government became more apparent as time progressed.

Personally, although I campaigned with him for years in the name of political solidarity, I found Mr Fraser to be as cold and austere as the Easter Island effigies that he so closely resembled, and his arrogance and abrasive nature did not endear him to either his colleagues or the Australian voter. Such personal deficiencies could have been overcome, of course, had Mr Fraser and his Government delivered to the people what they expected from him, which was, quite simply, good government. But, under Fraser, the national confidence, although initially boosted with the dismissal of Whitlam, soon diminished as staff levels in the public service continued to escalate, as inflation and unemployment were permitted to increase, and the deficit grew to alarming proportions.

Consequently the nation, in desperation, turned to Bob Hawke and the Labor Party, hoping that they would have learned from the mistakes of the infamous Whitlam years and would conceive and implement a program that would return Australia to a position from which it could exploit its full potential and provide a better way of life for all of us. Sadly, this was not to be.

Government at the Federal level is in chaos. The entire country—all those who have not been hoodwinked by the ineffective socialist regime in Canberra—has an urgent need to get behind the new Opposition leader, Mr Howard, and demonstrate to him that it is relying on him to do two things: firstly, effectively oppose those Government initiatives that are crippling our nation; and, secondly, show the people of Australia that he can lead an alternative Government that will, once and for all, give this country a future of stability and growth.

A great deal can be done, and has been done by the Queensland National Party Government, to reveal the true nature of the Hawke Government, but it will take more than we can do from Queensland to prove to the nation that the socialist policies of the incumbents in Canberra are leading this country to ruin.

Mr Howard, with determination and courage, and strong support from his colleagues, can convince the nation that he and a conservative coalition Government can give Australians back their honour and self-respect as an emerging economic power. But he has to demonstrate real leadership and strength whilst in Opposition, and he must present, to the people, a consistent line in policy, one that he is capable of implementing and prepared to follow when he becomes the next Prime Minister of Australia.

We already have seen one Opposition leader, Mr Peacock, fail to demonstrate this leadership. Mr Peacock is a pleasant and charming fellow, but he did not have the grit or the support to penetrate the facade of superficial strength of that socialist cry-baby, Bob Hawke.

Mr Howard cannot afford to attempt to be all things to all men. He has to present a viable alternative to the so-called middle ground that the Labor Party allegedly pursues, and he has to stand firm against challenges, both to his position and his policies, from within and outside his own ranks.

I was disappointed to read in *The Courier-Mail* only last week that Mr Howard had failed to commit himself to follow the same line in government as he does in opposition. He said that he would make no commitment that, when in government, he would legislate to restore concessions lost or remove taxes that have been imposed inequitably on the wage and salary-earner.

I take this opportunity to implore Mr Howard to make that commitment as soon as possible. The people of Australia are fed up with broken promises, and of decisions that, once made, are revoked the instant the smallest protest is made by some insignificant, usually radical left-wing pressure group.

Politicians are elected to make decisions on behalf of the people and, if they are to be effective, they must in all but the most exceptional circumstances, abide by their decisions no matter how electorally damaging they might at first appear.

Menzies did not shy away from hard decisions. He was a leader of substance who researched and considered all those premises that led to logical conclusions, then took affirmative action to see them implemented to the public benefit.

Mr Howard and the members of the Federal Opposition are obliged to commit themselves to clear and concise policies if the Liberal Party is to win Government and control the direction of this country. To win by default, as a result of the voters' disenchantment with Labor, would be a pyrrhic victory at best, for within a short time the nation would fall completely under the control of unscrupulous union bosses, and the country's faith in the Federal organisations of the Liberal and National Parties would be destroyed for ever.

I call on Mr Howard and Mr Sinclair to provide this country with real leadership and to fill the political vacuum that currently exists, to some extent, at a national level.

If Australians are to vote with confidence at the next Federal election, they are entitled to know Mr Howard's intentions in Government, what will be his policies on important issues such as capital gains tax, land rights, fringe benefits, and the controversial Bill of Rights? What will be his policies on unemployment, inflation, high interest rates, the declining value of the dollar and the imbalance of trade?

The people of Australia want to know these things. They want a strong leader. Having made the decision to elect a Government to run the country, Australians do not wish to be involved repeatedly in pseudo-consultation by way of expensive summits to gain so-called consensus from a gaggle of unelected minor pressure groups before making the decisions for which they are well paid—and, one would hope, well credentialed—to make themselves.

The State of Queensland, and the people of Australia, will support Mr Howard as the next Prime Minister if he can show them, with well-defined policies, his plan to haul Australia out of its present downward spiral. Australians will not fall for the "trust me" approach that Hawke and Fraser have handed them. They will want some guarantees, and members of this Parliament will also want some guarantees. Among those will be a guarantee that the unemployment problem, that festering sore that is undermining the morale of this country, will be eradicated by stimulating the manufacturing and mining industries, rather than temporarily hiding the problem beneath flimsy bandaid jobs in recreation and community services.

Last week in the Federal Parliament the Deputy Opposition Leader (Mr Brown) pointed out that in those industries in which Australia has the potential to attract foreign buyers, such as rural, mining, and manufacturing industries, employment is actually decreasing. In fact, in the manufacturing industry alone, employment is down to only 77.58 per cent of what it was in 1974, and in the metal and engineering industries it is down to 75.39 per cent of what it was 10 years ago. Those are Australian Bureau of Statistics figures. Conversely, in the unproductive services, employment is increasing through the Labor Government's temporary employment schemes, paid for by the increasing taxes of those fortunate enough to have permanent jobs.

Mr Howard has to be given the opportunity to reverse this pitiful trend. He must be given the chance to put Australians back to work, not only those presently without jobs, but also those who, although they have jobs, are prevented from working by the militant and anti-social unions.

It is a disgrace and an admission of failure in a Government which purports to have a special relationship with the union movement that, in spite of the much heralded

prices and incomes accord, an increase has occurred in the number of major industrial disputes during the past 12 months.

Who in Australia now can trust the Hawke Government? Who in Australia can now say that this is a land of opportunity, a land that will offer up a bountiful future to our sons and daughters? Only those, I venture to say, who are naive enough, or demented enough, to accept the dubious rhetoric of the Hawke Government rather than examine the dismal facts that confront our nation today.

I call on Queenslanders and all other Australians to give Mr Howard the chance to restore Australia to its potential greatness. I call on Mr Howard to respond to the faith that the nation is prepared to place in him, and commit himself to firm policies that will once again give Australians the pride and patriotism we so cherished during the Menzies era. The ball is in his court.

Greyhound Racing Control Board

Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (12.10 p.m.): Last night, this State witnessed what I believe to be one of the greatest travesties of justice that has occurred for a long time. I refer to the investigation by the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland, at the behest of the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze), of itself following complaints and allegations made by me last week in this Parliament.

The meeting held last night was an absolute charade. I assert that it was nothing more than a cover-up. Today I intend to reveal my reasons for that assertion. Once again, I make reference to the secretary of the board (Mr Max Mason). I also refer to the income and expenditure account of the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland for 1984-85.

In 1984-85, the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland returned a deficit of \$31,141. That is an absolute cover-up inasmuch as, during the same year, the board received, from the Racing Development Fund, an interest-free loan of \$50,000, which the board has attempted to hide. The amount has been shown as income for that year but, in actual fact, it is a loan which must be repaid. When that \$50,000 is added to the \$31,141, the total indebtedness or deficit of the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland for the year 1984-85 is \$81,141. In contrast to that—during the previous year, 1984, the board's deficit was \$15,866 and, in 1983, it recorded a loss of \$739.

The deficit for the year 1984-85 represents a massive increase in indebtedness over a period of two years owing to the incompetence of the board's secretary and board members supposedly served by that secretary. When one examines the expenditure shown in the books of the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland, one finds that interesting figures emerge. In 1983, the expenditure of the board was \$523,269, whereas in 1984 it was \$576,187. In 1985, the board's expenditure is shown as \$667,839. In other words, over the period 1983-85, the expenditure of the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland increased by a massive 44 per cent and—get this—the category of expenditure in which I am very interested is fees and expenses for seven board members for 1983, which amounted to \$45,000.

In 1984, members of the board paid themselves \$51,175. For the financial year ended June 1985, members of the board again paid to themselves, by way of expenses and gratuities, a massive sum of \$68,315. That expenditure was approved by the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the board—not by this Parliament.

The questions that must be asked are these: How much are the members of the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland paying into their own pockets each week? How much is being spent on wasted and fruitless trips round Queensland at a time when the industry that the board represents has incurred a debt of \$81,000? How many times must I ask, in this Parliament, for an account of expenditure for the incredible sum of money that is being spent every Thursday night in a den of solitude at the Greyhound Racing Club, Woolloongabba, where members of the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland entertain other people by living high off the hog

with unlimited amounts of alcohol and fine food for those who are invited into the inner sanctum—at the expense of the tax-payer and at the expense of those people who have supported the Greyhound Racing Control Board and the industry in Queensland for many years? Why is it that the board's report shows that the salary and wages paid to the secretary and other employees during the year 1985 amounted to \$349,952?

I point out that, in that income and expenditure account, nowhere is it shown how much was spent by the secretary of the Greyhound Racing Control Board (Mr Max Mason). I will table two statutory declarations but, before doing so, I propose to read them out. The first one is made by a Mr Thomas Graham Jensen, who lives at Lot 13 Buccan Road, Waterford. It is dated 14 April 1985. Mr Jensen states as follows—

“... that at a meeting of the Beenleigh Greyhound Racing Club committee, Mr Tom Costigan—”

incidentally, Mr Costigan is a member of the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland—

“stated in the course of conversation that Mr Max Mason had told him his travelling expenses were paid by the board and that he did not require a receipt to recoup his expenses. Mr Costigan indicated that anything he claimed for would be evidenced by receipt.”

A further statutory declaration was made on 14 April 1985 by a Mr Anthony Gauci, of 3907 Pacific Highway, Tanah Merah, who states as follows—

“... that a meeting of the Beenleigh Greyhound Racing Club committee, Mr Tom Costigan stated in the course of conversation that Mr Mason had told him his travelling expenses were paid by the board and that he did not require a receipt to recoup his expenses.”

I repeat the allegation that I made in this Parliament a number of weeks ago. Mr Max Mason is fleecing the board. He is a dishonest person, and he should be removed from his position as secretary of the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland.

I turn now to another item that appeared in the newspapers only a couple of days ago. It refers to a gentleman by the name of Ken Reed, who, I understand, tabled a statutory declaration at the so-called committee of inquiry last night in support of what I am about to say and what he has said already in the newspapers.

He said that he was called to an office at Woolloongabba, where a certain official said to him, “I shouldn't ask you this question, but I am going to ask you, anyway. Would you help me to set up Mick O'Byrne on the trial track?” Mick O'Byrne happens to be a very successful Queensland trainer, but he is offside with Max Mason and the Greyhound Racing Control Board. Reed was called into the office of Mr Max Mason's secretary, where Mason put to him a proposition that, because he was a friend of O'Byrne, he should conspire with O'Byrne to get him to use a live possum as a lure on his training track; that Mason would then tip off the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to organise a dawn raid to catch them in the act of blooding the dog with the live possum and, as a consequence of that, have O'Byrne barred from the track and have his living taken away from him by having him barred from being a trainer. As I said, that allegation is supported by a statutory declaration tabled before the board last night—further evidence that Mason is a dishonest person.

Other matters need to be investigated. I want some answers, for example, about why, on 7 November 1985—only a couple of weeks ago—a member of the Greyhound Racing Control Board, Ham Hillier, was able to enter three dogs in the one race at the Gabba when many battling owners and trainers in this State with dogs just as good as his are unable to get their dogs suitably graded in order to obtain a start at the Gabba? Why is it that tomorrow night at the Gabba that same member of the board, Mr Hillier, has entered four dogs in the one race? Not bad odds when there are only eight dogs in a race! Why is it that on one previous occasion he had four dogs in a race for very high prize-money? He was able to collect first, second and third prize-money because he had

four dogs in the race. As the Minister rightly said, Queensland pays the highest prize-money in Australia. This gentleman is rorting the system, and being backed up by the incompetent people on the Greyhound Racing Control Board.

I want some answers as to why, back in mid-1984, a dog named Brindle Bliss, which was rumoured to be a ring-in from New South Wales, was allowed to start at the Gabba and at Beenleigh. Why is it that a gentleman named Tim Nilsson, the trainer of the dog, was fined the massive sum of \$5,000—an incredible amount—simply because he gave the dog a drug to help it run faster? Apparently he was fined on the basis that it was suspected that the dog was a ring-in. I understand—and I have it written here—that Mason himself, when three delegates from the board met and questions were being asked concerning the increase in fines, hastily reported that that “included the \$5,000 fine in relation to the ring-in at Beenleigh.” The words of the board secretary—“the ring-in at Beenleigh”! Why has there never been a police investigation of the alleged ring-in at Beenleigh or the possibility of a ring-in at the Gabba?

Only last week, Judge Loewenthal, when sentencing Haitana, said that he was imposing a sentence of 12 months’ imprisonment for a very serious offence. It is reported that the Crown is considering an appeal against the leniency of that sentence; yet there has been no investigation of the possibility of a ring-in at Beenleigh.

I understand that the fine of \$5,000 was mysteriously paid by a cheque from the Kedron Social Club. What is the Kedron Social Club? Who is behind it? What prompted the Kedron Social Club to pay that massive \$5,000 fine?

I reiterate my call for the appointment of an independent inquiry into the whole greyhound racing industry in Queensland by a judge of the District Courts. There is something dramatically wrong with the board, and the Minister is attempting a whitewash.

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

Time expired.

ALP Attack on Ministers and Back-benchers

Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (12.20 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, today I wish to advise you and the Queensland public of incidents that demonstrate the disgusting methods that the Queensland ALP is using to leak malicious stories to the press and magazines. The ALP, in opposition, has allowed itself to fall to great depths. It has accepted, and adopted, a policy proposed by the young academic radicals to attack Ministers of the Government, one by one. To do this, it has resorted to dropping stories to the media and then hiding behind the media that carries the stories. The ALP has used supposition and stories taken out of context to attack individual members of the Government.

Until now, the Opposition has been able to drop those stories to sympathetic media representatives and no-one has had proof that the ALP is responsible. Today, I will give an example of how a member of the Opposition had a discussion with a top-ranking official of the Education Department. In their conversation, they discussed how they would be able to use the story to embarrass the Government. I will show how the story was given to a writer for a magazine—a magazine that has recently released stories clearly intended to embarrass Government Ministers.

It is not only Ministers in the Government who have borne the brunt of the ALP mud-raking. Back-bench members have faced it, as well. Within several weeks of my coming to this Parliament, I was subjected to that type of abuse. The Opposition spokesman on education asked a question that showed he had obviously been given details from the organisation at Kingston State High School. I was principal of that school for seven years. In that time, I dealt with literally hundreds of personal problems of students, parents and staff.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The honourable member will take his point of order.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I asked no such question. I ask the honourable member to withdraw the allegation. It is quite untrue.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Will the honourable member repeat his point of order? Will he allow me to hear it?

Mr UNDERWOOD: The honourable member for Fassifern said that I had asked, as the Opposition spokesman on education, a particular question about him and his school. I have never asked such a question. That statement is totally untrue, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr LINGARD: I withdraw it against the member for Ipswich West, because I was not speaking about him.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I did not hear the name of the member for Ipswich West mentioned by the member for Fassifern. I ask the honourable member whether his name was mentioned.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I was the Opposition spokesman on education.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I think there is only innuendo there. I cannot accept the honourable member's point of order.

Mr LINGARD: As I said, I dealt with personal problems of students, parents and staff. Many of the problems are listed in the personal records and official communications held at the school.

I can answer personal criticism on the floor of the House; but when personal details relating to others are released, clearly I must register my disgust and concern. Without doubt, that has occurred and, already, one member of the ALP has had the decency to come to me and tell me that it is happening.

It has now been found that an ALP member of Parliament has actually gone into a school—not the Kingston State High School—and, in front of school staff, discussed with a school inspector ways in which they can find stories that might in some way embarrass a member of the Queensland Parliament. Clearly, my disgust is obvious; clearly, the public will be disgusted; and, clearly, the school inspector, who participated willingly, should be punished.

School inspectors have access to Education Department records—records that should be confidential. Those records contain teachers' personal files. The personal files have records of examination results. They have records of inspection marks and inspection comments. The inspection comments contain criticism of the teacher's performance and suggestions for improvement. Taken out of context, they can be extremely damaging.

Worst of all, the records contain details of complaints that have been made against teachers by members of the public. School administrators know that such complaints are many and varied. Parents complain against teachers who give students low marks. Parents complain about comments that teachers make. Members of the public write to the Education Department criticising some of the things teachers do in their private lives. Parents become enraged when corporal punishment is used on their children. Administrators are often open to such criticism.

Fortunately, all complaints are dealt with in departmental inquiries, after which judgment is made on the validity of the complaint. Unfortunately, however, the information remains on the personal files. Malicious school inspectors can reach the files.

In this House, members who were school teachers have had to face the indignity of the filth that has come from the Opposition. Those comments are recorded in *Hansard* for the public to read.

Hansard records interjections such as "suspected child-molester", and others that I will not mention because young people have come into the gallery. It is word-play that distorts the truth. The comments are recorded in *Hansard* even when they are withdrawn on a point of order.

When such stories are being leaked to the press, it is time for the public to show disgust, especially when the stories are taken out of context and reported in such a way as to be a malicious attempt to bend the truth.

As I have said, members of the ALP have often declared their innocence, but now, because of the stupidity and naivety of a school inspector and an ALP member of Parliament, it is clear that this is happening.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I rise to a point of order. As the Opposition spokesman on Education, I cannot tolerate this vicious attack on the school inspector.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr UNDERWOOD: The honourable member is going on making these attacks on anonymous people who are quite innocent.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to resume his seat while I make a ruling on his point of order. Because there is no personal reference to the honourable member, there is no point of order. Comments in a general context are frequently made in this Chamber.

Mr Underwood: What about protecting some of the public servants round the place?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member argues with the Chair, I will warn him. As I have said, there is no point of order.

Mr LINGARD: When this sort of story-dropping occurs within the ALP, its members react with outward horror. I refer to the recent preselection for the vacant seat of Archerfield, when one of the ALP members who was standing for preselection released confidential education documents about the present member for Archerfield. He was dealt with by the party; he was expelled. He was not re-endorsed for the Logan City Council election. The present member for Archerfield was eventually elected to this Chamber.

Now, the member for Archerfield has had conversations with an Education Department official, gaining information about teachers so that he can embarrass honourable members on this side of the Chamber. Unbeknown to the member for Archerfield, I have witnesses to the conversation between him and Mr Frank Peach, who has been an acting school inspector and who has now been appointed a school inspector. Both might be regarded as naive because they held a discussion in a high school, which could be heard by staff and senior Education Department people.

The discussion was based on how they could get a story about me. Fortunately, I have been blessed with a wonderful family life. None of my personal educational records will show any criticisms by the Education Department of actions that I have taken. Clearly, I have nothing to hide. However, what they have obtained is information on teachers who have served on my staff. Clearly, by choosing a story, which to them appears very juicy, they believe they can discredit me because I was principal of the school at the time. The story they chose involves me only because I was principal.

No respect is shown for the young teacher involved. No contact has ever been made with the teacher to ask for verification of the story—a story which, I am sure, is untrue. However, the story was dropped to a writer of the controversial magazine *Matilda*. Fortunately, that writer contacted me to seek verification of the story, and the story has not been printed. It was not presented to me as a story about me; it was presented as a story about a young teacher. I have now spoken to the young teacher about the incident. He has a business that depends on goodwill. He is engaged to be married. Clearly, he can be hurt. If I did not have witnesses to the incident between the member for Archerfield and the school inspector, and then the telephone call from the writer of the magazine story, the members of the ALP would walk away with a smile again, as they have done over similar articles in the last few months.

This is a disgusting way for the ALP to act. It is a disgusting way for the school inspector to act, even though his political leanings have been questioned previously.

The conversation was held in a State high school in front of other people. It was not only about me as a member of Parliament; it was also about the personal records of a young school teacher. Clearly, the school inspector should be punished, the member for Archerfield stands condemned, and the ALP must face the condemnation of the Queensland public over the way it is attempting to bring about the personal degradation of Ministers and back-benchers.

National Party Hatred of Workers

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (12.29 p.m.): Those workers who think that the National Party's plan to eliminate overtime and penalty rates will apply only to the tourist industry should look to the vicious personal hatred of all workers and their families that pours from National Party Ministers and their public relations machines whenever they address a gathering of their supporters. If they do that, workers' families will not plan their future based on their current levels of take-home pay.

The National Party's policy is that all workers are overpaid, work too few hours and have too many holidays. Queensland's National Party Government has consistently opposed in the courts applications for wage rises based on cost of living adjustments. It is National Party policy that young men and women should have their wages reduced. It is the National Party's policy that employees should not be paid extra money for working longer hours than the award stipulates, for working on public holidays or weekends, or for working shifts, such as the midnight to dawn shift.

Those young men and women in the police force who have begun paying off their family home based on their current take-home pay—which includes shift work, penalty rates and overtime—should not think that the National Party will not attack all penalty rates and all overtime.

The nurses who answer the demands of their profession day and night—at all hours—to provide 24-hour hospital care should realise that the National Party considers overtime and penalty rates to be extravagant overpayments. Firemen, who are on call at all hours to protect our property; ambulance men, who make themselves available in good and bad weather; railwaymen, who keep trains running throughout the night; and water and sewerage workers, who work odd hours to service the community's needs, should look closely at the National Party's record and be aware that they, too, will reap the rewards of the gerrymander.

The minority Government, which rules without the support of more than 60 per cent of Queenslanders, has only just started its campaign to reduce the pay and conditions of Queensland workers. The National Party's misuse of Parliament to introduce special legislation against workers and their trade unions, and its intimidation and violent attacks on its own employees—threatening fines, the sack, and increased hours of work—is only the beginning.

The National Party Cabinet, with the support of its spineless back-benchers, has set out to bring its own workers to their knees by a campaign that is based on intimidation. Its tactics include recording the names of employees who participate in strikes, and forcing or encouraging foremen to spread rumours that those who participate in industrial action will be sacked.

The National Party's plan is to set up groups of contractors who will be given casual contracts at reduced rates to do jobs that are currently undertaken by permanent public servants and Crown employees.

Mr FitzGerald: So that they can earn more.

Mr BURNS: It is not true that they will be able to earn more. I have listened to the comments about contract employment.

This morning, the Premier spoke about the abattoir in the Northern Territory. The man up there who offered his workers big money did not pay it, so the workers have gone back to the union to get it to ask him to pay the dough he promised. That man is a full-blooded scab, and the National Party is putting money behind him so that he can keep on attacking the workers. That proves that what I have said is true.

The current tactic of the National Party is to create fear, uncertainty and insecurity among Crown employees who have provided loyal service to Queensland for decades. Mr Lane has done it to the railwaymen and Mr Gibbs has done it to the electricity men.

The National Party Government has refused to increase incremental payments for its workers in line with increases in the 1984 Consumer Price Index, even though, in line with an agreement with the Trades and Labor Council, that had been the practice. Consequently, employees of the Brisbane City Council and other local authorities probably will not receive incremental increases.

The National Party has foreshadowed legislation to allow employers to opt out of all awards and negotiate individual contracts with vulnerable small groups of workers. These private contracts are used extensively in the southern States of the USA, where there are strong, Queensland-like, anti-union laws that make union organisation all but impossible. The wages in those States are 40 per cent lower than the wages in the northern States, and unemployment is correspondingly higher than it is in the other States.

What of Queensland? Under the National Party Government, which attacks workers day after day, our wages are lower, our take-home pay is lower and our unemployment is higher.

Already the State Government is offering contracts to its employees in the South East Queensland Electricity Board. These contracts prescribe the opting out of the award system and increased hours of work, and will enforce employees to work anywhere as directed within the board's area, which will bring about a major dislocation of family life.

The National Party's new cry is deregulation, but only for the work-force, the union movement and the award system. Basically, it wants to do away with the rules. It will mean open slather in the job market—every man for himself and every woman for herself. For “deregulation”, the worker should read “wage cuts and lower and fewer conditions”.

The essence of the National Party's approach to workers is to break down the current industrial system into a hotchpotch of cheap little deals. It will be dog-eat-dog in its crudest form. Far from giving little people more power and choice, the National Party approach will make the strong stronger and the weak weaker.

The Liberal Party has nothing to crow about, either. The Federal Leader of the Opposition (Mr Howard) has said that the Liberal Party wants individual firms to have the right to make their own bargains with their employees about wages and conditions, according to the most fundamental of all principles—the capacity to pay. In other words, a boss will be able to say to a worker, “I have no money. You can work for me for nothing and I'll pay you later on when I get a quid.”

Blokes working up and down the coast have been bludged upon by National Party supporters for years. Some working men and women have never had enough money to bury their mother and father, because they have never had a decent go. That is especially so of farm workers. There are few award wages for them, and they have been bludged on year in and year out.

Mr WHARTON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr BURNS: The Minister cannot take a point of order.

Mr WHARTON: I can take a point of order. Many of the things that the honourable member for Lytton has said are absolutely untrue. I draw that fact to the attention of the House.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr WHARTON: They are untrue.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I really have to state that a point of order must be based in some way on a statement that is offensive to the person who takes the point of order. If the Minister had been affected personally, the point of order would be valid, but I do not think that I can accept generalisations.

Mr WHARTON: As a member of the National Party and as a farmer, I say that the honourable member's statements are quite incorrect and are offensive to me.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! To reconcile this matter, I ask the honourable member for Lytton to refrain from using the words "bludged upon".

Mr BURNS: What will I call them—"no-hopers", or "parasites"?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will not use derogatory terms.

Mr BURNS: The National Party parasites have, as their committed policy, the destruction and removal of workers' conditions, such as four weeks' annual leave; CPI wage increases, and the Government cannot argue that it has not opposed them in the courts; overtime penalty rates, which the Government says that it opposes; the right to strike for improved conditions, about which the Government has passed legislation; the right to job permanency, and I point out that the Government wants contracts; the right to 17½ per cent annual leave loading; the right to long service leave, and contracts do not allow for those two; the right to site allowances; the right to the BUS scheme, and rostered days off. The Government is on record as being against them all. It should not deny that. That is National Party policy.

The National Party's personal vindictiveness towards the sacked SEQEB workers is a clear example of its hatred of working men and women. The National Party persecuted them right to the end. It went for every ounce of blood that it could get. That is a display of nasty, dirty, low tactics. There is nothing worse than that.

The National Party's plans to destroy unions by dividing workers and putting one against the other, brother against brother, father against son and wife against husband is in the old, arrogant tradition of the Tories. National Party members believe that workers have no rights, that they should be grateful to the boss for a job, that they should be made to know their place and that they should touch their forelock to the boss as they come to work.

At a time of high unemployment in Queensland, there are those who will do anything to get work, those who will betray cherished principles because they have seen that greed and selfishness are given more recognition by this National Party Government—the knighthoods go to the greedy and the selfish—than the Christian principles in which National Party leaders profess to believe. In the long run, those workers who give in will be sorry. If the National Party succeeds, they and all other workers will be the losers.

The National Party is trying to destroy the State's arbitration system, its system of industrial justice. This attack is really a National Party attack on award wages, on the award system, the system that protects a worker's job, a worker's wages and a worker's family's standard of living and life-style. Those workers, who are standing on the sidelines while the National Party uses all the forces of government to rally all the bigots to destroy organised labour and unions, should think hard. They should question the continued appearances in the Industrial Commission of the Queensland Confederation of Industry Limited and the National Party State Government, which have tried to stop

wage increases in accordance with cost-of-living increases and have opposed the awarding of better conditions.

Those workers should ask themselves whether Bjelke-Petersen and the Queensland Confederation of Industry would have offered them their current wage rates, leave entitlements, overtime and penalty rates, working hours, worker's compensation, holiday loadings and job security if there had been no unions and no labour movement. Of course, the answer is, "No."

Workers should ask themselves why on earth, if workers would be better off under contracts, would employers, such as the Queensland Confederation of Industry and the National Party, be pushing so hard for contracts? The National Party and the Queensland Confederation of Industry want to reduce labour costs, which means they want to reduce wages and conditions. Other than sackings, that is the only way that they can reduce labour costs. That is why they want workers to accept contracts.

A political party once ran a series of advertisements called *Memories*. When the National Party contract system is entrenched and unions have been gelded, the workers of Queensland will be able to run their own series of *Memories*. They will be memories of—

the permanent jobs that disappeared under the contract system;

the six-monthly wage increases that disappeared with the destruction of centralised wage-fixing, and the introduction of the new contract system under which employees agree to work for a fixed wage with no increases;

the overtime and penalty rates that they used to be entitled to; and

the annual leave and 17½ per cent holiday loading that will no longer apply under contracts.

Time expired.

Sugar Industry

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (12.40 p.m.): I rise today to speak on the desperate plight of the sugar industry and the effect that it is having on millers, farmers, workers and their families.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr RANDELL: I know that members opposite are not interested in the workers.

Everybody knows that these problems have been caused by the world downturn in sugar prices because of the policies of the European Economic Community. I was interested to hear the honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns) speak about the deregulation of the labour force. Why will he not support me in fighting the deregulation that Mr Kerin proposes for the sugar industry?

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr RANDELL: He is insisting on deregulation.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I will not allow shouting across the Chamber, multiple interjections and finger-pointing. It is most unparliamentary. The Chamber will come to order.

Mr BURNS: I rise to a point of order. Is the honourable member supporting a reduction in wages for sugar-workers?

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

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member is trying to put into my mouth words that I did not use. Would he be prepared to go to Mr Kerin and say that we should not have deregulation of the sugar industry? That is the point.

The only thing that we can do for the sugar industry is obtain a fair and equitable international sugar agreement. Surely the honourable member for Lytton would agree with that. He should get the Federal Government to do something about that. The members of the Federal Government are the ones who must do something. They have to do the negotiating.

In the meantime, I am concerned, as are the members of the industry, about the reluctance of the Federal Government, represented by Mr Kerin, to make any realistic moves to assist in any way to help tide the industry over this most difficult period.

Honourable members will recall that, in 1973, in Cairns, Mr Hawke said that he would assist the sugar industry with the underwriting of a price support scheme. He said that, as soon as he had the power, he would do that. Since then, the Federal Government has done nothing but twist, turn, stall, move sideways and backwards and ask for more and more reports. The time for action has passed. It cannot stall any longer. Cane-growers, millers and workers have lost patience. They do not want any more excuses or reports. They want action now. They do not want any more of the con jobs of the last two years.

Mr Campbell interjected.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member for Bundaberg will have his opportunity shortly. Last night, I listened to his heap of rubbish and guff. The cane-growers, millers and workers want the Federal Government to face up to its responsibilities.

It is no good Mr Kerin falling back on the 100-day report, which, incidentally, all the industry has rejected in one way or another. It is no good for him to say, "You will deregulate the industry on my terms or you can forget about assistance." That is plain, straight-out blackmail. He knows that he has the industry over a barrel and he is saying, "Deregulate on my terms or you will get nothing." Nobody can convince me that deregulation will put any real money into the pockets of growers and millers. I defy the honourable member for Bundaberg to say that it will. I also challenge anyone to show me any of the present policies and regulations governing the sugar industry that are responsible for the economic downturn today. Nobody can do that.

In trying to manipulate this great industry of ours, Mr Kerin has taken the advice of economists and large business interests. In my electorate, the degree of deregulation that Mr Kerin is demanding and his other policies could effectively close several Mackay mills and force out 40 per cent of farmers. I have not plucked that figure out of the air. Honourable members should read the 100-day report. It is on record in black and white that 40 per cent of the growers will have to go. There is no way that I will accept that. There is no way that the State Government will accept that. There is no way that responsible persons in the industry will accept that. Some growers may have to go. If they have to go, let them go in their own time and with dignity. Naturally, inefficient growers will go to the wall.

The irony of the whole situation is that this could happen supposedly in return for monetary assistance. However, the way the sugar price is rising, Mr Kerin, who has put nothing in up till now—not one cent in three years—may not have to put in anything at all, and he would have achieved his objective of wrecking the industry and not having to make any monetary contribution.

Mr Campbell: He has, through the Rural Reconstruction Fund.

Mr RANDELL: Which is paid back.

The whole ludicrous situation has gone on long enough. Mr Kerin has to make money available to millers and growers right now, not next year or the year after. I call on him to relieve the desperate cash-flow situation being experienced by most mills in Queensland and to relieve the financial position in which many growers find themselves, through no fault of their own.

If it is required, let Mr Kerin make an interim payment and argue about deregulation later, or let him accept what the industry wants. He should provide some money immediately. I hope that the honourable member for Bundaberg and other Opposition members will support me on this matter, because the industry cannot last much longer.

What about the mill workers? Stand-downs will take place before and after Christmas. The workers will put the blame fairly and squarely where it belongs—right on the present Federal Government. The Federal Government supposedly supports the workers. The stance taken by that Government indicates that it could not care less. Members of the Federal Labor Government should be ashamed of themselves.

Kerin has the money; he could deliver it tomorrow, just by the stroke of a pen. Opposition members know that. However, he is blackmailing the industry in order to get what he wants.

Mr Menzel: I don't believe he does have the money.

Mr RANDELL: Mr Kerin has said he has got the money; I have to accept that.

Is Mr Kerin so out of touch that he is indifferent to the trauma and heartache being suffered by farmers and their families, who do not know where to turn next? Mr Kerin should visit the cane-fields and see what I have seen. Unless he does something besides enjoying the name of "con-man Kerin"—and over the years he has conned the farmers—Mr Kerin will go down in history as the most heartless and non-caring Minister for Primary Industry that Australia has ever had the misfortune to have.

Opposition members should compare the Federal Government contribution to the Queensland Government contribution. The Federal Government has contributed nothing, but this Government has contributed \$20m long-term carry-on finance at 4 per cent to keep the growers going. It has boosted the delivery price by paying the interest on the loan in order to get money to the farmers immediately. It is in their pockets now. I know of growers who have already received \$4,000 to enable them to carry on. What has Mr Kerin done for the farmers? Not a thing! He has not put one red cent into the industry. Do Opposition members support that? It is apparent from the way in which Opposition members speak that they do support it.

Mr Campbell: He has to give it through the State Government; you know that.

Mr RANDELL: Some of the demands that Mr Kerin is making in relation to deregulation are just not on.

The assignment system is the whole basis of any farm. Mr Kerin cannot take that away. It is the core that banks recognise as security. I believe that the Queensland Cane Growers Council has come up with a modified version of the assignment system that should be acceptable to everyone. It has stated that no grower should grow outside a defined area. The grower can move his plantings round within his farm, but he cannot go beyond that. It is in black and white, if any honourable member would like to read it.

There is no way in which the Queensland Government can accept the demands by Mr Kerin that millers and growers bargain on prices and that any dispute be settled ultimately in the civil court. Honourable members can imagine the years that would go by before judgments were handed down. That would not worry large milling companies. However, such delays could mean the economic demise of the battling cane-grower. That is the point that I am trying to make. What cash resource does the cane-grower have to fight a big company? He has nothing; he will go to the wall. Opposition members know that, but they are not game to admit it.

The Central Sugar Cane Prices Board should be retained, with a degree of modification and loosening-up. The great danger with the demands made by Mr Kerin is the transferability of peaks between mill areas. Mr Deputy Speaker, as a practising cane-farmer, you would know the great dangers if that is not carried out wisely and well.

The situation could arise in which one mill could be overburdened with production of cane, which could be to the detriment of existing growers. I can envisage the reverse happening if too many growers were allowed to transfer from one mill area to another. A mill could cease to be viable and forced to close if the growers moved out. I believe that that is what Mr Kerin wants to happen. Growers who are located some distance from a mill could be proven economically non-viable according to mill standards and be forced out of the industry. In my own mill area, that is highly likely. However, the Federal Government could not care less.

It is about time Mr Kerin started to think of people—farmers, millers, growers and workers, who are making, and have always made, a valuable contribution to this State and this nation. It is time that Mr Kerin listened to the concerns of those people. It is time that he stopped listening to some of the shiny-pants, desk-bound public servants in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, who have no practical experience in the very highly competitive world in which we live.

It is also about time Opposition members viewed with sympathy the suffering of cane-growers. Those members should leave the cities and go and look at what is going on in the cane-fields. The great sugar industry is going to the wall right before our eyes. Thousands of workers will be put out of work. Christmas is fast approaching. The children of cane-growers want something for Christmas. It is about time Opposition members got their act together. If they have any influence with Mr Kerin, members of the Opposition should try to use it in order to get some money for the Queensland sugar-growing community.

Local Government Association of Queensland Conference, Gladstone

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (12.49 p.m.): On 15 October, I spoke about allegations made by way of two letters written by a Mr Ken Nicholson, a well-known member of the National Party in Gladstone. Those letters were published in *The Gladstone Observer*.

One of the allegations that greatly concerned me was that the Gladstone City Council used blackmail in an endeavour to extort \$30,000 from the Commonwealth Bank, by telling the bank that if it did not pay for a dinner function at the conference, which could cost \$30,000, the council would withdraw all of its business from the Commonwealth Bank and give it to another bank, namely, Westpac.

The Commonwealth Bank informed the local authority that it believed that the Gladstone City Council was threatening the bank; that there were approximately 800 statutory bodies in Queensland that could all employ such tactics if the bank were to bow to blackmail and pressure that was being applied by the council; and that such demands would be never-ending and unbearable to cope with.

I asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) to have these allegations investigated and give me other cost figures on the business lost by the Commonwealth Bank. The Minister answered my request by way of a letter dated 18 November, which reads as follows—

“Whilst it is true that the council decided to transfer its banking from one bank to another, the renegotiations of loan to which reference has been made did not arise as a result of this decision by the council.

The renegotiation resulted from the maturing of a number of conversion loans, which necessitated action on such loans, and it was coincidental—”

I repeat the word “coincidental”—

“that this occurred at the time of the transfer of the council’s banking interests.”

It is very obvious that the change of banks did take place. The Minister did not deny that and the reason was that the Commonwealth Bank refused to pay the ransom figure. The Minister did confirm, however, that pressure was placed on the Commonwealth Bank and a number of other businesses.

I quote from part of his letter as follows—

“Concerning the decision by the council in relation to its banking, I understand that, prior to the holding of the Local Government Association Conference in Gladstone, the council approached a number of local organisations with a view to gaining sponsorships of functions at the Conference. The bank which handled the council’s business at that time was approached, but declined to assist to any great extent.”

It is plain that great pressure or, as the bank says, “blackmail” was used by the local authority in its endeavour to extort \$30,000 from the bank.

The Minister’s letter further states—

“Following consideration of the matter by the council and having regard to the fact that another bank agreed to a sponsorship and displayed a most co-operative attitude towards the council, the transfer was decided upon.”

What the Minister has failed to state is just how much the renegotiation of these loans has cost the rate-payers of Gladstone.

What all honourable members must be concerned about is this: If this local authority can blackmail, endeavour to extort and exhibit corrupt action—obviously with the support and knowledge of the Queensland Local Government Association, the department and the Minister for Local Government—for how long has that been going on, and where will the matter end?

As the letter from the Minister states—

“I would mention that the matter is one entirely at the discretion of the council and I can see nothing improper in the actions taken.”

The Minister has failed to accept his responsibility. That is the same attitude that he adopted towards the council in 1978 when it was found guilty, by the Auditor-General, of theft, fraud and misappropriation.

Honourable members must be concerned about just how far requests or demands made on any person, firm or organisation by the local authority have been taken in relation to applications for building permits, subdivision or rezoning. Honourable members should also be concerned about the kinds of transactions that people, firms or organisations enter into with the council. If this type of action is allowed to go unchallenged, where will it end? What pressure will be used by local authorities in their battles to determine which city, town or shire can put on the most lavish conferences, which include day-and-night parties, at which a good time is had by all. Bearing in mind the many allegations made over the years against the Minister, I would not expect him to take action against anyone for engaging in blackmail, extortion or corruption.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The honourable member for Port Curtis is impugning the veracity of a Minister. Under the provisions of the Standing Orders, that is not permitted. The reference made by the honourable member to the Minister in that context will be withdrawn.

Mr PREST: I will withdraw that reference if it is untrue that allegations have been made against him.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! That kind of remark cannot be made in the Chamber.

Mr PREST: I withdraw the remark. If members of the National Party—especially the Premier and Treasurer—are as clean as they are supposed to be, I ask the Premier and Treasurer to take up with the executive of that association this matter of funding of lavish Queensland Local Government Association Conferences and make certain that these standover tactics are not repeated.

I do not believe that my request of the Premier and Treasurer will be acceded to, because his puppet, Sir Albert Abbott, is president of the Queensland Local Government

Association and is up to his ears in this disgusting affair. He loves every moment of these conferences and their goings-on. It is the Queensland Local Government Association that urges the host local authority to do something bigger, brighter and better than was done in the previous year, irrespective of how it is done or at whose expense.

It has been stated, although without proof, that those blackmail standover tactics have been part and parcel of the National Party's policy that has seen money flow into the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation. As I said, that allegation is made without real proof, but what I have said here is real proof of blackmail, extortion and corruption on the part of a National Party local authority.

What will the Government do about it? I am sure that if any ordinary citizen endeavoured to blackmail or extort money from a bank, or any other business or person, criminal charges would quickly be laid and he or she would be in a court facing legal action.

Over a long period, the National Party Government and, in particular, the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen), the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn), the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) and the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) have repeatedly said that they will not allow the unions to blackmail employers. Only yesterday, in this House, in reference to the Builders Labourers Federation, Mr Lester said—

“All I can say is that one thing is sure and certain: the Queensland Government will not allow these blackmail tactics to go on.”

This Government will not tolerate union pressure on business or employees; however, it is obvious that blackmail standover tactics were used to gain favours and benefits for delegates to the Queensland Local Government Conference held in Gladstone in September. I want to know what action the Premier will be taking, and taking urgently, against the Local Government Association.

Let me make it quite clear that the decision to use those tactics was taken by the mayor and councillors, not the officers of the Gladstone City Council, who only carried out the instructions of the council. This allegation was made by a disgruntled National Party member and was published in *The Gladstone Observer*.

I am aware of the council's tactic of endeavouring to cause me embarrassment if I did not take the allegation to the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing. However, on this occasion, the Minister confirmed that what has been alleged is correct. Nevertheless, he intends to again run away from his responsibilities as Minister. The Minister's reply shows that what many of the small businesses are saying is correct. They were approached, and now those that could not pay are being harassed by the council. I know that some of the businesses were approached and asked for something as small as gift wrapping-paper. However, some were approached for a huge amount of beer. Some of the businesses could not afford to pay, and they are now paying the penalty.

Mrs Chapman: Haven't you got a Labor council in Gladstone?

Mr PREST: No, we have not.

Mrs Chapman: How many of them are Labor?

Mr PREST: One.

Mrs Chapman: Who is that—the mayor?

Mr PREST: No, Jeff Lenz. All the rest are members of the National Party or the Liberal Party. No doubt the honourable member for Pine Rivers will say that that sort of thing is not going on, but the Minister, in his reply to my allegations, said that those things did happen. However, he also said, “I would mention that the matter is one entirely for the discretion of the council . . .” and that, therefore, he does not intend to take any action.

The stage is being reached at which each successive conference must be bigger, better and brighter than the previous conference. The host local authorities are putting pressure on local businesses. In this case, a bank was not only asked to pay \$30,000 for one dinner function but also was told, "If you don't give, we will take our business away from you." When the council was told that that was blackmail, it did in fact take its business away from the bank.

Similar incidents have occurred in this State. It has been reported that such tactics have been adopted by the National Party over a very long period. It has used standover, blackmail and extortion tactics in order to gain contributions to the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 36A, the time allotted for the debate on matters of public interest has now expired.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

ELECTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 9 October (see p. 1697) on Mr Harper's motion—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr GOSS (Salisbury) (2.16 p.m.): In rising to speak to this legislation, I indicate that the Opposition does not see any great problem in it. However, I intend to comment particularly on certain provisions, and generally on others.

Honourable members and the public generally must realise that the democratic framework of democracy in Queensland and in the remainder of Australia rests on a number of important principles and practices. While the Elections Act is an important part of that framework, it is only part of the framework, and its value is lost, as are its positive reforms, when other equally important aspects of the framework are not what they should be.

I am speaking about what is well known as the unfair electoral system in Queensland. It is important, for the whole framework to work and for the Elections Act to do for the community the job that it should do, that we have practical provisions for the fair conduct of elections and their results.

What value is there in positive reforms, when the rules are rigged, when the rest of the framework is distorted by a Government intent only on maintaining itself in office despite the will of the people, as reflected at elections time after time?

As is well known, my party's policy is based on one vote, one value. This morning, the Premier rose on that point and challenged Opposition members on the one vote, one value principle. I support that principle. I am sure that all members on this side of the House support it. When I say, "On this side of the House", I mean the Labor Opposition. I am not sure of the Liberal Party's position. That is not surprising, because they themselves are not sure.

It is fair to say, relative to the important democratic framework that I have been referring to, that the dishonesty of the current system is apparent when the boundaries and the population figures recently published are looked at.

For a start, the zonal system is completely obnoxious. It has no foundation in logic. Its foundation lies only in the desperate desire of the Government to maintain its position, despite the will of the majority. Quite fallacious arguments are put forward in terms of the need to compensate far-flung areas in terms of representation in this place, yet much smaller populations are to be found in electorates such as Barambah and Somerset than in far-flung electorates such as Cook. I could cite example after example. Another example is the Cunnamulla nipple that removed Cunnamulla, a Labor-voting

area, from the electorate of the Minister for Primary Industries. Feature after feature of the electoral system reveals the apparent dishonesty in the whole framework, which is distorted and perverted.

As I have said, the amendments are mainly positive and worthwhile reforms. Although I would not put all of the measures in that category, the Opposition will not be carried away and oppose them. However, the good work done by the Minister in preparing the legislation is perverted by the distortions and dishonesties in the overall framework of the boundaries and the zonal system. Very soon, the majority of the public must realise the inequity and unfairness in the present system. For too long, too many people have been apathetic about the gerrymander, or the "Bjelkemander", as it is sometimes called.

Mr HARPER: I rise to a point of order. We are dealing with the Elections Act Amendment Bill; we are not dealing with redistribution or any other Act. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you to consider whether honourable members should confine themselves to the legislation before the Chamber.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Randell): Order! I am aware of what the honourable member has been saying in his speech. I will allow a fairly wide-ranging debate. However, from now on, I will take account of what the honourable member is saying. I ask him to keep as closely as he can to the Bill before the Chamber.

Mr GOSS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I think the comments that I make will be relevant to the matter of elections. I am saying that it is important that elections reflect the will of the people. If the Minister is a bit sensitive about the fact that Queensland elections do not reflect the will of the people, I can understand it. They do not.

The Minister's department has a partial responsibility in this area, but it is an important responsibility. Increasingly, the way in which elections are conducted is removing the result further and further from the collective will of the people. Because of the overall framework that is provided for elections, people are being denied the opportunity that they should have, under the principal Act and the amendments, of getting the result that they choose by voting en masse at a general election. Presumably, the purpose of elections is to get a reflection of the will of the people. That purpose is being distorted and avoided by a system that is dishonest and is designed for the maintenance of the status quo rather than the maintenance of democracy.

Regarding elections and the conduct of elections—people realise, in a general sense, that the results of elections affect them. What they have to realise, and what has to be made clear to them, is that the overall framework of the electoral system—not just the Elections Act—is something in which they have a vested interest. They have a duty to be concerned about the system and to follow it.

When the next election is held under the principles of this legislation, if the people wish to vote to get a new Government or to register a protest about one issue or a number of issues—for example, galloping State taxes and charges, or the inadequacy of basic services and facilities, whether they be police, ambulance or whatever—they will be denied the opportunity adequately of reflecting that wish.

This legislation is all very fine and very sound in its construction, but the foundations are shonky, and it is the foundations that distort and diminish the value of what we are seeking to do here today. As a result of those shonky foundations on which the whole Elections Act is built, the people are being betrayed.

On those general remarks, I conclude by asking: If the Government believes it is so popular, why is it so scared of going to the people on fair and equitable boundaries?

Mr FitzGerald: They are.

Mr GOSS: They are not. That is why people such as the member for Lockyer have to be protected and closeted by the system. Under a fair system, not only would the people see through the honourable member, but also he would not be returned to this

place—and that would definitely be a healthy development. The removal of the National Party fox terrier from this Parliament would be a healthy development. He is the fox terrier of the Parliament—a lot of noise but no impact.

A long-standing example of the intransigence on the part of the Government is that, for some time, there have been separate enrolment cards and separate rolls for Federal and State elections.

I am pleased that a joint enrolment card is to be introduced, because it is a positive step. I commend it. However, the provision should go further. Indeed, the same provision could be applied to the residential qualification. I cannot see the logic in maintaining a system in which the residential qualification for the Commonwealth roll is one month but, for the State roll, it is three months. It seems to me that one residential qualification would be more beneficial for all Australians, whether they are Queenslanders or not.

The Minister might care to clarify another matter for me, because I am not clear precisely what the position will be. As a result of the joint enrolment card, will two data banks of names and addresses be maintained, or will there be only one? Will one agency pass the card on to the other? I notice that the Minister is indicating that two data banks will be maintained. In that case, it seems to me that the job is being only partially carried out. The records will not be complete, complementary or efficiently maintained until a central data bank is established, one from which both State and Federal agencies are entitled to extract by computer the electoral roll that they require according to the boundaries and the principles of their own legislation.

The next provision with which I want to deal concerns the recognition of the progress of technology and the introduction of computer technology into the electoral system. I am pleased that positive steps have been taken to provide for the electoral roll to be printed on electronic tape—for example, computer tape—and for those tapes to be made available. It can only make the system more efficient, and that is in the interests of the people.

However, I was disappointed to learn this morning that the Government, without consultation with the Opposition, announced that computer equipment will be set up in the electorate offices of four members of this Assembly in a pilot program. I do not have any objection to that per se, but, from what was said this morning about the offices that have been selected—Albert, Greenslopes, Maryborough and Archerfield—it is quite clear that the computer technology, and the system of technology that will be made available by the relevant department, will be used in a weighted or loaded way to the benefit of the Government. That is obvious on a consideration of the electorates that have been selected—a Minister's electorate; two vital, marginal Government electorates; and a safe Labor seat. If the marginal electorates are to become safe for the Government at the next election, the Government will need to spend a lot of money on tricks and whizz-bang technology.

Mr Littleproud: How about Salisbury? How will that go?

Mr GOSS: What the Government has done to the electorate of Salisbury is obvious. Indeed, the Government would not install the technology in such an electorate, for fear that it would be even harder for the Government to win. That is why, in this pilot program, the equipment is to be installed in marginal electorates.

It is obvious that the National Party is very concerned about the adequacies of the members for Greenslopes and Maryborough; otherwise it would not have given them this unfair advantage over their opponents. Because the Government is so concerned about its ability to win marginal Labor electorates, it has proposed that the computer technology will be installed into a very safe Labor seat. That is a misuse of tax-payers' funds, and I challenge the members for Greenslopes and Maryborough to stand up in this place and say that they will have nothing to do with the abuse of tax-payers' funds to try to ensure their re-election.

If the Government really wants to be genuine and honest about this pilot program, it should arrange that lots be drawn to determine the four electorates. Two electorates

from both sides, either drawn by lot or selected by the relevant parties, would be more appropriate. However, once more, a biased approach has been brought in at the various levels of the electoral system, and it stinks. It is shonky from the foundations to the top.

I see that the member for Greenslopes is leaving the Chamber through the back door. I repeat the challenge I made when she was absent. I challenge her to stand and say that she will have no part of the abuse of tax-payers' funds that has occurred in an endeavour to give her an unfair advantage and to try to save her failing and marginal National Party electorate.

Mr Hamill: She will be out the back door at the next election, anyhow.

Mr GOSS: Perhaps. It will be very interesting to see whether or not she is prepared to say that to the tax-payers, or is it the fact that she is party to this scheme under which tax-payers' funds will be used and abused to give her an unfair advantage in the forthcoming election?

Mr Harper: The Premier made it clear this morning that the equipment for these trials was being supplied by the companies concerned so that the pilot scheme could be introduced and evaluated.

Mr GOSS: Is the Minister saying that there will be no expenditure of Government time, energy, money or resources?

Mr Harper: I am repeating what the Premier said.

Mr GOSS: The Minister is avoiding the point.

I would be interested to know the full details of the arrangement that has been entered into because obviously it favours the Government. In particular, it favours a Government Minister whose performance has been somewhat suspect this year, and two very shaky Government back-benchers in marginal seats. What is significant and what highlights this fact is that the Labor electorate selected is one of the safest Labor electorates in Queensland.

The Bill contains a number of other provisions. I will canvass some of them only briefly. There is provision in relation to the compilation of rolls not every 12 months but rather in a period of not more than 24 months. I am not exactly sure of the reason for that, but I cannot see any important consequences of a detrimental nature hinging on that change. The same applies to the provision to remove divisions, and list electors in alphabetical order.

As I have said before, the Bill contains other positive provisions. One of them provides for the public inspection of the last printed copies of the roll as well as the list of additions and deletions. I note that there has been a reform relating to prisoners serving sentences. I agree that the reform that the Minister has introduced will provide a much more preferable situation to the existing one, which is somewhat uncertain and could be discriminatory. The current provision is that a person is disqualified while he is serving a sentence, irrespective of the length of that sentence, as a result of being convicted of a crime for which the maximum sentence is 12 months' imprisonment or more. The change to an actual term of six months or more is fairer in all the circumstances.

The next provision in relation to which I wish to comment relates to identification cards. There has not really been, from the Minister, a complete justification or a complete explanation for this provision. I know he has said that the cards are optional and that it is a service that is being made available to young people. Claims have been made that the cards can be used to combat underage drinking. The debate on the legislation passed yesterday exposed that argument as being without foundation, because the relevant legislation will still provide that people who choose not to produce an identification card can fall back on the old certificate system, under which they simply sign a certificate to say they are of the requisite age. Last night, the Minister conceded that that system had

not really worked effectively and that there was no suggestion that it would work more effectively in the future.

I do not know about the identification cards. Quite obviously the young people of Queensland have not really responded to them and do not feel that they are a positive measure. I recall the Minister saying last night that only about 1 500 had been issued. In the time that they have been available and given the number of young people who are eligible to obtain them, that is really a fairly paltry number. Another deterrent to young people is that they cost \$5 each. While that cost applies, it will be another deterrent to their obtaining those cards. I see this measure as a very patchy and only very partial response to whatever it is that the Government is trying to solve. Judging by the very small number of cards that have been issued, that is obvious.

The legislation contains a number of provisions relating to the removal, from the roll, of names of people who do not live at particular addresses. That is fair enough.

The legislation provides also that, for security reasons, Family Court judges will be entitled to have their addresses omitted from the State electoral roll. That is one provision that I would count among the positive provisions of the legislation and one that I am happy to support. It is a sad reflection on society at present that the law has to be amended to afford that protection to Family Court judges. It is absolutely necessary, and it is only one of the many measures that should be undertaken to afford those judges the protection and security to which they and their families are entitled, given the difficult and controversial area in which they practise the law.

A straightforward part of the legislation relates to the removal of names of people who, by virtue of physical disability or mental incapacity, are incapable of complying with the requirements of the Act. The Bill contains provision for the removal of names on the basis of medical certificates.

The Bill contains new provisions in relation to voting rights of people whose names are not on the roll. The provision that a person shall be permitted to vote if he has completed and lodged his claim for enrolment before 5 o'clock on the afternoon of the day on which the writ for the election was issued, is fair enough.

Similarly, the Bill contains a provision that candidates must be enrolled on a State electoral roll and not necessarily the roll for the electorate for which they are standing. I was surprised that that provision was not already in the Act. I think that all honourable members would agree that it is a sensible and practical measure. I do not know why the Minister has increased from 6 to 10 the number of people who are required to nominate a candidate. Perhaps it will go some way towards reducing the number of ratbag candidates. If that is so, it is to be supported. In any event, I cannot see any objection or serious prejudice that anybody could claim as a result of that provision.

Mr De Lacy: That could put the Liberals out of the Cairns electorate. They haven't got 10 members.

Mr GOSS: Perhaps the Minister has introduced it to assist the honourable member for Cairns and to avoid his having to face a Liberal Party candidate. From a recent trip that I made to the Cairns electorate, I understand that the Liberal Party has recently increased its membership dramatically, so the honourable member had better watch out. A journalist in Cairns told me that, this year, the Liberal Party had doubled its membership in the Cairns district and that there are now two members of the Liberal Party living in the honourable member's electorate.

The Minister has introduced practical measures to formalise the basis on which infirm, elderly or incapacitated voters are able to vote from a motor vehicle. The Bill contains a new provision that the electoral visitor must give 24 hours' notice to candidates of a proposed visit. That is fairer to candidates and more sensible than the previous ad hoc and unnecessarily spontaneous system.

The situation in relation to incapacitated voters is taken further, because the Bill amends section 86 of the original legislation to allow electoral officials to inform the

elector of the name of the political party in whose interests the candidates are standing. That is something to be applauded. I certainly support this measure. I would like the legislation to go further so that the names of political parties are shown on ballot-papers and/or put by the electoral officer on the walls of polling booths.

Mr Harper: Maybe in the new year.

Mr GOSS: I am pleased to hear the Minister say that. When that legislation is introduced, I will be prepared to stand in this Chamber and compliment him and support his legislation, as I have done so many times this year. Of course, there have been times when it has been necessary for me to criticise the Minister. However, that has been constructive criticism necessary for the Minister's education and improvement of the general administration of the Justice Department. I know that the Minister takes it in that spirit.

The Bill contains a number of other provisions in relation to qualifying embassy officers to witness electoral claims, the registration of postal voters by the day of the issue of the writs, non-voter notices, and so on. All of those measures seem to be sensible and I am happy to support them.

I do not support as strongly the provisions relating to canvassing. In my opinion, it could be made a distance of 6 metres from the entrance to the building or the actual fence or boundary line of the particular premises, even if that was within the 6 metres. In my experience in my electorate and in campaigns in which I have worked, I have not encountered the sort of problems that the Minister adverts to in general terms. Perhaps he will be in a position to be more specific when he replies. The measure does not cause me great concern. However, I am aware of situations in which it has been more convenient for all concerned—the parties, the candidates, the workers and the fund-raising stalls conducted by schools, for example—to have everybody within reasonably close proximity but at a reasonable distance from the actual entrance to the building. I believe that that can be managed. The Opposition will not take strong issue with the provisions.

The Minister made reference to the decision of Mr Justice Thomas in relation to the recent Elections Tribunal case heard in Maryborough. The Minister has adopted the suggestion made by Mr Justice Thomas. Once in a while, the Elections Tribunal sorts out the mess that sometimes occurs in close elections. Honourable members probably should be grateful for the elucidation that is able to be achieved via that process. It is good to see that being reflected in the legislation.

In conclusion, as I have said, the Opposition is happy to support most of the provisions of the legislation. Most of them are positive and practical measures that will lead to increased efficiency and fairness in elections. One of the main concerns of the Opposition is that this legislation is part of an overall framework, in respect of the foundations of which Opposition members have lodged justified and substantial complaint. I refer, of course, to the redistribution within the zonal system. However, I have commented on that, and I will not go over it again.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (2.42 p.m.): I have pleasure in joining in the debate on the Elections Act Amendment Bill. I suppose that to any casual observer, the main thrust of the Bill is that it sets up the joint enrolment form for the Commonwealth and the State electoral rolls.

It is true that a number of people who came to Queensland have been quite critical of this State for having two separate rolls. I make no apology for the fact that this State does have a State roll and a Commonwealth roll for elections.

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr FITZGERALD: I might be able to explain to honourable members why a difference in numbers of voters in electorates can occur with the two different rolls. Even a person with the limited common sense of the honourable member for Ipswich

will be able to understand my explanation. In my opinion, two separate rolls should be maintained, one by the State and one by the Commonwealth.

Mr Vaughan: They are not going to be, are they?

Mr FITZGERALD: Yes, two separate rolls will be kept. There will be one joint enrolment form, which will go to the Commonwealth and the State, and the two separate rolls will be kept.

The reason for having separate rolls is that the State has different conditions for qualification as an elector from those of the Commonwealth. The residential requirement in Queensland is three months, whereas the Commonwealth requires only one month's residence.

People move from one electorate to another. I have heard of instances—as has, no doubt, the honourable member for Stafford (Mr Gygar)—of people suddenly moving from one area to another with the direct intention of illegally trying to swing the result of an election. That has happened in the past. There is insufficient time for anybody scrutinising the roll to wake up to what is happening and to protest or take corrective action. No doubt an alert candidate or member would be aware of such instances. There are well-documented instances of this happening in the past and the not-so-distant past.

As all honourable members would be aware, voters move from addresses that are listed on the electoral roll as their residential addresses. There is no requirement that a voter should inform the electoral office of a change of address, and voters are able to enroll in a new electorate after they have resided at the new address for three months.

It is possible for a person who is employed on a casual basis or itinerant basis to travel round the State and still be enrolled in an electorate in which he or she lived 12 months previously. Mail may be addressed to a person at his former address, and the person who receives it may never have heard of the addressee, perhaps because the residence is a boarding-house or a rented house that has a high turnover of tenants. Until such time as a person has been resident at a new address for three months, enrolment in the electorate in which he lived 12 months before can be retained.

In the past, occasions have arisen on which names have been deleted from the State roll. The only way in which names can be restored on the roll for a particular electorate is by furnishing proof of eligibility. I can find no provision in the Elections Act that requires a voter to inform the electoral office of a change of address. It may be the case that, when a person changes an address, no arrangement has been made to have mail forwarded to the new address from the address that has been stated on the roll.

Provision is contained in the Bill for priority to be given to the processing of electoral cards when a State or Commonwealth election is imminent. That is an excellent example of the co-operation that can be developed between electoral authorities.

A matter that was referred to yesterday is the provision concerning identification cards. Although application for identification cards is made on a voluntary basis, the cards can be of assistance and benefit in verifying age. An identification card is not intended to benefit anybody but the individual who carries it. One can imagine that such a means of identification would be of benefit to a person who is challenged about being underage when entering licensed premises. If such a person was not carrying an identification card, some other procedure may have to be resorted to for proof. The Bill provides for identification cards to be issued, and that is an excellent idea.

The Bill also provides for access to electoral roll data in electronic form or from the printed roll. In this day and age, members of Parliament need access to an electronic electoral roll to keep in touch with the changes that take place in their electorates. Clause 37B represents a recognition by the Government of the changing nature of the society in which we live.

Another feature of the Bill will be of benefit to representatives of country areas. I refer to the roll that lists names in alphabetical order for each electoral division. In the

electorate of Lockyer, there are four electoral divisions. If an inquiry is received about a person whose name does not appear on the roll, it is necessary at present to trace that person through all four divisions, whereas electorates such as Toowoomba South or Toowoomba North require only one alphabetical listing for the whole division. That will mean that when parliamentary representatives wish to check the roll, they will be able to consult a complete alphabetical listing, which will be of great assistance.

Another housekeeping provision relates to people—for instance, the judges of the Family Court—who may not wish to have their addresses printed on the roll. That provision has been requested by the Commonwealth Government, and, for the sake of uniformity, the State has complied with the request. For security and various other reasons, such people may wish to have their addresses omitted from the roll, and that is a reasonable provision.

Another provision clears up any doubt about the eligibility of a person enrolled in one electorate being able to stand as a candidate in any electorate. It was the understanding of the majority of people that that was so. However, there seemed to be a little confusion about it, and the proposed provision removes any ambiguity. From now on, if a person is on any electoral roll he is eligible to stand for any electorate in Queensland. The provision will be quite useful for people such as the member for Salisbury, who is not sure in which electorate he wishes to stand. It will remove any confusion. It will also help the member for South Brisbane, who can rest easy knowing that he can stand in any electorate in Queensland.

I believe that the member for Ipswich is under challenge from some of his party colleagues. Because his electorate is now a safer seat for the ALP, perhaps some of his colleagues will stand against him in the preselection plebiscite. I am not sure how he will fare. However, because he is a reasonable type of chap, I wish him all the best.

Another of the Bill's provisions requires that a person obtain the signatures of 10 people on the electoral roll before he nominates as a candidate. The number of signatures required has been increased from six to 10. However, I am not sure whether that will stop the ratbags. In most electorates, a person could probably find another 10 persons who could be convinced that he should be a candidate. If a person cannot obtain 10 signatures, obviously he is a person of little substance—what has been referred to as a ratbag candidate—and should not be eligible to stand.

At previous elections, I have seen candidates who have managed to obtain the requisite six signatures on the form who have obtained just over 100 votes in an electorate with 18 000 or 20 000 voters. Such persons will have to sift through a great many people before they can find 10 persons out of 18 000 willing to sign the form. It is unfortunate that such candidates appear from time to time, but in a democracy every person has the right to stand for election.

I do not wish to speak at length on the Electoral Districts Act, but I will touch on it because the honourable member for Salisbury suggested that this legislation will not make elections in Queensland any fairer than they have been in the past. He said that, because of the zonal system that applies in Queensland, this legislation is of little consequence. I believe, however, that it is of major consequence in enabling fairer elections to be conducted. It is of paramount importance that that aim be achieved. I am happy to report that in most electorates the candidates from various parties find that election campaigns are fairly fought, even though they are contested with a great deal of vigour and spirit. Only on rare occasions does one see nit-picking and niggling associated with election campaigns.

The arguments used by the honourable member about the zonal system were quite erroneous. It is a well-known fact that, with the exception of Cunningham, every electorate west of the Great Dividing Range was held by the Australian Labor Party prior to 1957. If it had the right policies and candidates, the ALP could again win all of those seats. The people in those areas do not have to vote for the National Party. Prior to 1957, the ALP represented all of those seats. The ALP has no sound policies. If it does not

have good policies, it will not win elections. Members of the ALP are finding it very hard to digest that fact of life.

I support the Bill, which embodies quite a number of provisions. One of the main provisions concerns the arrangement between the Commonwealth and the State on a joint enrolment card, which means that people who change their address, or come to live in Queensland, have to complete only one enrolment card. That will save a great deal of confusion.

As honourable members know, Queensland has compulsory voting. We prefer that all people vote in an election. It is regrettable that many people do not bother to cast a vote in an election to get the Government of their choice.

Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (2.56 p.m.): I was intrigued to hear the honourable member for Lockyer imparting a little of his wisdom on Queensland elections and the State's electoral system. In the light of the track record of the National Party, I was particularly intrigued when he said that policies win elections. The National Party's policy is rejected by two-thirds of the people in Queensland but, unfortunately, 35 per cent of the vote now seems to be sufficient for the National Party to win elections in Queensland. I believe that the people of Queensland are waking up to the type of foolishness spouted by the member for Lockyer. I trust that this debate will be the vehicle by which the people of Queensland will achieve their desire for electoral and voting justice. I certainly cannot cop the notion that one person should have a weighted vote because he lives in a different part of the State from another person. We are fundamentally equal, and our equality should be reflected in the value of our vote in the ballot-box. This legislation is all about the procedure of voting and how elections will be conducted.

I shall dwell in detail on the maintenance of the electoral rolls. For a long time, electoral rolls in Queensland have been the subject of considerable criticism as to their accuracy, or the extent to which they are kept up to date by the State Electoral Office. Without exception, State or Local Government elections conducted using the State rolls have been fraught with complaints by people who have maintained that they are enrolled but have been denied a vote or have claimed a section vote which has not been counted, because no record could be found of their being on the electoral roll.

It is certainly a step in the right direction to have a joint enrolment card. The Australian Electoral Commission, the body that took over the responsibilities of the Electoral Office, does a far better job than has the State Electoral Office in keeping the electoral rolls up to date. The Australian Electoral Commission has conducted periodical roll canvasses to ensure that the rolls are kept up to date. Indeed, it has a statutory responsibility to do so. When the Minister responds a little later, as I trust he will, perhaps he will be able to tell us whether the State will be contributing financially towards the cost of the canvassing undertaken periodically by the Australian Electoral Commission or whether the State Electoral Office intends to persist with its highly expensive, infrequent updating of the electoral rolls.

Major campaigns have been conducted to update the State electoral rolls. They have been expensive, have involved a good deal of television advertising, and so on. The movement of population in and out of the State, and within the State, is such that it is essential for roll updating to be carried out far more regularly than just once a year. Of course, the Minister's department is responsible for that.

In the aftermath of the most recent test of the State rolls—the Redlands by-election—we heard how the National Party was busily gathering the names of phantom voters, people who were enrolled but were not to be found at the address for which they were enrolled. If the National Party wishes to try to level the blame at someone for the poor state of the electoral rolls, as experienced in the Redlands by-election, it should look no further than the apparatus that has been placed in the custodianship of the Minister. The experience has been similar in other by-elections during the life of this Parliament.

Although I welcome the introduction of a joint enrolment card, this measure is not sufficient; it should go much further. I was heartened to hear a little ray of sunshine from the Minister in this regard in foreshadowing the possible introduction of further amendments to the Elections Act, maybe in the new year. Why does the Government not just take the bit in its teeth and improve the legislation in one fell swoop as it does with so many other pieces of legislation? It would not take a great deal of vision or legislative activity to introduce a single enrolment card for local government, State and Federal elections. The Australian Electoral Commission has proven itself to be very confident and capable in that area.

If the luxury of the dual processing of enrolment cards is to be retained, what is being entertained is an unnecessary duplication of effort and expense which, after all, is coming from the pockets of Queensland tax-payers. The situation could be improved out of sight if the initiative was taken to legislate here and now to provide sole responsibility for the maintenance of rolls. Given the sort of technology available, it would be easy to have a computer run off lists of enrolments according to the information fed into it in terms of electoral boundaries and so on. It certainly would not be the time-consuming manual task, which it once was.

Most of the provisions in the legislation are welcome. So many of the provisions, which are designed to ensure that people can exercise a vote, actually sit in strange contradiction with other legislative provisions that the Government has introduced, which have gone a long way towards ensuring that the votes in various areas of the State are devalued. It is hoped to extend the franchise to eligible voters to the fullest degree. The funny thing is that all that these people are being offered is a fractional vote. It is not worth as much as the vote of people in other parts of the State.

It is extraordinary that different provisions pertain to enrolments for State and Federal elections. I do not see the logic in having different provisions touching on the voting rights of people. It seems extraordinary that a person can vote in a Federal election from one address but is not able to vote in a State election from that address. There is the anomalous situation that different periods of residency are required before one can enter one's name on the State and Federal rolls. It would seem that any move to harmonise that situation would streamline the electoral enrolment procedures.

So many problems arise with electoral rolls because of the confusion in the minds of intending electors. In the past, people who have come from interstate have been confused because they were not familiar with the requirement to fill in two enrolment cards—one for the Commonwealth and one for the State. Certainly this legislation overcomes that problem. The different qualification requirements of voters should be harmonised to overcome what will be continuing confusion in the minds of voters. A voter may fill in an enrolment card and have his name entered on the Commonwealth roll but, because insufficient time has elapsed, his name will not appear on the State roll. The voter goes along to the polling booth and insists emphatically that he has filled in an enrolment card. He may have even received a card back from the Commonwealth indicating that his name has been entered on its roll. He finds that he is refused a vote in the State election. It is not good enough, and it ought to be remedied.

As I have said, a number of the measures extend the franchise, and a welcome provision liberalises the law relating to prisoners. However, I must make mention of the plight of the handicapped. There are a number of intellectually handicapped people in my electorate.

Mr Comben: Llew Edwards?

Mr HAMILL: He is no longer in my electorate.

In my electorate, a number of large institutions that are run by the Health Department have, thankfully, dispersed their population into the community. Many of those people are very competent citizens and are able to do a great deal of good for themselves in developing their skills as citizens in the community; but they are very concerned about

their right to vote. After all, they are citizens, and they have the right to vote. They have the same needs, aspirations and desires as most other people in the community.

Measures that assist them in exercising their right of franchise are very welcome. It is just a pity that, for a long time, many of those people have been led to believe that they are outside of the voting population and that the franchise ought not to be extended to them. As a result, they are unaware of their civil and political rights. I hope that that will be remedied by a deliberate campaign, if I may use that phrase, to encourage those people to exercise their full rights as citizens within the State of Queensland.

One measure concerning disabled voters relates to the ability of the presiding officer to inform such voters of the party in whose interests a candidate is standing. While that may be the best possible solution for a person who is illiterate or blind, it would seem to me that the suggestion of the honourable member for Salisbury is a far more sensible and practical solution. He suggested that the names of the parties appear on the ballot-paper and that, on the how-to-vote cards, which all political parties seem to be very keen on, the preference distributions recommended by the parties appear, and that they be displayed clearly in the polling place so that voters have all the information at their disposal.

Mr Harper: Is that a policy of your party?

Mr HAMILL: The proposal that the candidates' party affiliations be displayed on the ballot-paper has certainly been put forward by the Australian Labor Party. Indeed, that has been implemented in the Commonwealth arena, and how-to-vote cards for the Senate have been distributed for inclusion in the booths. It would be a very practical and sensible provision to have that sort of electoral information readily available in the polling place.

Mr Harper: Would it be supported by the Opposition?

Mr HAMILL: That would overcome the sort of harassment that often occurs outside polling places through the over-zealous endeavours of party workers, who, unintentionally, may obstruct voters because they see it as their duty to get the how-to-vote card in the voter's hand as he proceeds into the polling place.

Mr Harper: So it would be supported by the Opposition?

Mr HAMILL: I personally would support such a measure, and I am sure that a number of my colleagues would support a similar measure.

Canvassing has been dealt with in the Bill, and some sensible provisions have been put forward. However, the problem of inclement weather, particularly at school polling booths, remains. In the event of wet weather, people are forced to seek shelter, and I know that on a number of occasions in the past presiding officers have turned a Nelsonian blind eye to the fact that the canvassers took shelter under the building. That is a breach of the Act. However, in the practical implementation of these measures, a degree of flexibility is required. Because you, Mr Deputy Speaker, represent a north Queensland electorate, you would be aware that north Queensland has inclement weather for nearly half of the year. Therefore, any summer-time election day may be subject to a downpour in that part of the State.

In short, the measures that have been proposed in this legislation are quite acceptable to the Opposition. We do think, though, that the Minister could go further in certain areas. I have canvassed those. The Opposition would certainly welcome any further development or progress along the lines of sensible electoral reform in this State by the introduction of further legislation in the Parliament in the near future.

Mr GYGAR (Stafford) (3.10 p.m.): The most basic element on which a democracy can be judged is the freeness, the fairness and the secrecy of the elections that are conducted within that system. Historically, Queensland has a rather sad history in elections. When one looks back over 50 or 60 years, one sees that Queensland elections

are a litany of fiddles and distortions designed by parties in power so that, despite the will of the voters, a certain result will be achieved in the end. Regrettably, this State has not yet escaped from that syndrome, in that the Electoral Districts Act is a total and absolute travesty of anything that could be remotely called democracy.

However, what the House is now looking at is the Elections Act in this State. On that, this State has a great deal to be proud of. Queensland has one of the best Elections Acts. I speak now about the conduct of elections, not about the boundaries that are drawn under which they are conducted. The conduct of elections in this State is as fair as is achievable in the present circumstances and as fair as that in any other country in the world. This has not been brought about by accident. In fact, it has been remarked upon here and elsewhere that Queensland's Elections Act is somewhat different, that it contains unique features. Some of those have been criticised here today. I suggest to the House that it has unique features because this State has seen what rorts and rackets can be pulled. Elements have been introduced into this Act to ensure that rorts and rackets do not happen in the future, thereby giving this State elections that are as fair as are possible.

I must say that I am quite proud that in the 11 years I have been in this House, until October 1983, I was intimately associated with the development of the Elections Act in this State and the amendments to it. I am particularly proud of the last amendments, which were introduced by the coalition Government. I believe that we always intended—and we set our minds towards writing an Act to achieve this—to have the freest and fairest possible voting system for the public, one which, as far as possible, deliberately went out of its way to stop any unfair tactics being used to distort the voting intention of the public.

At this point, I applaud the Minister and his committee for continuing that fine tradition. I believe that there is nothing in this Elections Act that is not intended, at least, to bring about the fairest conduct of elections that is possible. I hope that that tradition will continue. That means that all that has to be done is to clean up the Electoral Districts Act and this State will have one of the fairest systems in the world.

Honourable members have criticised some of the things that are in this Act—matters of separate rolls and of changes in times for enrolment. I suggest that they should be there, because, as history shows, there are very good reasons for them.

I will consider first the provision for the length of time for enrolment. What is the reason for the period of residency being three months and not one month? The simple reason is that the people of this State saw what happened under the Labor administration when the time for residency was only one month. The history of this State is replete with stories of the railway flying gangs that used to suddenly undertake bridgeworks in western Queensland six weeks before the rolls closed. That was in the long-distant days when the ALP used to have some electoral support in western Queensland and used to hold those western seats under a gerrymander even more notorious and even more unfair than the one the State currently faces.

Sir William Knox: Dumb-bell electorates!

Mr GYGAR: Yes, there were dumb-bell electorates.

The Labor Party used to cash in on two other things. The reason it held the seats was that in those days primary industries were manpower intensive. That was in the days before wages got out of hand and mechanisation was introduced on a far greater scale.

The workers on farms, who were quite commonly members of the AWU and part of the Labor tradition, used to vote Labor. Wherever they needed a little fillip, the Labor Government of the day could always find some railway work that needed to be done. Surprise, surprise! The railway work usually occurred in electorates that were extremely marginal for the Labor Government. So 100 or 200 railway workers would set up a camp in the middle of an electorate to do four or five weeks' work. Lo and behold!

After they had been there for four weeks on the dot, the AWU organiser would come out and all the workers would be signed up on the electoral roll. The day after they had signed up, they would all be shipped back to their base. However, they were on the roll long enough to be able to vote at the next election and deliberately distort the results.

Honourable members have seen modern examples of that. All honourable members can remember back to the notorious Coogee by-election in Sydney. Half of the members of the University of New South Wales Labor Club suddenly decided that they needed beachside residences. They needed them for only one month—long enough to squeeze 20 or 30 people into a flat—so that they could have their names placed on the electoral roll and be able to vote in that vital by-election and fiddle the result. The residency provision of three months is appropriate. I hope that it is retained because it safeguards in individual electorates the franchise of people who have a real, honest and continuing intention to actually reside there. It is a valuable tool in preserving the propriety of the franchise. There is no good reason to change the period from three months to one month. All that would do is provide another opportunity for the racketeers to fiddle elections. If any change ought to be made, it should be made to the Commonwealth Act. The other States should introduce the three-month requirement. It disadvantages no-one who genuinely resides in an electorate. It disadvantages only those who would distort the electorate process. I hope that the Minister will not fall for any blandishments by anybody who wants to change that provision.

Another unique feature of the Elections Act in Queensland relates to the electoral visitor voter and the electoral visitor vote being conducted from mobile polling booths. No other State has that provision. Why does Queensland have it? Again, it goes back to the massive interesting discoveries that were made by the new coalition Government when it came into power. One of the things that it discovered was how easy it was to fandangle postal votes. The ALP is still good at that. One has only to pick up last week's newspaper to read about the history of the Transport Workers Union election. One can read about the phoney letter-box drops and people going round to pick up mail and postal votes. I will not go into the long history of how one can fandangle postal votes. There are about four different ways of doing it.

Mr Comben: You would know all about that.

Mr GYGAR: The honourable member says that I seem to know an awful lot about it, and I do, because all of those tricks were tried on me.

If it had not been for the Whitlam years and the disaster that the Labor Party suffered in 1974, we would probably have never woken up to those rackets. When I was elected, I discovered all sorts of interesting things. The honourable member should talk to the former Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Mr Roy Harvey. Next to his house he had a terrific fence. It must have been good. To the casual observer, it looked like a fence made with ordinary posts with wire attached to them. However, on the electoral roll, three people lived on that fence. It was fascinating. I do not accuse Mr Harvey of doing anything. I think that he was a totally innocent person and that someone thought that he would get at Mr Harvey by enrolling someone on his fence. That is what one can do when compliant people are involved in the system. A person is enrolled and his mail is intercepted.

When Gordon Park was in the electorate of Stafford, I discovered that there was a street that ran down to a creek. Honourable members need not worry as all those persons have been removed from the roll. I took care of that some years ago. Let us suppose that the last house in that street was number 20. Honourable members would be surprised at the number of people who used to exercise riparian rights of ownership by living in the creek, because there were people enrolled at numbers 21, 22, 23, 24, and so on. In that street, there were about a dozen and a half additional voters.

Many people were enrolled at the infamous Lutwyche Cemetery. For those people who do not know it, I point out that Lutwyche Cemetery is on the corner of Gympie Road and another major road. Because the cemetery takes up so much space, on that

side of the road no number is lower than 120. Honourable members would be surprised if they were told the number of people who live in gutters, under fences or behind tombstones. Dozens of people were enrolled at numbers between zero and 120 on that side of the road.

I had approximately 600 people removed from my electoral roll when I took over as the member for Stafford. Honourable members who visit my office occasionally remark on the fact that I have a map that shows every house in my electorate. I compiled it not because I love walking up and down streets and drawing lines, but because it was the only way in which I could establish where there were houses and where there were vacant lots, and then have the Labor voters who were enrolled in vacant lots, on fences and in creeks taken off the roll. That still happens. I cite the example of the Transport Workers Union. That is why Queensland has electoral visitor voting.

Mr De Lacy: It couldn't have been that good.

Mr GYGAR: The honourable member for Cairns says that it could not have been that good. I hope that he is one of the people who closed down that dear, sweet, little old lady at Gordon Park whose duty, on behalf of the Labor Party, was to clip out all the death notices every morning, look up the addresses in the refedex, work out which State electorates the deceased persons had lived in and then list them. That was done so that when the electoral rolls came out just prior to the election, a cross-check could be done to work out which ones had been fouled up in the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages and left on the roll. The Labor Party followed an interesting form of logic. It said, "If they were alive, they would have voted Labor. Why should a mere accident of fate prevent them from doing so in this election?" Members of the Labor Party then went out and voted for them.

Such people are off the roll for Stafford, because I check the roll and send all the death notices to the returning officer, so that he can put a line through their names before polling day arrives.

That is why Queensland has electoral visitor voting. If anybody alleges that he or she is ill, that person has to look the returning officer straight in the eye before his or her vote is cast. I urge the Minister once again to preserve electoral visitor voting. It is a great convenience to the genuinely ill and infirm, and it is a great disincentive to people who rot the Elections Act.

Sir William Knox: Queensland started it.

Mr GYGAR: As the honourable member for Nundah says, Queensland started it.

Electoral visitor voting is a good idea. It is a service to the community. It helps to maintain the integrity of the electoral rolls, and I hope that it will continue.

I will not go into the bits and pieces of the Act about inspection of ballot-boxes. It is obvious why that is necessary. Union-members are pretty good with the false-bottom ballot-boxes. Queensland history is replete with incidents of that nature. That is why ballot-boxes are sealed so well and also why scrutineers' signatures are put on count-sheets before the ballot-boxes are sealed and sent away from the polling booths. Honourable members would be surprised at the number of ballot-boxes that in the bad old days—prior to 1957—used to take a slight diversion on the way back to the Principal Electoral Officer's counting sheet.

Sir William Knox: Lost for a fortnight.

Mr GYGAR: As the honourable member for Nundah says, a ballot-box was once lost for a fortnight. The perpetrators must have been a bit slow off the mark in producing the phoney ballot-papers that they wanted to put inside it.

It is essential that the Bill remain as tight as possible. That is in the interests of everybody. As I have said, for a number of years I was involved in drafting changes to this Act as a member of the justice committee in this State. The intention of that

committee was to make it as tight as a drum, so that there was no way in which it could be fiddled. Politics moves in strange and mysterious ways. Pendulums swing backwards and forwards.

I have no doubt that, in my lifetime, disaster will ultimately befall Queensland and that it will get a Labor Government. The only way in which the Labor Party can be prevented from introducing its trade union tactics into State elections is by ensuring that the Elections Act is unable to be fiddled. I am not talking about an Elections Act that is framed in such a way that the Government of the day can fiddle it because it has the resources available; I am talking about an Elections Act that is framed so that nobody can fiddle it. I believe that that has been achieved, and that should remain the case. As I have said, I compliment the Minister for proceeding along the lines that he has and for preserving democracy at least in one of the two Acts that govern elections in this State.

I will now consider the Bill in detail. I will begin with the joint roll provisions. A great deal has been heard from a few honourable members about the need for a joint roll. I totally oppose that concept, and I hope that the Minister does also. The only argument that has been legitimately put forward for a joint roll is that people coming to Queensland from other States get confused, that they do not know that they have to put in two cards, and thereby can accidentally disfranchise themselves. The measures in the Bill that allow for a joint enrolment card overcome all of those objections.

I have not heard voiced, either today or in the past, any other legitimate objections that make sense or lend force to the arguments put forward in favour of having a single roll. The result of changing to a single roll would be that this State would hand over control of registration of electors to the Commonwealth Government.

Mr De Lacy: And it is about time, too. The Commonwealth Government does it so much better.

Mr GYGAR: The honourable member for Cairns talks rubbish. He displays a knee-jerk reaction—

Mr De Lacy: The State electoral roll has been a source of continuing frustration.

Mr GYGAR: If the honourable member had been listening, he would have heard me say that the problems he mentions would be solved by issuing a joint electoral card. That is so because the names that appear on the Federal electoral roll will also appear on the electoral roll for the State; otherwise there would be no point in keeping joint cards.

When information is received by either a State or Federal electoral authority about deletion of names or changes, that information would also affect the roll kept by the other authority. I take it that it goes without saying that the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General will make the appropriate arrangements for the interchange of information when the joint cards are introduced.

The point I wish to stress is that the Queensland Government should never hand over to the Commonwealth Government the right to determine which electors will be enrolled, when enrolment is appropriate, or what the rules that govern enrolment will be. If the State Government was to do so, the first thing that would happen would be that the prerequisite residential period would be reduced to one month.

It would be obvious to anyone who has studied history that relinquishing control would open the door to electoral rorting. As it stands at the moment, the Queensland Elections Act prevents that from occurring. The Queensland Government must retain that control, because that control is important at present and will be in the future.

A great deal is put at stake by individuals and political parties during elections, and it is regrettable that shadowy characters hang round the fringes of some political parties. If such people were able to get up to electoral rorts, they would give it a try.

Any responsible Minister who has charge of a State Elections Act must be empowered to respond to the creativity of those who would destroy the electoral process.

I do not know when the Australian Labor Party will attempt its next electoral rort in Queensland. I have some suspicions, though, that it is proceeding along those lines at the moment. The Liberal Party is checking on that matter in an attempt to prevent the Labor Party from rorting the system. Sooner or later, though, someone will come up with a new racket. It is therefore essential that the Minister and the Queensland Parliament retain the power to stop such action dead in its tracks by amending the State Elections Act and changing the rules of the game to prevent racketeering.

If the Queensland State Government was to hand over complete control of the electoral roll to the Commonwealth Government, it would also hand over complete control of the rules governing the system, the way in which the rules are made, the way in which the roll is checked, the way in which electors are canvassed, and the qualifications of electors. I do not think that such a move would be in the interests of conducting clean, free and secret elections in this State. I urge the Minister to retain control.

Mr De Lacy: That is spoken by a conservative, "a clean and fair election".

Mr GYGAR: The honourable member for Cairns should read some history, because his mind cannot recall anything that occurred longer ago than this morning's breakfast.

Mr De Lacy: You have been reading *Power Without Glory*. You ought to read some non-fiction.

Mr GYGAR: If the honourable member for Cairns wishes to read some non-fiction, he might care to read the files kept in the electoral office and acquaint himself with some of the things that the Australian Labor Party has been up to.

In this State, the Australian Labor Party has a shameful and despicable record of fandangling elections at every chance. I am concerned to ensure that when that party does regain power in this State—may God help us—it will not have the power to rort the system again. I suppose one must accept that that party may regain power eventually. However, it is up to the Queensland Parliament at this time to make sure that the operation of the Elections Act continues to be as clean as possible.

I return now to the topic of joint electoral cards. I ask the Minister to give an assurance in his reply that total responsibility for roll canvassing will not be handed over to the Commonwealth Government, but that a kind of joint arrangement will be entered into by which canvassing can be conducted at regular intervals, as considered appropriate by the State Government. I stress that because, if the Commonwealth Government decided it wanted to save a few dollars by not conducting canvasses, that may not be good enough for the State Government. It is essential that a clean and accurate electoral roll system be maintained, and the way to do that is by conducting canvasses at regular intervals.

I do not propose to state what those intervals might be, because areas that experience very little population movement and are regarded as stable may require canvassing at six-year or eight-year intervals. For areas that experience a great deal of population movement, it may be appropriate to conduct a canvass once every three years to ensure the integrity of the roll. Control over canvassing is an important aspect of the system that should be retained by the Minister and should remain with the State Electoral Office.

The other topic is the format of the roll. Someone in Canberra has gone a little crazy about all this privacy nonsense. A Federal roll tells one just about nothing. It gives one a name and an address. What is wrong with placing on the roll the sex of the person and the date of enrolment? They are both invaluable tools in picking up rackets that are going on in stacking electoral rolls and similar types of activity. They should be maintained. The format of Queensland's rolls is far superior to that of the Commonwealth, and I urge the Minister to retain it. In fact, I ask the Minister to give a clear indication to this House that the present format of the State electoral rolls will continue, and that

it is his intention to retain it despite the introduction of these amendments and despite the joint enrolment provisions. Queensland's present system is quite crucial to a continuation of clean elections.

Certain other aspects of the Bill warrant comment. One of them relates to the new provisions that are being introduced into section 37A dealing with the computerisation of rolls. The amendment proposed by the Minister states that updates, deletions and insertions shall be maintained and be available, without fee, for public inspection in written form at the office of the Principal Electoral Officer at all convenient times. I ask the Minister whether the directions given under this provision will include a requirement that interested members of the public are able to copy those rolls and, if necessary, able to copy them at reasonable cost so that they can be fully informed.

Because members might have tunnel vision on this issue, it is not good enough for only elected members to have access to that information, as is the case at present. The public are entitled to have real access to it, and real access will not be given if a person goes to a fast-changing electorate because, two years down the track—two-yearly electoral rolls will now be introduced—the pile of additions and deletions would be big enough to choke a horse. There must be some method by which people are entitled to obtain a copy, be it for 20c a sheet or whatever is the appropriate photocopying cost.

I ask the Minister for some assurance that the access will be a true and real access and not an illusory one, because it would be illusory if one had to look, for example, at the additions and deletions that had taken place in the Redlands electorate in the last two years. One would end up with a wad of paper about three inches high. A right to inspect and take note of a roll is quite illusory if the person is either blocked into some corner and standing up at a bench with a great wad of paper that he has to copy with a pencil or has to go away and forget about it. The information must be able to be copied.

I also draw attention to the proposed new section 37B (3). It deals with the provision of electronic data format rolls and states—

“The tape or disc or other electronic means of supply shall not contain any data additional to that available by obtaining and paying for a copy of the last printed copy of the roll . . . ”

This is quite foolish, because all that it will achieve is the making available of a roll that the member does not really want. He wants the updated roll and why should he not get it if it is available? This proposed section will impose a significant strain upon the State Government Computer Centre. I suggest to the Minister that, if this amendment is proceeded with, the State Government Computer Centre will be given an enormous amount of extra work, because it will have to keep records for the preceding two years. It will have to give the member the roll as it was then, not as it is—

Mr Harper: I will be moving an amendment at the Committee stage.

Mr GYGAR: I am delighted to hear that. That is a sensible and reasonable approach because, let us face it, it is a convenience tool and ought to be convenient to everyone, including the State Electoral Office and the Government Computer Centre. If it is not, the Government is just making work for no reason. I thank the Minister for his interjection and compliment him on the foreshadowed amendment. It is a very sensible proposal.

I am a little cautious about the proposed amendment to section 49. It is proposed to insert that a person “shall be on the electoral roll” and removes the old “qualified to be on” provision. It is far safer to provide that a person should be qualified to be on the roll. All of us have seen those horrendous accidents that occur when people turn up on polling day with all the best will in the world, believing that they are on the electoral roll and find that they are not. Any person who has stood for election has seen cases in which people are quite sure that it was an official mistake or error that caused their name not to be on the roll, but they never get their vote counted, anyway. Those

are the breaks. We work on the principle that what one loses on the roundabouts, one gains on the swings.

I should hate a legitimate candidate in any election to be refused the right to stand because of some official mistake or error or because of some other intervening factor, such as thinking he was on the roll, could have been on the roll or should have been on the roll but, because of some foul-up, is not on the roll. If a person is qualified to be an elector, he should be qualified to be a candidate. I see no advantage in this amendment. I see no gain for democracy and I see no improvement in the system. In fact, as I have said, my philosophy is that elections should be as free as they possibly can be within the confines of the appropriate legislation. I should be interested to hear the Minister tell us the inherent gain in this amendment. I see no gain, but a disadvantage, and possibly a disfranchisement.

I compliment the Minister on the new section 82A. It is quite sensible. I hope that the publicity, if any, surrounding the introduction of this new section emphasises quite clearly to people that the Act requires that they be injured or incapacitated on, or shortly before, polling day. That is essential in this section, and people must know it. If someone breaks his leg a week before, we cannot lead him wrongly to the conclusion that all he has to do is turn up in a car to get a vote. He must know quite clearly that he is then a candidate for an electoral visitor vote, not one of these votes. The publicity on this matter must be handled very carefully and cautiously if we are not, wrongly and innocently, to disfranchise people.

I draw attention to a later part in subsection 16 (a) of new section 82A, which provides that any person present when an applicant is before a presiding officer for the purpose of voting under this section shall obey all directions of the presiding officer. I suggest that that provision is drawn far too widely. No-one objects to people having to obey all reasonable directions of a presiding officer. I should hope the situation never arises in which a presiding officer gives other than a reasonable direction. However, there must be some protection for people if a presiding officer says stupid things—and, regrettably, there are a few such presiding officers. History shows that some of them get carried away with a sense of their own importance and say all sorts of things to people. The powers of the presiding officer would not be detracted from in any way if the one word “reasonable” could be inserted to give people adequate and increased protection.

Like Opposition members, I have problems—not to the extent of opposing the provision—with the new prohibition on canvassing. I seek a full explanation from the Minister on why this provision has been thought necessary. We all know what happens on election day. Absolutely no problem occurs in 99 per cent of the booths. Probably all of us have been there for years. We all know the arrangements. At some places, there is a nice tree to get under and, at others, a balcony or something else is available, and sometimes that is a little illegal. However, because it detracts in no way from the fairness of the election and adds greatly to the convenience of those participating, the rules are sometimes bent a little. This provision makes it far more difficult for sensible, appropriate arrangements to be implemented, with the mutual consent of all concerned from the presiding officer at the booth down to all the people involved. I hope that this new provision will not require some silly, impracticable things to be done merely to obey the letter of the law.

I intend to comment briefly on the placing of party affiliations on how-to-vote cards and the putting of party how-to-vote cards in polling booths. I agree entirely with the principles, the idea and the ideals. If someone can devise a way of doing it practically, without causing more trouble than it seeks to prevent, I will support it enthusiastically. However, if we put party affiliations on cards, we must have political parties with registered names. We must also have rules on what can and cannot be called a party, on how big how-to-vote cards can be and on the styles of type to be used. Frankly, it is a somewhat unnecessary pain. However, I repeat that if someone can devise a good, appropriate and easy way to put the ideas into effect, I will be happy to support it. At this stage, I think it will probably cause more trouble than it is worth. I welcome

suggestions from any quarter on how it can be done. It should be an improvement, but is it worth the effort?

I again compliment the Minister on what has been done and hope that some of the explanations I have requested will be forthcoming in the Minister's reply.

Mr COMBEN (Windsor) (3.40 p.m.): At the beginning of his speech, the member for Stafford (Mr Gygar) referred to certain rorts in the electorate of Stafford. He explained to me one matter that I have not been able to understand. Certain members of my party who live close to the Lutwyche Cemetery regularly ask me, "Why does that strange fellow Terry Gygar, the member for Stafford, go past the Lutwyche Cemetery each day and wave to the gravestones?" Suddenly I found out. He is waving to half his electors. I appreciate the courtesy that the honourable member has extended by telling us why he does that strange thing.

The Elections Act Amendment Bill contains a number of good points. At the outset, I indicate that I do not dissent from many of the points contained in the Bill. However, it has not gone far enough. Initially, I shall canvass some of the points in the Bill and then move on to a couple of other points that should be covered by the Bill, as an extension of the Elections Act in Queensland.

Firstly, although the Bill provides for joint State/Commonwealth enrolment cards, we do not know what will be done about a joint roll.

Mr FitzGerald: It is out.

Mr COMBEN: We do not know why there will not be a joint roll.

Mr FitzGerald: The member for Stafford has already told you. Didn't you hear it?

Mr COMBEN: The Minister has said that there will be a joint enrolment card. There is no logical reason why a joint roll cannot be introduced. Other States have one centrally based roll. Queensland has to be different. The honourable member for Stafford might have told me why there should not be a joint roll. In fact, I do not think that he explained anything at all, which is typical of the method that he adopts.

The Bill also makes provision for the purchase of an electoral roll, the data being supplied in electronic form. That move is to be commended. Today's society is modern. A modern office is an electronic office. The sooner members of Parliament move into the area of computers, memory typewriters, etc, the better they will be.

This morning, in answer to a question, the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn) said that certain electorate offices will be getting word processors or computers of some form, which will assist members in their electorates. It would be extremely useful to have the electoral roll on a computer. Electronic data processors have been available for some time, but very few members have taken advantage of them. The Government could save money by ensuring that electorate offices are more efficient. I think that most members would agree that they need staff, that they need researchers. Members of the National Party do not do much research. They receive good old homely advice, but they make no realistic attempt to get genuine knowledge and genuine data.

Mr De Lacy: They are briefed.

Mr COMBEN: As the member for Cairns said, Government members are briefed. They are not game to step out of line in any way. Ministers tell them what to say. That makes it very easy for them. Opposition members have to present the alternative view, the proper view, for the governing of Queensland, and their task is a little harder. They will certainly welcome the introduction of electronic machines into their electorate offices.

The Bill provides also that a person who is imprisoned for a period of six months will not be qualified to be enrolled. Previously, the period was 12 months. I thought

that the old concept, under which outlaws who were convinced of an indictable offence had no right to sue in the courts or to vote——

Mr Harper: The Opposition spokesman supported it.

Mr COMBEN: The Opposition spokesman did not support it.

The Assembly supports this Bill, and it is open to all members to raise queries. Members of the Labor Party do not claim to be the same as members of the National Party, who go round in bush hats, sucking pieces of straw. We are free thinkers, and we are entitled to ask for explanations. The Opposition spokesman has expressed his thoughts on the Bill, but I must ask the Minister whether he would be prepared to tell us why he thought such a change was necessary.

The provision by which the addresses of Family Court judges may be omitted from the State electoral roll for reasons of security is reasonable, and it is to be welcomed.

The member for Stafford said that he could not understand why the Federal electoral roll did not list the date of enrolment or the sex of the elector. I question the need for such information, because it is merely a roll of people who reside in a particular area. If it gives the person's name and address, that is sufficient. The member for Stafford seems to be paranoid about roorts. Indeed, it seemed to me that he protested too much. I could not see any logic in his argument. In my opinion, the Federal roll gives enough information.

I welcome the provision under which a person may be taken off the electoral roll on the receipt by the principal electoral officer of a certificate in the prescribed form signed by a legally qualified medical practitioner. In my electorate, a very frail, aged voter who had voted for my party throughout her entire 90 or 95 years was stopped from voting at the last election.

Mrs Chapman: She would have to be 115 if she had voted for you for 90 years.

Mr COMBEN: She voted for the Labor Party for those of her 95 years that she was entitled to vote. If she is 115, she must be the twin of the honourable member for Pine Rivers. I thought that she was a bit younger.

That woman was stopped from voting. When someone from my party went to visit her to ask whether she wanted an electoral visitor vote, her daughter, who claimed to be looking after her, said that her mother was gaga and would not be voting. We left it at that, but found out later that the elector and her daughter did not see eye to eye on politics and that she was stopped from voting because she had no method of getting to a polling booth by herself.

The Opposition spokesman has stated that the Opposition agrees with those provisions. However, a number of long overdue changes, such as those that have been introduced federally by the very good Federal Labor Government, should be introduced. Those changes include the listing of party affiliations on ballot-papers. That should have been introduced years ago, and I do not understand why it cannot be done in Queensland. It would simplify the procedure and voters would not be confused. I am sure that all honourable members have been told by a voter that, although he intended to vote for the Labor Party candidate or for the National Party candidate, he realised that he had voted for the wrong person. If party affiliations were listed on the ballot-paper, the procedure would be simplified and voters would be assisted.

Mr De Lacy: It was too simple and too sensible.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, it was too simple for even the simplistic National Party Minister in charge of this Bill. It is a shame that those more far-reaching reforms have not been introduced by the Minister. This is his swan-song, and it would have been good for him to go out on a good note; but he has done only half a job on this legislation.

As happens with the Federal rolls, electoral rolls in Queensland could be kept open for a longer time before the election date.

The Federal Government has also introduced legislation that provides for the disclosure of major financial contributors to parties and candidates. The possibility of doing that in Queensland should have been examined in more detail, because it is totally unrealistic to believe that financial contributors to political parties do not expect something in return for their money. In most cases, probably that means merely that any help that is given to a party is given because the contributor simply wants to see that party's policies implemented. I can see no objection to that. I do not think any member of this House would ever expect trade unions to support any party other than the Labor Party, because it is supportive of the trade union movement.

Mr Harper: You do not give them that option, though, do you?

Mr COMBEN: We do in fact give anyone an option.

It is also to be expected that free enterprise people and large companies probably would be supportive of the National Party to some extent. The Labor Party can cope with those sorts of contributions. However, when a contributor is specifically looking for a benefit in return for moneys donated, something must be done to ensure that Government contracts and benefits are not given to the donors of money to political parties. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the possibility of public funding of elections.

Whatever is done, legislation will never make dishonest politicians honest, but it can make it harder for them to persist. I know that when Mick Young was introducing—

Mr FitzGerald: Not the notorious Mick Young?

Mr COMBEN: The great and glorious Mick Young.

When he was introducing the Federal Government's electoral reform, the following article appeared in the press—

“He said the Federal Government had to act quickly to reform the electoral system otherwise political parties would be open to widespread political corruption.

Mr Young said about \$15 million had been spent on the federal election campaign earlier this year.

Labor had spent about \$2 million and it was ‘reliably reported’ the coalition parties (Liberals and Nationals) had paid almost \$10 million for their campaigns.

‘When you start talking about that kind of money you are inviting corruption unless parliament has some control over how much is spent, where it comes from, and how it is accounted for,’ Mr Young said.”

In the 1983 State election, the Labor Party was outspent by the Liberal and National Parties by \$380,000. The Labor Party was discriminated against and disadvantaged to the tune of 350 per cent.

Mr FitzGerald: You will want Government funding next.

Mr COMBEN: That is certainly what I am calling for this afternoon. The question of Government funding of elections needs to be referred to a joint parliamentary committee, as was done in Canberra. That example should be followed in this State.

Parliamentary democracy is based on all parties and individuals having equal opportunity to vote, having equal votes and an equal opportunity to publicise their case. Equality in the funding of election campaigns is as important as equality of voting rights. Nothing is truer than that the Labor Party in this State is disadvantaged in every way. At the 1983 State election, the Liberal and National Parties spent about \$480,000 on television advertising for their campaigns. The Labor Party spent about \$130,000. Those figures do not include the cost of newspaper advertisements.

To equalise opportunities in election campaigns, the Labor Party believes in public funding of elections. The sooner that it is introduced, the sooner there will be equality of voting, at least to some extent. Other countries that have introduced public funding

for election campaigns include Austria, Canada, Denmark, West Germany, Great Britain and the United States of America. Of course, one would not expect the Liberal and National Parties to support the Labor Party in this endeavour, because, as always, they are looking for money from other sources and are not prepared to publicly disclose donations that they receive.

Mr Casey: That was brought in by Maggie Thatcher's Government, was it?

Mr COMBEN: Yes, Maggie Thatcher's Government was quite prepared to introduce public funding of elections.

Mr Casey: As the Government wants to follow her industrial laws, why doesn't it want to follow her electoral laws?

Mr COMBEN: That is something that I cannot understand.

Certainly the public funding of elections should be examined. Of course, the Government always follows a selective policy.

In May this year, in an article in the *Daily Sun*, the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer is reported as calling for proposals for alternative ways to raise cash and as saying that such proposals were being considered by the State National Party as it faced intense Federal pressure to reveal its financial backers. The alternative that was being presented then was that art union funding could be anonymous and circumvent new Federal electoral laws. This was brought about because the Joint Select Committee on Electoral Reform was examining a \$300,000 donation to the State National Party during last year's Federal election campaign. The article states that the donation revealed in Australian Electoral Commission returns was made by National Free Enterprise Ltd only eight days after the company's establishment.

Queensland Labor Senator John Black called for an investigation into the company's relationship with the National Party. Mr Harper proposed that the art union regulations be changed to allow political parties to conduct them to raise funds. Under existing law, art unions can be run only by approved charities. The article stated that Cabinet did not reach a decision on Mr Harper's submission. We never heard another word about that. It is obvious that he was considering some form of changes to allow alternative methods of fund-raising for election purposes in this State. I would be interested to know what happened to that. Earlier, I said that the matter had been proposed by the Deputy Premier. I apologise for that. The article stated—

“The move was proposed in State Cabinet this week in a submission by Justice Minister Mr Harper.”

For some reason, Mr Gunn's photograph is depicted in the article. However, he is not mentioned in the article. It is obvious that the writers of the article were already dismissing Mr Harper as a Minister.

There is a need to examine alternative fund-raising methods in Queensland. The Queensland National Party has shown that it is already prepared to duck the Federal Government's disclosure of donations to political parties by means of National Free Enterprise Ltd. All that the National Party disclosed in its return earlier this year was a donation by National Free Enterprise Ltd, with no details at all. \$31,587 was given by individuals.

The first of those gifts was from a Mrs A. Garms, Chester Street, Newstead, \$13,633, for catering services to the National Party. Honourable members will recall that Mrs A. Garms is Mrs Ann Garms, who was the Liberal Party candidate in the seat of Windsor at the last State election. I had some dealings with Mrs Garms, none of them pleasant and none of them honourable. Mrs Garms has maintained her stand in this matter. The amount involved for catering services was \$13,633. The average cost of a meal at the Roseville Restaurant is about \$50. It appears that about 550 persons were entertained in some form. I do not know how Mrs Garms managed to get a bill for \$13,633 for

catering services during the Federal election. The members of the National Party must have lived it up very well. That matter should be explained.

The other donations were fairly straightforward ones from small companies and individuals, involving amounts of \$3,000 and \$5,000. There is certainly a need for the Australian Electoral Commission—

Mr Gygar: If you think they are small donations, you must run a fairly wealthy campaign.

Mr COMBEN: I have no trouble attracting donations. Every person in Windsor gives me a couple of dollars because everyone wants to see me returned. I know that the honourable member for Stafford does not receive very much. However, I have no problems in attracting donations.

The other donations varied from \$5,000 down to \$1,000. Only amounts over \$999 needed to be disclosed to the Electoral Commission. If that is the way in which the National Party raises funds, there is a need for the joint parliamentary committee in Canberra to examine what has been happening to the National Party in Queensland. It seems that, although a law is in existence, members of the National Party find a method of circumventing it. They considered art unions to change the system.

Mr Harper: You don't want to go too deeply into art unions.

Mr Gygar: We all know a bit about them.

Mr COMBEN: I wish someone would tell me. I know nothing about any art unions.

The Art Unions and Amusement Act Amendment Act was passed within the last five years. That Act was obviously designed to prevent the Labor Party from raising \$10 a time by raffling a chook at the local pub. Of course, when it comes to large amounts of money to circumvent the Federal laws, the National Party suddenly becomes very pragmatic and is willing to alter the Act so that it can obtain a benefit. If the Labor Party is to benefit by its two-bob fund-raising at the local pub, that is illegal. If the National Party is to benefit by \$200,000 from the local multinational, that is OK. It is typical of the hypocrisy and circumvention of the law that Opposition members have come to expect from the National Party. Just to put the record straight—two-bob chook raffles are not conducted in the Windsor area, so I would appreciate it if the Minister did not send out any inspectors.

The last point that I wish to make relates to the Electoral Districts Act. The gerrymander in Queensland has to be removed. A need exists for the Federal Government to consider either a referendum according to the Macklin plan—and I have no hesitation in stating that I certainly support the Democrat's idea of trying to get a referendum passed—to enable one vote, one value to be introduced or, alternatively, to reform the Convention for Social and Political Rights contained in the Bill of Rights.

The Special Minister of State (Mick Young) said, in May 1983, that an overhaul of the electoral system would end blatant gerrymanders, such as that in Queensland. Although he did not in fact overhaul the system in the Electoral Act amendments that he introduced and to which I referred earlier, a need still exists for him to examine the system further. If the power exists, a one vote, one value system should be implemented.

It is quite obvious that every person who lives in a Queensland city is being discriminated against by this Government. My vote in the city is worth only a third of its value in the electorates of Balonne, Warrego or, indeed, the Minister's electorate. Those electorates return, for their voting strength, three times as many members as they are entitled to. I suppose, in a way, that that is probably right. I am certainly equal to any three National Party members.

A need exists for reform of the electoral system so that the gerrymander can be removed. People should be able to expect one vote, one value. In these modern times of electronic media and fast means of communication, it is unnecessary to give the

franchise not only to country people but also to trees, horses, cattle and rocks in the country. That was abolished in the United States in the 1930s. It is time that it was abolished in Queensland.

I look forward to the day when the Federal Government will, in some way, implement a system under which all Queenslanders are treated equally. That means one vote, one value, a fair redistribution, and a system in which public funding will enable equality among people in putting their message across, so that the rich are not advantaged and the average Australian, who is looked after by the Australian Labor Party, has an equal voice, so that elections will be free, proper and equal.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (4.3 p.m.): Firstly I must comment on some of the rather unbelievable statements made by the honourable member for Windsor. If he is dissatisfied not only with the Queensland electoral system but also with Queensland, he should go back whence he came. Perhaps he would then be much happier.

It amazes me that people come to Queensland from other parts of the world, and enjoy the fruits of living in this State, yet they spend all their time criticising it.

That brings me to the honourable member for Ipswich (Mr Hamill) and his paranoia about fractional voting, as he terms it, or different value voting. The honourable member for Windsor, who supports the Macklin plan, might be interested to know that Senator Macklin, as a Democrat, is a representative in the Senate under an eight-zone system, not a four-zone system.

The zones I refer to are Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. If one was to measure the equality of votes in those terms, the four-zone system that operates in Queensland and the three-zone system that operates in Western Australia pale into insignificance. Although I will make this point more strongly on another occasion, I now point to the variations that are found in the eight-zone system for election to the Senate. The quotas that are required to elect a candidate to the Senate range from 24 000 in Tasmania to 286 000 in New South Wales. I mention that that system has operated since federation.

Mr Simpson: Senator Macklin would be out of office if he had to meet the New South Wales quota.

Mr STONEMAN: That is absolutely right. I do not think that Senator Macklin has the brains or the intellect to understand that what he is saying is not only a lot of rot but also total hypocrisy. If the senator meant what he was saying, he should resign; and I suggest that many people would feel a sense of relief if he did.

I was interested to hear a couple of comments made by the honourable member for Stafford (Mr Gygar). Apparently the honourable member has joined with the State director of the Liberal Party in opposing the views of the parliamentary leader of the Liberal Party, the honourable member for Nundah, on balanced electoral representation of the zonal system in Queensland. I advise the honourable member for Nundah not to leave the State. The last time he did that, the honourable member for Stafford was not backward in coming forward and promoting the political demise of his parliamentary leader. I congratulate the honourable member, however, for his momentary flight into reality when he spoke about the problems that have been created by the Federal Australian Labor Party Government for the rural sector. I was delighted to hear the honourable member for Stafford say many sensible things about rural communities.

I believe that relationships among people who live in country areas, particularly among members of political parties and candidates for election, are usually very good. I admit that momentary problems do arise, but I prefer to instance the relationship that has prevailed for many years during my political career among the members of various political parties on election day. The amendments to the Elections Act that are contained in the Bill recognise some of the elements of those relationships and factors that promote change.

Honourable members might be interested to know about something that occurred during a Federal election for the seat of Kennedy. One of the members of the National Party was distributing how-to-vote cards for the present member (Mr Bob Katter senior) when a well-known Australian Labor Party supporter, a lady from the Guru district, arrived at the polling booth. She discovered that the Labor Party contingent had not yet arrived, and she had no how-to-vote cards to distribute on behalf of that party. She was able to borrow some of the National Party cards on which Mr Katter's name appeared, and she was able to change the recommended voting sequence to favour the Australian Labor Party by rearranging the preferences. That is an example of the kind of co-operation that occurs spontaneously in many country electorates, and I think it is an amusing story.

Mrs Chapman: That is part and parcel of living in a democracy.

Mr STONEMAN: That is exactly right. As the honourable member for Pine Rivers has pointed out, it is part of a life-style that can be found in a democratic State in which people are able to express their views without harassment and without being confronted by a gun-at-the-head mentality.

On many occasions during elections, party members have to be absent briefly from the polling booth, and members of the other parties do not hesitate to hand out how-to-vote cards for all the parties without equivocation. That ensures that all the parties get a fair go, and the people who take part in that kind of conduct are to be commended.

It concerns me that some people will endeavour to work against the system or try to turn the operations of the system in their favour. The amendment to the Act provided by this Bill will address many of those problems. I believe that many people will welcome the amendments that, by altering the provisions of section 82A, permit votes to be cast from a motor vehicle. As other speakers have mentioned, the Bill contains provisions about which members of the general public should be aware.

It should be remembered that the capacity and ability to vote is regarded as precious by people who live in Australia and other parts of the world. I have, in my area, many people from other countries who have experienced both sides of the coin. They know what it is like not to be able to cast a vote and they are very upset when, at the last moment, they have not been able to avail themselves of an electoral visitor vote and so are precluded from voting at all. They will now be able to go along and vote. Many senior citizens regard the right to be able to play their part in the democratic process as being very precious. They will now be able to go along to a booth and cast a vote without having to climb up stairs or walk a great distance. I commend the Minister and his officers on the insertion of that provision.

The introduction of electoral visitor voting was an excellent initiative. Certainly, some abuses of that system occurred, but these proposed amendments will overcome them. In many areas, such as hospitals and aged persons homes, people who are permanently infirm but are still active enough in their minds to take part in the democratic process will be able to vote.

I want to deal with a point made by the honourable member for Windsor about fund-raising. I am a very strong supporter of the view that the financial support of candidates at elections should be spontaneous and voluntary. The suggestion that parties must declare how much money has been donated to them is abhorrent to me, in the sense that that means that, at the point of a gun, a party must declare donations. It is then publicly denigrated because of the source of those donations. That is done by members opposite. They highlight the names of donors and hold them up to ridicule and scorn. That is a sad reflection on attitudes that members opposite are trying to create in the community.

A basic tenet of democracy is the right of a person to choose the party to which he will give both physical and financial support. If a person wants to spend his entire earnings on supporting a party, so be it. He should be able to do that without fear of

harassment and denigration of the type that one sees in this State today. I totally oppose that suggestion.

As I said, financial support should be spontaneous and voluntary. I wonder how much money would be donated to the Labor Party if it were not for the forced donations and collections made from union dues. No-one can tell me that the Labor Party receives spontaneous support from each of its members. Many thousands of workers across the nation pay union dues, and are therefore subscribing to ALP funds. I accept that many of them want to do that, and that is fine.

I want to make some brief comments on computer records that these proposed amendments validate and formalise. In doing so, I welcome this morning's announcement by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer about a computer trial. It has some very real possibilities. Many bridges will have to be crossed and a good deal of work done, but the announcement opens up a new era and recognises a new field of technology. I certainly hope, as seemed to be indicated this morning, that the honourable member for Archerfield is not subjected to harassment from within his own party because he, and more particularly the people of Archerfield, have been chosen to take part in the trial. Members should be concerned about the people of Archerfield. There is a need to find out what sort of assistance they should receive. However, if I detected anything this morning in the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition, it seemed to me that he was very crabby about the whole show. I hope that the honourable member for Archerfield is not caused any stress and strain in his party because he has been chosen to take part in the trial.

As I said, the formalising of computer-based electorate records is not only a logical but also a natural progression of the advance in technology. The making available of floppy discs containing electorate information will greatly assist members. That will be undertaken at the cost of the member. That is OK because we must maintain a balance, and the many costs involved have to be met.

I suggest that, in future, we could well be looking at the need for changes. Given the type of experiments and trials being undertaken with computers in members' offices, we could incorporate on-line access to the electoral roll. That would be very expensive and is probably a difficult area that will have to be addressed in due course. It seems to me that a person should be able to go to the local court house and get someone to push a button to see whether he is enrolled correctly and, if he is not, have the necessary corrections made. Thanks to the advances in computer technology, members can telephone the State Electoral Office and almost instantly check enrolments.

A natural extension would be limited on-line access by a member of Parliament to the electoral office. In my opinion, many people would visit a member of Parliament's office to check their enrolment if they did not have direct access to the court house or did not feel comfortable going to the court house. Members of Parliament, regardless of political affiliation, should be able to do that for that benefit of the electorate. I know that Government members represent 100 per cent, not merely a section of their electorates.

Stage 1 of the operation, in my opinion, should be the formalising of the computer-based electoral records. I hope that stage 2—although there may be other stages in between—will involve court house access or electoral office access. I am sure that that will come. A further stage could involve members of Parliament having access provided the trials and cost-effectiveness of installation of computers make it possible.

Many legislative parameters have to be looked at. Certain facets of the electoral rolls should not be available to the general public. It seems to me that only basic information from the electoral roll should be available. Physical constraints are involved in access to an on-line computer or any other computer.

I compliment the Queensland Government on the way that it has undertaken trials through the joint utilisation of satellites and normal telephone communications. In combination, they will prove to be very effective, with satellite technology on the one hand and Telecom on the other, for the people at each end of the spectrum, that is,

those who supply the information and those who desire access to information. That is indicative of the positive attitude adopted by the Government.

I applaud the provision included in the amendment of section 33 for the removal, from the roll, of physically disabled or mentally incapacitated persons. Although the need to vote may not worry people who are mentally incapable, those who are physically incapable can well worry unduly about their fate if they are unable to vote. More particularly, supporting families have been subjected to much unnecessary stress.

I commend the humanitarian approach in many of the amendments. I again congratulate the Minister and his officers for what has been achieved. I am very pleased to have been able to play a part, as a member of the Minister's committee, in drawing up these worthwhile changes.

Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (4.20 p.m.): I welcome the attempt by the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General (Mr Harper), on behalf of the Government, to effect reforms in the voting system in Queensland. However, it is a matter of regret for the Australian Labor Party, and, indeed, a terrible irony, that those reforms to the voting system are being introduced at a time when the worst ever malapportionment and electoral boundary fraud have been presented to the Queensland voters.

Mr Simpson: You're joking!

Mr BRADDY: I hear an interjection, "You're joking!". Every objective commentator on political events in Queensland has said that it is possible for the Government to be returned to office with 35 or 36 per cent——

Mr HARPER: I rise to a point of order. Previously, when the Opposition spokesman was speaking, I raised the point that we are dealing with the Elections Act Amendment Bill. I suggest that the honourable member is diverging completely from the legislation before the Chamber.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth): Order! I did hear the comments that the Minister made when the Opposition spokesman was speaking. I allowed the honourable member for Rockhampton a certain amount of latitude to introduce the subject. It is quite definite that the House is discussing the Elections Act Amendment Bill, and I think that the honourable member should return to it.

Mr BRADDY: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I think that I managed to get out one sentence. Apparently, the Government is so touchy on this matter that even one sentence——

Mr Simpson: You are misleading the people.

Mr BRADDY: The interjection is that I am misleading the people. I ask: Is it not correct that the Government might be returned with a 36 per cent vote? I challenge Government members to deny that.

Mr Simpson: No-one is returned to this House with less than 50 per cent.

Mr BRADDY: I am referring to a 36 per cent total vote of all the electors in the State. The honourable member knows what I mean.

As I have said, there is the terrible irony that reforms are being introduced at the same time as injustices are being perpetrated in other areas.

In this Chamber today, honourable members witnessed another form of injustice. We were notified that, on a trial basis, computers would be installed in the electorate offices of four members. Computers are being given to one member of the Labor Party and to three members of the National Party. The Government has become so used to its own fraud that it does not realise that it does not have three-quarters of the members of this House. What principle of justice did the Government use to decide that computers would be installed in the electorate offices of three Government members and one Opposition member? None will be put in the electorate offices of the members of the

Liberal Party. Government members have become so used to injustice that they cannot recognise it themselves.

In this Chamber, the Government has approximately 40 seats and the Opposition has approximately 30 seats, which is a ratio of four to three; yet the Government is giving three computers to Government members and one computer to an Opposition member. What an unjust Government it is! It does not recognise the injustice itself. It is no wonder that the Government has difficulty in recognising the electoral fraud that it perpetrates with its electoral boundaries. It has become common for the Government to try to justify its own injustice by using fraudulent arguments, but the Opposition rejects them.

The ALP welcomes the move towards a more just electoral system, even if that system has been tarnished by a gerrymandered electoral redistribution. Are the measures that are being introduced proper? Are all the proper reforms being introduced? They are the two most important questions that honourable members have to answer today. The Government will have to face the people on the gerrymander, and it will continue to be reminded of that by the members of the Labor Party and by other people who respect justice.

I shall deal with the measures before the Chamber and other measures that perhaps should be before it. I will look at what happened in the recent Redlands by-election and examine the lessons that should be learnt from it.

About \$70,000 was spent by the Government on publicity, mainly on large newspaper advertisements, in an attempt to get the Redlands electoral roll in a proper form for the by-election. I understand that that sum of money was spent to advise people in Redlands of the election and about polling booths, and to get the rolls in order. The Government mounted an expensive campaign; a comparable sum has never been spent before. Despite that, it was discovered that the rolls were in a poor and unjust state at the time of the election.

Mr Harper: How have you discovered that?

Mr BRADDY: Before the election result was known, the National Party made statements in the media to the effect that, because the rolls were in such a poor state and there were so many bodgie voters on the roll, the Government would dispute the result in court if it did not win the election. The Minister asked me how the Labor Party discovered that the rolls were in a poor state, yet his own party was crying foul before the election result was announced. I challenge the Minister to deny that the media releases came from his own party. He is attempting to wash his hands of this matter and suggest that that was not what his party claimed.

Mr Harper: But your own Mr Beattie said similar things.

Mr BRADDY: I do not deny what Mr Beattie said; but because I have been challenged, I can surely quote no better evidence than that which comes from the Minister's party. It is true that the Labor Party complained about the poor state of the rolls. The Minister is only helping me prove my case.

Mr Harper: Why hasn't he made an official complaint?

Mr BRADDY: Both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party are not happy with the state of the rolls. I am trying to be positive about what could have been done to get the rolls in a better shape than they were at the time of the Redlands by-election. The Minister should not be so sensitive. Is it that he admits that the \$70,000 that was spent on newspaper advertising could have been better spent and could have produced better results? It would appear that that is so.

I suggest that the \$70,000 was another example of National Party grandstanding and was another poor choice of Government expenditure. The \$70,000 could have been spent on a more just and efficient electoral roll process. The last complete canvass of

the Redlands roll occurred in September 1984. Instead of spending the \$70,000 on high-profile advertising, the Government should have expended the funds on an electoral canvass in Redlands. Such a canvass would have been effective and would have had a number of results.

Firstly, all, or most, of those entitled to be enrolled would have been enrolled. Secondly, most of those not entitled to be enrolled would have been struck off the roll. I digress to suggest that it was that particular problem about which the National Party complained. Advertising at \$70,000 a pop does not remove people from the rolls, and I thought that the Minister would understand that. Thirdly, paying people to canvass the electorate would have been cheaper and more effective than the advertising.

I suggest positively that the Minister should consider introducing a compulsory electoral canvass before each general election and by-election. Although in recent times by-elections have been frequent, that is fairly unusual. Certainly the amount of money involved would have been much better spent in endeavouring to enrol those who were entitled to be enrolled and removing those who are not entitled to be enrolled.

I suggest that the Minister has not properly thought out how best to spend money on these matters. Therefore, I seriously suggest that the Minister and his department consider the process of mandatory electoral canvasses to be conducted before each general election and before each by-election. Perhaps if a by-election occurs within a certain fixed time of a general election, in an endeavour to save costs a canvass would not be necessary. Perhaps if the by-election was within 12 months of a general election, there should not be a compulsory canvass. These compulsory canvasses would be less expensive and much more effective than the more expensive and comparatively ineffective advertising campaign that the Government carried out at a cost of about \$70,000 before the Redlands by-election.

We in the Labor Party certainly do not want to hear again the whinging cries of "Foul!" that came from the National Party Government after the Redlands by-election because it thought that it might lose it, particularly when it was within the power of the Government itself to carry out a canvass to ensure that the rolls were in a proper state. For the Government to cry foul in those circumstances is yet another example of its poor administration. How many more examples do there have to be before the Government concedes that it needs some lessons in good administration?

I now refer to clause 14, which inserts new sections 37A and 37B, which deal with computer records. I welcome the provision of electoral roll data in electronic form. I congratulate the Minister and his department on this innovation. However, I am concerned about the method of introduction. I am particularly concerned with the part of new section 37B (2) that provides that a member of the Legislative Assembly may obtain data of a particular electoral roll if he is the member for a district adjoining that district and in the same zone as prescribed for the purpose of electoral distribution or redistribution in the State. Quite apart from obtaining data on his own electoral roll in electronic form, I have no quarrel with any member's being able to obtain it for an adjoining electorate. However, I query the need for the restriction that is placed in the Bill, that is, that the adjoining electorate has to be in the same zone. Why does it have to be in the same zone?

Of greater concern is the fact that, under new section 37B (2) (b), in other cases the approval of the Minister has to be obtained by the member. So, in any case, a member of Parliament is given the right to apply to the Minister to have supplied this electoral roll data in electronic form. However, the member has a right to it only if it is his own electorate or an adjoining electorate in the same zone. In any other instance he must apply for it. Why? The Labor Party certainly asks that question in a State that is as gerrymandered as it is at present. The proper course would be to enable any member of Parliament to apply for the data if he is prepared to pay for it. Why should it be left to the discretion of a Minister? Why is it left to the goodwill of a Minister?

I suggest that one could go round the State and pick out some electorates that the Labor Party would have some reasonable hope of winning and would certainly be anxious

of winning at the next election. If they are not adjoining and in the same zone as electorates already held by the Labor Party, the Labor Party must rely on the good graces and the goodwill of the Minister. I believe that the Minister has certain good graces and certain goodwill. For example, he has fought hard with the Commonwealth Government over the joint enrolment card. He has achieved that aim, despite the wishes of certain other members of his party. He ought to be congratulated on that successful fight.

That indicates that the Minister has some real regard for democracy and for the democratic process. However, we should not be left to rely on the goodwill of a particular Minister. The appropriate course would be for the Minister to consider why he has introduced this restriction and given himself this discretion. He should think about it again and alter the system so that each member of Parliament or at least one member of each party in the Parliament is entitled, as of right, to obtain any of the available electoral rolls in electronic form.

I turn now to a measure that I have mentioned recently and on which I praised the Minister, namely, the joint enrolment form. That reform is long overdue. I congratulate the Minister on its introduction. However, the terms and conditions that apply to the joint enrolment form should be a matter of concern to both the Commonwealth Government and the Queensland Government. It is a great pity that both Governments have not been able to agree on a form, so that the conditions would be universally applicable rather than conditions that differ in some instances.

The major requirement in Queensland, of course, is the three-month residency criterion. That compares with a one-month period in the Commonwealth. It is a great pity that the Queensland Government did not adopt the same residential requirement as the Commonwealth Government. It is unfortunate that, recently, the Queensland Government and its National Party spokesman were crying foul about the state of the electoral rolls and how the Queensland Government thought that it might lose the Redlands by-election because it did not have the rolls in proper form.

If Queensland had this joint enrolment form that applied universally to both the Commonwealth and the State, there would be even less chance of the electoral rolls being in the poor condition that has been portrayed by all the parties in Queensland at present.

I was concerned about the state of the rolls and the efficiency of the electoral office in Queensland at the time of the Rockhampton by-election in February 1985.

Mr McElligott: Are you saying that that worked against you?

Mr BRADY: On that occasion, because the rolls were not in a good state, there were some instances in which it appeared that that might work against me.

A number of people were not on the rolls. My son had recently turned 18 years of age and he was entitled to be enrolled. I made sure that he was enrolled. I thought that I should check to see whether all the students in his class were enrolled. I found that hardly any of them were enrolled and that there had been no canvass in Rockhampton to make sure that they were enrolled. There had been some advertising urging people to enrol, but people do not necessarily see such advertisements.

Although I took steps to ensure that enrolment cards were filled in, and delivered them personally to the office in Rockhampton, at the time of the election I found that not all of the cards that had been delivered by me made it to the electoral office for printing on the electoral roll. Time was pretty short. I therefore became concerned about the efficiency of the system. A few of them made it; a few of them did not.

I made several urgent telephone calls in an attempt to find out why people whom I could name, because I had delivered the cards personally, had not made it onto the rolls. I obtained no satisfactory answer. Several of them did appear on the rolls subsequently without lodging any further application forms.

I am not suggesting that any deliberate attempt was made to keep those people off the rolls. However, I do suggest that it is a clear example of inefficiency. It demonstrated to me that, immediately it is known that a by-election has to be held, the electoral canvass should be got under way. There is no need to wait until the by-election process has started.

The recent Rockhampton by-election was held in February 1985. Mr Keith Wright resigned from this Parliament in early November 1984. It was clear that a by-election would have to be held, and it should have been clear to the Government that it should begin an electoral canvass at that time.

Mr Harper: Over Christmas?

Mr BRADDY: Not over Christmas. Canvassing could have been carried out in November and December. Christmas Day is on 25 December. There are many weeks in November and December before Christmas. There are also weeks in January, after Christmas and prior to February, when the electoral canvass could have been held. As I understand it, Christmas is a one-day celebration. The Minister might find that he has to celebrate it for a longer period. Most people can work in November, December and January, even though they are preparing for and recovering from Christmas.

It is apparent that the Government is prepared to effect reforms in some respects. I again welcome that. I congratulate the Government on what it has done. What it has done has been done well. However, I regret that the Government has not seen fit to carry out, at lesser expense, a proper reform.

I ask the Minister to give serious consideration to these mandatory electoral canvasses. It is to be hoped that at the next election, whether it be a by-election or a general election, the National Party Government will not cry foul when an election is pretty close.

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (4.43 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. I will briefly reply to some of the questions asked by honourable members.

The Opposition spokesman referred to the compilation of rolls at intervals of 24 months. Another speaker also referred to it. The fact is that the rolls will be prepared at intervals not in excess of 24 months. It is appropriate that those rolls be prepared more frequently.

At present, a tremendous waste of funding is possible if rolls are prepared unnecessarily. Under the present provisions, the rolls are required to be prepared every 12 months. In relation to the preparation of rolls for local authority elections, it is more appropriate that there be a discretion, provided that rolls are prepared at intervals not exceeding 24 months.

The Opposition spokesman referred also to zonal systems and electoral weightings. I will not deal with that matter. That system was introduced by the Australian Labor Party when it was in Government, and the Queensland Government has no intention of changing the requirement of a three-month residential qualification.

The processing of enrolment cards was referred to by more than one speaker. It will be a joint form. The honourable member for Rockhampton (Mr Braddy) referred to this. If he wants to know the position, I suggest that he listen to my explanation. A single enrolment form will be processed by the State or Commonwealth office to which it is addressed. When that electoral office has completed the process, the form will be sent to the other electoral office.

However, when an election is announced, the form will be sent immediately to the relevant authority, irrespective of the office to which it is first delivered. If it is a State election, the Commonwealth Government will not process the forms until they have been sent to the State Electoral Office. When a Commonwealth election is to be held, forms that pertain to that election will be sent immediately to the Commonwealth office

if they are delivered in the first instance to the State Electoral Office. After that, they will be returned to the State office. The process will involve a single form, which will be dealt with by whichever office first receives it, except at the time of an election.

I thank the honourable member for Salisbury (Mr Goss) for his basically supportive remarks about the legislation, and for his contribution to the debate.

The honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) referred to the option of applying for electoral identification cards, which are intended to provide a service to the community. As is the case with many other community services, although the card is available, its use is not mandatory.

It is rather interesting that a number of eligible voters do not exercise their voting rights. The fact was apparent during the recent Redlands by-election. The honourable member for Rockhampton (Mr Braddy) has criticised me, as the Minister responsible, for giving directions for an advertising campaign to be carried out. It was undertaken because I considered it to be a measure that should gain support from members of the Opposition. My intention was to ensure that every eligible voter in the Redlands electorate knew that a by-election was about to take place. It seems strange that criticism should be levelled at me because of that.

Despite the efforts involved in launching that advertising campaign, approximately 3 000 eligible voters did not exercise their right to vote. That is beyond my comprehension. The figure represents 10 per cent of the total electorate, and I am told that is a fairly normal occurrence and that it is a rather good indication for a by-election. It is therefore probable that the advertising campaign had a beneficial effect.

The honourable member for Ipswich (Mr Hamill) referred to the accuracy of the Queensland electoral roll. I put it to that honourable member that the staff of the State Electoral Office is more efficient and more accurate than the staff of the Commonwealth Electoral Office in keeping the roll. I can assure all honourable members that it is the Queensland Government's intention to continue the past practice of canvassing to maintain the accuracy of the State roll. The Government intends to continue with its canvassing practice, and I understand that the Commonwealth Government will continue with its own information-gathering process.

I mention that approximately 5 000 application forms are received at the State Electoral Office every week. Among them are approximately 3 000 notifications of change of address. That highlights the continuing work-load that confronts the staff of that office. There is a great deal of population movement involved when people change their address.

Members of the Opposition have registered their dissatisfaction with so-called phantom voters in the Redlands by-election. At this stage, it is too early to make an assessment of the claims that have been made by the National Party and the Australian Labor Party. However, inquiries are being made by checking and cross-checking the rolls, and names that have been provided to us will also be checked. I give the assurance that the inquiries will be followed through in an attempt to identify the incidence of phantom voting.

I was interested to note the apparent support by the Opposition for recognition in legislative provisions of political parties and how-to-vote cards. Albeit with a degree of modification, support in similar terms was given by the spokesman for the Liberal Party in relation to that matter.

I turn now to the provision that refers to the qualifications of a candidate. If a person decides to nominate for an election, surely that person should ensure that his name appears on the electoral roll. If such a person purports to be capable of representing a constituency, he should also be capable of ensuring that his own electoral status is intact. In any event, if the person's name has been removed because of an official error, the Act provides for his name to be restored to the roll for the electorate in which he lives.

The honourable member for Stafford (Mr Gygar) asked me to give an indication of whether the present format of the roll will be maintained. I indicate that, at present,

there is no intention of changing the format of the roll. Because it will facilitate the ability of a returning officer at a polling-booth to identify a voter, a purely alphabetical roll without divisions will be provided to each returning officer. At present, it is possible for people to be listed in a division other than the one to which the returning officer refers, so the provision of a purely alphabetical electoral roll, in a form similar to that of a telephone directory, should make it easy for a returning officer to be sure whether a person is enrolled.

The honourable member for Windsor spoke at length. I was interested to hear from him an acknowledgement of the Opposition's philosophy of extorting from all members of trade unions contributions to the Labor Party's political funds. It was quite surprising that he acknowledged that fact. Irrespective of the wishes of a member of a trade union or his political philosophy, he is forced to contribute to the Labor Party's political machine.

The honourable member for Burdekin is a member of my parliamentary committee. I thank him for his support on that committee and in this debate.

The honourable member for Rockhampton has already received my assurance that normal roll canvasses will continue. As to the restriction on supplying data on rolls of adjoining districts—at present, it is very important that the State Electoral Office, in order to maintain and improve its efficiency, has full access to the computer services available through the State Government Computer Centre. When information is supplied to members at a cost, that diminishes the time allocated to the electoral office by the computer centre. Certainly, as a first step, it is not unreasonable that there should be a restriction on the ability of members to obtain rolls in electronic form for their own and adjoining electorates within their own zones. At some later stage, when more computer time is available, the Government will look at the other suggestion made by the honourable member.

As I indicated during the debate, at the Committee stage I propose to move two amendments to clause 14 dealing with the purchase of electoral roll data in electronic form by members of the Legislative Assembly.

Clause 14 provides that the tape or disc or other electronic means of supply shall not contain any data additional to that which is contained in the last printed copy of the roll in question. It is possible to supply data in respect of all enrolments current at the time application is made.

I can see no reason why a member should not be able to obtain up-to-date information at the time an application is made for the data. The amendment that I propose to move will achieve that. However, a member will not be able to obtain any data in addition to the data that may be found in a printed roll.

Although it is imperative, as I just said, that the electoral office retain full computer time when it is in the process of preparing rolls, jury lists and redistribution information, the amendments will delete the proposal that a member is not entitled to be supplied with more than one copy of the data. This will allow more flexibility in considering applications for the supply of data. There may be occasions when, in exceptional circumstances, a second copy may be required, and the amendment will allow such applications to be considered on their merits.

Motion (Mr Harper) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.55 p.m.